

MNST 6401 SANKOFA: RACIAL RIGHTEOUSNESS AND RECONCILIATION

North Park Theological Seminary Spring 2018

COURSE INSTRUCTOR

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will learn about the history of systemic racism, institutional bias, and ecclesial practices that prohibit the church from prophetically living life together and embodying Christian solidarity in the face of racial harm. Sankofa examines the historical significance of race, racial inequalities, structural injustice, and institutional bias, both inside and outside of the church. The online and travel course centers around a four-day bus pilgrimage exploring historic sites of the Civil Rights movement, connecting the oppression of years past to present day racial suffering and division. Students participate in listening, exploring, learning, and unpacking the cause, effect and impact of racism in the U.S. This course addresses the learning outcome found in all four NPTS degree programs to, “engage diversity and exhibit growth towards intercultural competence for ministry reflective of God’s global redemptive work.” Sankofa fulfills the intercultural diversity course requirement in a blended format. Auditors welcome. 3 seminary credits.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Examine the origins of race and racial formations in the United States.
2. Examine biblical texts that were critical for legitimizing and sustaining racism.
3. Examine biblical texts used by African Americans who resisted racial oppression.
4. Analyze the systemic nature of racial injustice in the United States in regards to housing, education, socio-economics, and mass incarceration.
5. Students will be trained to lead dialogues on racial righteousness and reconciliation outside the classroom. They will be equipped to engage these topics inter-generationally within a framework of discipleship.
6. Students will plan steps moving towards racial righteousness from within the church, personally and communally.

COURSE OUTLINE

This blended format course is divided into six online modules at two week intervals. Four are scheduled before travel to build a communal learning framework, and two after travel for reflection and planning next steps. The proposed schedule is as follows:

Module One: Introduction to Racial Formations, Righteousness and Reconciliation

Module Two: Race and Scripture

Module Three: Life together: Dividing walls, and Christian belonging

Module Four: Oppression, Liberation, and Theology

5/31-6/3 Travel: **Sankofa Journey and Immersion Experience** (Date subject to change)

Module Five: Sankofa Reflection: How the Past informs the Present

Module Six: Final Project Reporting on Next Steps

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

For the travel component of this course, students are required to find a partner of the same gender but of a different race to be coupled with on the Sankofa journey. Students are responsible for all assignments, and should be prepared to bring them to bear through discussion online. The assignments will help place the class in context, challenge and engage students during lectures, films and documentaries, online discussion, and guest speakers/lecturers. Books can be purchased on Amazon.com. Supplementary assigned reading materials will be made available online.

- **Required Reading (Due Before Travel)**

1. *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race*, Willie James Jennings, (Yale University Press), 2011.
2. *Dear White Christians: For Those Still Longing for Racial Reconciliation*, Jennifer Harvey. (Eerdmans Press), 2014.
3. *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, James H. Cone, (Orbis Books), 2013.
4. *Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus: Harlem Renaissance Theology and an Ethic of Resistance*, Reggie L. Williams (Baylor University Press), 2014.
5. *Rethinking Incarceration: Advocating for Justice That Restores*, Dominique DuBois Gilliard (InterVarsity Press), 2018.

- **Required Resources (Portions posted online in Canvas – read before travel)**

1. Brian K. Blount, Cain Hope Felder, *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentator*, Minneapolis, MN (Fortress Press: 2007)
2. Willie Jennings, *Acts: Belief A Theological Commentary on the Bible*, Louisville, KY (Westminster John Knox Press: 2017)
3. Cain Hope Felder, Ph.D., *The Original African Heritage Study Bible*, (Nashville: The James C. Winston Publishing Company, 1993)

- **Required Documentaries & DVD's (To be Viewed After Travel)**

1. Race: The Power of An Illusion – PBS Documentary
 - a. The Story We Tell Episode II
 - b. The House We Live In Episode III
2. The House I Live In – Documentary – to be viewed after
3. 13th – Online Documentary

GRADING & ASSESSMENT

Activity	Grade Percentage	Due Dates
Reflection Papers	20%	#1 4/18, #2 5/20, #3 6/17
Online discussion	20%	Due Dates Listed Online
Sankofa Journey	40%	To be determined
Final Project (10-12 pages)	20%	7/12
Total Percentages	100%	

Course grades will be computed according to the policy found in the NPTS catalog.

NOTES

1. Students are not permitted to miss any portion of the course's required travel. The Sankofa journey is not optional but a requirement of the course. Students are not allowed to miss more than 2 assigned on-line weekly interactive postings. In case of needed medical leave, the instructor must be notified by email or by phone.
2. The instructor reserves the right to modify the course to best accommodate the learning needs of the class.
3. Use proper "netiquette" when posting online. Remember there are people on the other end of your communication. Use your best academic writing skills. Avoid sarcasm, emoticons, abbreviations or writing in CAPS. Use inclusive language.
4. NPTS encourages all students to follow the Statement of Inclusive Language of the ECC which states, "We are committed to being inclusive in language and imagery in an effort to eliminate prejudice, whether gender, racial, ethnic, national, religious, denominational, cultural, or physical. This way of proceeding in no manner seeks to deny personal identity; rather, it guards against any use of word or phrase that tends to exclude people." Consider how you can best incorporate inclusive language into all of your communication (written and oral) during the course particularly in your references to God and to humanity.
5. **Harassment Policy and Title IX:** Students who believe they have been harassed, discriminated against, or involved in sexual violence should contact the Dean of Students (773-244-6222) or Director of Human Resources (773-244-5601) for information about campus resources and support services, including confidential counseling services. As members of the North Park faculty, we are concerned about the well-being and development of our students, and are available to discuss any concerns. Faculty are legally obligated to share information with the University's Title IX coordinator in certain situations to help ensure that the student's safety and welfare is being addressed, consistent with the requirements of the law. These disclosures include but are not limited to reports of sexual assault, relational/domestic violence, and stalking. Please refer to North Park's Safe Community site (<http://www.northpark.edu/Campus-Life-and-Services/Safe-Community>) for contact information and further details.
6. **Academic Accommodation:** NPTS provides services for students with documented disabilities to ensure equal access to programs, services, facilities, and activities. Students with a disability who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Seminary Academic Services as soon as possible. If desired or necessary, discussion pertaining to documentation and accommodation can take place at another suitable location or by telephone. Further information about the American Disabilities Act Services is found at <https://www.northpark.edu/campus-life-and-services/student-success-and-wellness/disability-resources/>.
7. **Academic Integrity:** NPTS promotes a commitment to integrity in all areas of life. In the case of breaches of academic honesty such as plagiarism or cheating on examinations, the matter will be reported to the Dean of Faculty. Students should be advised that normally in cases of academic dishonesty or plagiarism the penalty can range from receiving a failing grade for the assignment to expulsion from the Seminary. For the full policy, please see the seminary academic catalog.