

## **Bible, Culture and Race: BSPT 315**

Foster School of Arts & Sciences  
Cincinnati Christian University, Fall 2016

### **Professor: Brooklin Taylor**

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### **CCU's Mission**

CCU is committed to providing a Christ-centered, liberal arts education taught with a Christian worldview in students' chosen fields of study.

### **Course Description**

This is a foundational course in Public Theology and thus will focus on the broad biblical exhortation, as Jeremiah 29 has it, "seek the welfare of the city...for in its shalom you will find your shalom." This task is undertaken through the particular exegetical analysis of the Biblical passages on human identity in the context of racial and ethnic differences. In light of this foundation, the class will then seek to develop a basic understanding of theological and racial constructs in this field, understanding the role of power, history and otherness. Finally, the class will seek to engage directly in history, assets and practice of our local community around these matters.

### **Course Outcomes**

Students taking this course will be able to:

1. Explain matters of human identity in the context of racial and ethnic differences from a Biblical perspective.
2. Be conversant with models and theories employed to describe race and ethnicity in our theology and our culture.
3. Describe the major conversation of the kinds and effects of power operating in racial and ethnic differences in our city, country and world and the main principles and frameworks found therein.
4. Locate their own lives and practices in the context of these principles as well as people and organizations actively engaging in this conversation in our neighborhood.

### **Learning Experiences**

1. The primary mode of learning in this course will be through in-class lecture and discussion/questions as well as guest speakers and program visitations.
2. Students will have assigned reading that supports the above outcomes and will be required to report on or take quizzes and exams over the assigned reading, class visitations and guest speakers.
3. Students will be asked to complete other assignments and group discussion questions designed to facilitate engagement with the class presentation.

### **Major Learning Experiences, Course Requirements & Procedures**

1. The class sessions mainly comprise lectures, discussion, guest speakers and program visitations. Students are expected to engage the material in class and consider and discuss the material outside of class.

2. Reading Comprehension Quizzes (RCQ): Each student is expected to read the assigned chapter/reading in preparation for lecture and discussion. The reading assignments and corresponding quizzes are to assist in developing the student's awareness of the material. The assigned reading and corresponding comprehension quiz must be completed on Canvas before the allotted class begins. This assignment is designed to measure outcomes 1, 2, and 3.
3. Reflection/Application Papers and Projects: Each student is expected to bring into critical conversation not only the reading but also what they have learned or are grappling with from the guest speaker or corresponding activity. These brief and concise assignments are meant to further the student's personal engagement with the class material. Please see the attached Reflection Rubric for grading questions and writing suggestions. This assignment is designed to measure outcomes 1, 2, and 3.
4. Final Paper or Project: You will receive more specific information on this as the semester continues but the purpose of this final paper or project is to think creatively about what Theology and Race looks like in each student's specific context. Engagement with community members and organizations working in the is field will act to support and measure outcome 4.
  - The final 8-10 page essay will serve as the final assessment for the course. This paper must be well-written, well-edited, clearly presented and conform to normal MLA standards of composition and citation. The thesis will be presented in class for discussion.
  - Alternatively, a final art project may be considered for the equivalent weight of the final paper. Like the paper, select one issue from the course, depict its basic contours, then propose/illustrate/create a theological response that satisfies the ambitions of the course objectives. The project will be turned in along with a 500-word thesis and description will be present in class for discussion.
  - The final project proposal (essay or art project) is simply a 300-word description of the topic and direction of the final essay or final art project.

### **Attendance & Late Work**

1. Attendance will be taken and is a large percentage of your grade. Please be present and on-time.
2. No late work will be accepted for any reason, since work can always be submitted early. All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course; late assignments receiving no credit

### **Submitting Assigned Work**

Unless otherwise stated, all assigned work will be submitted through Canvas.

### **Assessment & Grading**

1. Attendance and Class Participation (15%)
2. Reading assignments will be assessed for comprehension of material (25%)
3. Students will take periodic quizzes, reflections or other assigned tasks (25%)
4. The final paper or project will assess student's comprehension of the subjects discussed in class and demonstrate the ability to apply the course information in the context of their own lives (35%)

### **Course Policies**

1. Disability Accommodation: Students who require academic accommodations due to a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability should request assistance from the Student Services Department within the first two weeks of class. The

Student Services Center is located on the 200-level of the Presidents Hall. You may also contact the office by phone ([513.244.8150](tel:513.244.8150)) or email [studentlife@ccuniversity.edu](mailto:studentlife@ccuniversity.edu).

2. The Evan Bolejack Learning Center: Students in need of academic coaching or tutoring should contact the learning center at [learning.center@ccuniversity.edu](mailto:learning.center@ccuniversity.edu) to schedule an appointment. All services are free to current students.
3. The course instructor may alter assignments and dates as the need arises and always in the interests of the student.
4. The class attendance policy is described in the student handbook.
5. Students sleeping in class will receive a 5% final grade reduction in the course for each occasion.
6. If students expect to be absent, as a professional courtesy, they must alert the instructor beforehand via email.

### **Technology**

The inappropriate in-class use of technology distracts on average six other people, regardless of how discrete a student imagines themselves to be. We maintain a zero tolerance policy on the use of phones and similar devices during class meetings. That means that:

1. Absolutely no phones or similar devices maybe accessed during the class meetings, or any group discussions, and any such use will require the student to leave the class and receive a final grade penalty of 10% for each occasion. Students are considered to be in breach of this policy if the professor suspects they are, so students should avoid even appearing to be using such technology.
2. Due to the above policy, taking notes on a phone/similar device or accessing a biblical text on a phone is not an acceptable means of engaging the class.
3. All phones must be set to silent mode.
4. Any use of a computer/tablet for anything other than taking notes on the class presentation or composing responses in group discussions (e.g., any use of a computer for writing emails, messages, texts, social media access, internet searches/reading, entertainment, etc. is never acceptable) will result in that student being prohibited from bringing a computer/tablet to class for the rest of the semester. Again, students are in breach of this policy if the professor suspects they are, so students should avoid even appearing to be in breach of the policy.
5. The simplest approach here is to just not use phones/similar devices at all and to just focus on the class during the class meeting time, leaving social media and entertainment for the remaining 23hrs hours available in the day.

### **Required Reading**

- Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press: 2010.
- Cone, James. *The Cross and The Lynching Tree*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books. 2011.

### **Suggested Reading**

- Bantum, Brain. *Redeeming Mulatto: A Theology of Race and Christian Hybridity*. Baylor, 2010.
- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me: The Beautiful Struggle*. New York: Spiegel & Grau. 2015.
- Irving, Debby. *Walking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race*. Cambridge: Elephant Room Press. 2014.
- Jennings, Willie James. *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race*. Yale University. 2010.
- Stevenson, Bryan. *Just Mercy*. New York: Random House. 2014.

- Wallis, Jim. *America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege and the Bridge to New America*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press. 2016.

The Class/Assignment Schedule will be posted on the first day of class.

*The professor reserves the right to change any of the course requirements, schedules, grading scale, or procedure at any time during the course for either specific individuals or the whole class. The Professor may establish in-class conduct requirements not specified in this syllabus, if the professor believes that such would be in the best interests of student experience and learning.*