



CHTH 319/415

Reconciliation, Christian Ethics and Public Theology

Distance Course Outline 2021

SEMESTER 1 2021

Lecturer:

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Welcome to 'Reconciliation, Christian Ethics and Public Theology'. This paper examines political and social reconciliation initiatives in divided societies in recent times. It draws on these experiences to think critically and creatively about what a socially relevant Christian theology of reconciliation needs to address, and to explore the insights that theology might offer on these issues. A key question guiding the course is: 'How can a Christian theology of reconciliation be developed to engage constructively with the challenges of reconciliation in the aftermath of division and/or recent conflict.'

This paper is divided into five units. The first unit (Reconciliation) explores why reconciliation has come to prominence as a social and political issue in recent decades, what is at stake, and why it is significant for public theology. If you've taken other papers on public theology, you'll likely find some of the public theology parts of this unit familiar. If not, don't worry, these terms and concepts will quickly become familiar. The second unit (Reconciliation in South Africa) covers the Truth and Reconciliation Commission during the political transition in South Africa. The third module (Reconciliation in Northern Ireland) considers reconciliation work to address sectarian division and conflict in Northern Ireland. The fourth module (Reconciliation in Aotearoa New Zealand) considers its relevance closer to home. The fifth unit (Forgiveness) addresses the relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation.

LECTURER'S INTRODUCTION

Your lecturer for this paper is Professor David Tombs, Howard Paterson Professor of Theology and Public Issues, and Director of the Centre for Theology

and Public Issues. David studied theology and philosophy at Oxford University, Union Theological Seminary (New York), and London University. His research focuses on public, contextual and liberation theologies, and he has a particular interest in religion and different forms of violence. Before coming to Otago, he lectured on Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation at the Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin, and previously lectured in theology at the University of Roehampton, London. He can be contacted by email on david.tombs@otago.ac.nz and by phone on (03) 479 8450.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students taking this paper at the **300-level** will be able to:

By the end of the course the student taking the paper at **300-level** should:

- Clarify a sound understanding of the challenges posed by reconciliation as a personal and political process and its relevance to Christian ethics and public theology.
- Analyse the complexity of truth, justice, forgiveness, remorse and apology in the social transformation of division and conflict.
- Critically evaluate the resources that public theology and Christian ethics can draw upon to contribute constructively towards personal and political reconciliation.
- Present persuasive written work with analytic arguments based on evidence, reading and reason.

In addition to all the above, the student taking the paper at **400-level** should also:

- Develop the capacity to identify a research topic and pursue a research plan to satisfactory completion.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course is divided into five units with ten topics.

- **Introductory videoconference.**
- **Unit 1: Topics 1-2: Reconciliation. Teaching Day.**
- **Unit 2: Topics 3-4: South Africa. Videoconference 1.**
- **Unit 3: Topics 5-6: Northern Ireland. Videoconference 2.**
- **Unit 4: Topics 7-8: Aotearoa New Zealand. Videoconference 3.**
- **Unit 5: Topics 9-10: Forgiveness. Videoconference 4.**

The dates of the videoconferences are shown in the schedule below.

TEACHING

The teaching typically involves discussion of your readings, so it is important to complete the required reading in advance whenever possible.

ASSESSMENT

- At 300-level the course will be assessed through **three pieces of written work** worth 30%, 30% and 40% of your grade respectively. There is **no final examination**.
- At 400-level the course will be assessed through **three pieces of written work** worth 15%, 15%, and 70% of your grade respectively. There is **no final examination**.

RESOURCES

- Blackboard, the University's online learning tool;
- This Course Outline and the Study Guide and Required textbooks (see below).
- eReserve, a resource for electronic readings, which you can access via Blackboard;
- The Programme's "Style Guide" which recommends students use the 16th edition of the Chicago Style Guide when writing essays. It is available online at <http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/>
- The handbook *Distance Learning Information and Support 2018*, providing advice on administrative matters not covered in this Course Outline and on the Distance Library Service. (You may download the PDF from the 'Essential Information' web page).

Required textbooks

- David Bloomfield *et al.* eds. *Reconciliation After Violent Conflict: A Handbook*. Stockholm: IDEA, 2003. Available for free download at: <https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/reconciliation-after-violent-conflict-handbook?lang=en>
- David Tombs and Joseph Liechty (eds.), *Explorations in Reconciliation: New Directions for Theology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006). Ebook available through University of Otago library: https://otago.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/q5v1tf/OTAGO_ALMA51195648090001891

- Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*. New York: Doubleday; London: Rider, 1999. This is available to purchase on Kindle (or other ebook platforms) and it is also available through the University Bookshop: <https://www.unibooks.co.nz/>

THIS IS IMPORTANT!

Please Note: You **must have access to Blackboard and your University email address** in order to complete this paper. You will receive access once your enrolment is complete. Communications from your lecturer regarding teaching matters will be provided only through Blackboard and your University email address, as outlined in the University's Student Communications Policy, so you must check these emails regularly. eVision will also send important messages through your University email. If you have any concerns about your access to Blackboard or to other course resources, please contact the lecturer or administrative staff immediately so that these can be resolved.

You will find there is a lot of helpful information and resources on the Theology Programme website. In particular, we require you to read the section called "Essential Student Information." You will find it here:

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/>

This page provides a number of useful resources such as the Style Guide and the Plagiarism Declaration Form you must attach to your assignments. It supplies detailed information on assessment and student support. In particular, it contains guidance on the topics of plagiarism and deadlines, both of which can incur penalties if not heeded. This also is where you will find instructions for making online discussion posts and submitting assignments electronically. So it is very important you make yourself familiar with this material. Our assumption is that you have read it.

We will make reference to information on the website in the following pages, so do take the time to follow the links and absorb the material. It will save you from making costly mistakes and help to make the practical experience of distance study a straightforward one.

VIDEOCONFERENCES

Distance study requires students to accept a high level of responsibility for their own study. Success is most easily achieved by students who are self-motivated, who engage readily in self-directed study, and who prepare well for the videoconferences. The videoconferences will not cover all the material in each module. Instead, they will focus on some of the key themes and provide opportunity for interaction between

students and the course teacher. Much of the learning will take place as you work through the Study Guide modules and readings on your own.

Accessing the Videoconferences

Please see the 'Zoom Information' link on Blackboard and the 'Essential Information' web page for instructions on how to access Zoom and join in the videoconference sessions. The URL you need to join the sessions is posted under 'Zoom Information.'

Schedule of Videoconferences

Videoconference sessions will be held on **Thursday evenings** as below:

SESSION	DATE	TIME	
Intro	4 March	6:10pm – 7.00pm	Intro
Topics 3-4	25 March	6:10pm – 8.00pm	South Africa
Topics 5-6	15 April	6:10pm – 8.00pm	Northern Ireland
Topics 7-8	29 April	6:10pm – 8.00pm	New Zealand
Topics 9-10	13 May	6:10pm – 8.00pm	Forgiveness

Topics 1-2 will be covered during the Teaching Day (see below).

Attendance at the Videoconferences

Attending videoconferences is a requirement of taking this course. If you are obliged by circumstances beyond your control to miss one, you may find a recording of the proceedings of the Videoconference on Blackboard under the Zoom Videoconferences Link.

TEACHING DAYS

In addition to the Zoom videoconferences, this course involves a teaching day in Wellington. It is not compulsory but it is really worthwhile if you are able to come and it is great way to meet up in person. Students should prepare for the teaching day/evening by doing the reading for the material to be covered in the Teaching Day as indicated in the Study Guide.

Wellington

Date: 12 March 2021

Time: 9.30am-3.30pm

Venue: Anglican Centre, 18 Eccleston Hill (off Hill Street), Thorndon, Wellington.

Please provide own lunch, or there are opportunities to purchase locally.

ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS

At **300-level** every student must submit three assignments which are weighted as follows.

Assignment 1	1,500-2,000 words	30%
Assignment 2	1,500-2,000 words	30%
Assignment 3	2,000-2,500 words	40%

At **400-level** every student must submit three assignments which are weighted as follows.

Assignment 1	1,000-1,500 words	15%
Assignment 1	1,000-1,500 words	15%
Assignment 3	3,500-4,000 words	70%

In your assignments, it is good to demonstrate:

1. Critical examination of the academic literature, showing both breadth and depth
2. Careful thought about complex questions
3. Persuasive, well-reasoned and evidence-based arguments
4. Clear writing style and good presentation format and referencing
5. Appropriate independent reading and personal initiatives
6. An ability to work with primary sources as well as secondary literature. Work with primary resources is especially important at 400 level.

300-level Assignments**CHTH319 Assignment 1: Invited talk**

Due: Friday 26 March 2021; 11:59 pm.

A local group in your hometown (for example, a church, community or youth group) have heard you are doing this course and have asked you to speak to them to about what the course is focusing on and what you are discovering. You have decided to speak to them on 'What is Reconciliation?' and ONE OTHER

CHAPTER TOPIC from the *Reconciliation After Violent Conflict Handbook*.

Prepare an appropriate text for your talk to the group, which will include:

- Telling the group why you chose this course;
- Sharing and explaining what the Handbook has to say on 'What is Reconciliation?' and one other chapter topic;
- Saying why you find the Handbook's discussion interesting, and how it compares or contrasts with other readings that you are doing for the course.

In your text, be sure to thank the group for its interest at the start of the talk, and again for its interest at the end of the talk. The style of writing should be appropriate to the group, but it should include conventional footnotes, just in case one of the group asks for a copy of the text. Include a first footnote that explains who the group is. You can choose whether it is an imaginary group or a real group that you actually know, but if it is a real group it is best to give it an imaginary name for the purpose of the assignment.

CHTH319 Assignment 2: Book review

Due: Friday 30 April 2021; 11:59 pm.

The book review editor of the *International Journal on Public Theology* has asked you to do a book review of Desmond Tutu's *No Future Without Forgiveness*. You have been asked to include particular attention to:

- What you see as its strengths and weaknesses as an account of the TRC;
- What Tutu means by forgiveness and why he sees it as important;
- To what extent would other literature on the TRC support or question Tutu's assessment of the value of the Commission and the value of forgiveness.

CHTH319 Assignment 3: Analysis essay

Due: Friday 28 May 2021; 11:59 pm

Write an essay that analyses the issues, identifies and discusses the relevant academic literature, and argues your own views for ONE of the following questions:

1. How adequately did the South African TRC process address the experiences of South African women?
2. Can religion help the reconciliation process in Northern Ireland? Describe and critically evaluate the role of the churches in the conflict and in the peace and reconciliation process in Northern Ireland.
3. What would a public theology of reconciliation in Aotearoa New Zealand need to address, and how might it best seek to do this?
4. What biblical and theological resources are available to develop a theology of reconciliation, or a Christian ethics of reconciliation, that might make a positive contribution in a society where reconciliation is seen as a social issue?

400-level Assignments

CHTH415 Assignment 1: Research plan

Due: Friday 26 March 2021; 11:59 pm.

Write a research summary and plan for your Assignment 3. This should include:

- A statement of your particular interests in choosing this paper
- An overview of the theme you wish to explore in more depth in your essay and the angles you might explore
- A review of some of the secondary literature you might use and your reasons for choosing it.
- Any element of primary research that you intend to do as part of the assignment. This will usually take the form of work with primary documents (in physical or electronic form). However, if you intend to do interview work your assignment should be accompanied by a completed Ethics approval application. You should discuss this with the course coordinator prior to completing it. NB You are not required to carry out primary research as part of assignment 3 but it is encouraged and if you chose to do so it might take your assignment to a higher level. However, if you chose to only address secondary literature then you can mitigate the absence of primary research by ensuring that your critical analysis of the literature is at a high level and goes into appropriate depth and detail.

CHTH415 Assignment 1: Book review

Due: Friday 30 April 2021; 11:59 pm.

The book review editor of the *International Journal on Public Theology* has asked you to do a book review of Desmond Tutu's *No Future Without Forgiveness*. You have been asked to include particular attention to:

- What you see as its strengths and weaknesses as an account of the TRC?
- What does Desmond Tutu mean by forgiveness? Why does he see it as important?
- To what extent would other literature on the TRC support or question Tutu's assessment of the value of the Commission and the value of forgiveness?

CHTH415 Assignment 2: Research essay

Due: Friday 28 May 2021; 11:59 pm

Research and write an essay that analyses the issues, identifies and discusses the relevant academic literature, and argues your own views for ONE of the following questions:

1. How adequately did the South African TRC process address the experiences of South African women?
2. Can religion help the reconciliation process in Northern Ireland? Describe

and critically evaluate the role of the churches in the conflict and in the peace and reconciliation process in Northern Ireland.

3. What would a public theology of reconciliation in Aotearoa New Zealand need to address, and how might it best seek to do this?
4. What biblical and theological resources are available to develop a theology of reconciliation, or a Christian ethics of reconciliation, that might make a positive contribution in a society where reconciliation is seen as a social issue?

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Marking for all assignments will use the programme grade criteria and will take into account:

1. Critical examination of the academic literature, showing both breadth and depth
2. Careful thought about complex questions
3. Persuasive, well-reasoned and evidence-based arguments
4. Clear writing style and good presentation format and referencing
5. Appropriate independent reading and personal initiatives
6. An ability to work with primary sources as well as secondary literature. Work with primary resources is especially important at 400 level.

REFERENCING SYSTEM

For writing essays, the Theology Programme requires that you use the 16th edition of the Chicago Style Guide, which is the norm for many academic journals in the Humanities and is often recommended for theses in the humanities. The Programme has prepared a Style Guide, which outlines the Chicago Style and offers other advice on essay presentation. You may find it via the Theology Programme's "Student Resources and Information" page:

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/>

SUBMITTING WRITTEN WORK

All assignments shall be submitted **electronically** via the "Assignment" feature on Blackboard by **midnight** on the due dates notified. Please do not submit paper copies. For full instructions about how to submit assignments electronically via Blackboard as well as other important information on plagiarism, grading, and deadlines, please see the "Essential Information" web page.

All Assignments submitted in the Theology Programme must be prefaced with a student Plagiarism Declaration Form. They will not be deemed to have been submitted unless and until the Plagiarism Declaration Form has been submitted. It can be downloaded from <http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/>

It is also on the Blackboard site for this course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All Assignments submitted in the Theology Programme must be prefaced with a student Plagiarism Declaration Form.

It can be downloaded from <http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/>
It is also on the Blackboard site for this course.

Academic integrity means being honest in your studying and assessments. It is the basis for ethical decision-making and behaviour in an academic context. Academic integrity is informed by the values of honesty, trust, responsibility, fairness, respect and courage. Students are expected to be aware of, and act in accordance with, the University's Academic Integrity Policy.

Academic Misconduct, such as plagiarism or cheating, is a breach of Academic Integrity and is taken very seriously by the University. Types of misconduct include plagiarism, copying, unauthorised collaboration, taking unauthorised material into a test or exam, impersonation, and assisting someone else's misconduct. A more extensive list of the types of academic misconduct and associated processes and penalties is available in the University's Student Academic Misconduct Procedures.

It is your responsibility to be aware of and use acceptable academic practices when completing your assessments. To access the information in the Academic Integrity Policy and learn more, please visit the University's Academic Integrity website at www.otago.ac.nz/study/academicintegrity or ask at the Student Learning Centre or Library. If you have any questions, ask your lecturer.

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago116838.html>

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago116850.html>

STUDENT SUPPORT

The “**Essential Information**” web page provides helpful information on how to access the University Library's resources, as well as a guide to the support services available to students at the University of Otago, including the Student Learning Centre and Disability Support.

For all **administrative** enquiries, please contact the Theology Administrator:

Email: theology@otago.ac.nz Phone: 03 479 8639

We recommend that you contact the Programme as soon as possible if you have any problems participating in the course or accessing resources. Please remember to check your University email account regularly for updates and announcements.

THEOLOGY PROGRAMME

University of Otago, PO Box 56, Dunedin 9054, New Zealand
www.otago.ac.nz/theology