

# New Courses for J-term and Spring 2021

## January Term 2021

### **OT 3263 Womanist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible**

**Instructor: Justin Reed**

Ever since Alice Walker defined the term “womanist” almost four decades ago in her book, *In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens*, several biblical scholars have been enthralled with the utility of this term for characterizing how some Black women make meaning with the Bible. While there is great enthusiasm around this shared word, every womanist biblical interpreter understands and applies the term “womanist” in their own unique and nuanced ways. In this course we will be looking at the specifics of how these various scholars apply a womanist reading to the Bible by closely examining several essays alongside biblical texts. Furthermore, we will work to contextualize our work by broadening and deepening our understanding of life for Black women in the United States.

### **PC 3913 Death, Dying, Grief and Loss**

**Instructor: Rev. Susan Lowe, D.Min.**

Death, dying, grief, and loss are topics and experiences known personally and corporately throughout the life span. As such, it is extremely important for ministers and pastoral counselors to have at least a basic understanding of current and past theories of grief and loss, access to tools and resources to share with members or clients facing death or grieving a loss, as well as articulation of their theology of dying and death. This course will provide a general overview the development of grief theories, theological beliefs around dying and death, discussion of end-of-life care decisions, funerals and burials, as well as the importance of self-care in ministering to the dying and bereaved.

### **PW 2503 The Art of Presence: Creative Worship for the People of God**

**Instructors: Mark Goodman-Morris, DMin; Cheryl Goodman-Morris, MDiv**

How can we spark dead, dry bones to jump up and dance, full of life? How can we gather ancient words, printed on parchment thin pages, and infuse them with such life that our worship services snap and crackle with Good News? In this course, students will actively engage in studies of scripture that ignite their imaginations and equip them to develop liturgical and artistic skills to bring those scriptures to vibrant life. The first week will focus on developing each student’s skills in presenting the spoken word. The second week, students will work in ensemble teams to design and participate in worship experiences. These will be based in the Reformed and/or the student’s own worship traditions, speaking to the deep longings of their communities and their own hearts.

Please note: This course is holistic, much more than a classroom experience. The Holy is held at the center of all we do in our time together. With this understanding, these elements are integral to the core of our work:

- \*The nurture and development of covenant community
- \*An emphasis on experiential learning
- \*A deep and playful engagement with the Word and each other

It is strongly recommended that students have completed an Introduction to Worship class prior to this course.

## **TH 2243 Testimony: The Examined Life as Wisdom and Witness**

**Instructor: Chris Elwood**

Sometimes theology or religious wisdom is told—presented as story. Sometimes these stories are about people’s lives. Some of these tellings are first-person narratives, a writer conveying their own life as a prism through which they have discovered and others can discern deep moral and spiritual meaning. In this class, we will read several spiritual autobiographies from different times and places in order to better understand this genre of religious and theological meaning-making and to think about how examining one’s own life in narrative form can be a form of spiritual witness.

Focus readings: Augustine, *Confessions*; Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*; Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*; John G. Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks*; Malcolm X and Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*; Sister Helen Prejean, *River of Fire*.

### **Spring Term 2021**

## **OT 1323 Latter Prophets and Writing**

**Instructor: Tyler Mayfield**

What does it mean to be “prophetic”? How do we live a “wise” life? This course introduces the historical, literary, and theological worlds of what is known in the Jewish tradition as the Latter Prophets and Writings.

The Old Testament/Hebrew Bible is a library of books that emerged out of historical situations and also purports to describe historical events; so, we engage the *historical perspective*. The Old Testament, however, is also a work of literature that can be studied for its literary form; so, we engage the *literary perspective*. Finally, the Old Testament/Tanakh has the status of Scripture for a variety of religious communities; so, we engage the *theological perspective*.

## **PC 3093 Ministries of Care and Counseling**

**Instructor: Rev. Carol Collier Harston, D.Min.**

This course is designed specifically for Master of Divinity students. Particular attention will be given to the theological and theoretical resources and skills useful for ministries of care in congregational settings.

The semester will integrate academic study, class discussion, personal reflection, and creative projects to develop new skills. With wisdom from the counseling and caregiving field, we will explore how ministries of care and counseling adapt in this season of a global pandemic, national division, racial reckoning, and ever-increasing dependence upon virtual ministry. Topics will include pastoral leadership, pastoral care ethics, lifespan and developmental issues, crises, chronic struggles, ritual resources, congregational networks and strategies, and trauma-informed care. Professional skills will also be developed for an entry level of practice in congregational settings.

**PC 3273 Gender, Race, and Class: Engaging Intersectionality (for M.Div. and MAR students)**

**Instructor: Kathryn House**

This course introduces students to intersectionality as an analytical tool for interrogating the significance of gender, race, and class as social identities as they operate within systems of power and privilege and ground a liberative approach to Christian theology and practice. We will interrogate ways that expressions of Christianity both shore up oppressive structures and relationships and can likewise enliven efforts to disrupt and dismantle sexism, racism, and classism in individual lives, interpersonal relationships, and communal contexts.

We will ground our study in the conceptual history of intersectionality, giving special attention to its origins and development by Black women across disciplines. We will also engage theoethical and practical theological projects utilizing intersectional frameworks, mapping the crucial roles of narrative, experience, embodiment, and justice in diverse contexts. Through activities honing critical and reflexive thinking, listening, and writing skills, students will articulate the complexities and urgencies of intersectional praxis within their own lives, traditions, and communities.

**SM 2021 Interspirituality and a Theology of Technology (1 credit hour; P/F)**

**Instructor: Anita Coleman**

This course provides a space to critically reflect on what the pandemic of COVID19 has revealed about being a global citizen located in a specific place and time dealing with information and communications technologies in our personal lives and ministries. Students will read an autobiography that integrates Christianity and Yogic Spirituality, learn of technological and theological movements, and practice attention, connection, and meditation activities using music and rich digital media. The goal is to increase our understanding of the ultimate reality, what it means to be human, and discover ethical guidance for future adoption and use of technology that reflects the Divine.

Required Textbook:

Russill Paul, *Jesus in the lotus: the mystical doorway between Christianity and yogic spirituality*. Novato, Ca; New World Library, 2009.

Library availability: (ebook) <https://lpts.on.worldcat.org/oclc/831625687>

Purchase: Many used copies on Amazon for under \$5! New Price is \$14.95.

Required Music:

Russill Paul. *Bhava (Ecstatic Heart)*. 2019. The Relaxation Company.

Purchase: MP3 on Amazon is \$9.49 and \$19.99 Audio CD

Free Streaming: Spotify | Apple | YouTube link:

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=OLAK5uy\\_k73Qjrzbeylg4MEbk2TROD0jZl5iao6dw](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=OLAK5uy_k73Qjrzbeylg4MEbk2TROD0jZl5iao6dw)

**SM 3003 Faith and Violence (Big Question course)****Instructors: Shannon Craigo-Snell and Amy Plantinga Pauw**

Violence is an inescapable dimension of our world, and so ministry must find ways to engage it. This course will examine war, domestic violence, and racial violence, with special attention to trauma. We will approach the problem of violence through a variety of genres, including fiction, therapeutic perspectives, and liturgy. We will look at Christian complicity in violence as well as resources in Christian traditions for responding to it.

**TH 3673 Political and Liberation Theologies****Instructor: Shannon Craigo-Snell**

This course examines influential political and liberation theologies including: Latin American liberation theology, Black theology, womanist theology, queer theology, and disability theology. We will read primary sources and discuss the texts in the manner of an advanced seminar.