

EASTERN MENNONITE SEMINARY &
THE CENTER FOR JUSTICE AND PEACEBUILDING
JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE BIBLICAL STORY

CTT 546 / PAX 688 ~ Fall 2022

Wednesdays 9:00 – 11:40 a.m.

Seminary 202

Course Instructors:

Office hours: Available by appt.

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EMS MISSION: Eastern Mennonite Seminary prepares people to serve and lead in a global context. In response to God's saving grace, we educate students to bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of God's Spirit as wise interpreters, mature practitioners, discerning communicators, and transformational leaders.

CJP MISSION: The Center for Justice and Peacebuilding educates a global community of peacebuilders through the integration of practice, theory and research.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The Bible has often been used to justify war and other forms of violence. The biblical story has also been read and interpreted as pertaining to only personal beliefs and behavior rather than communal concerns or social issues. The intent of this course is to explore the biblical story and what it says about issues of violence, justice, and peace. How are people who embrace the biblical story called to apply these understandings to their lives, personally and collectively? How have Christian communities around the world made use of the biblical story as a core component of their efforts to work for safety, emancipation, self-determination, and healing? How can we use biblical narratives in our work to build peace and justice within communities? As we examine these questions, we will center perspectives and traditions of reading the Bible birthed by people experiencing direct violence and oppression.

This course meets a core requirement for the faith-based peacebuilding certificate and is an elective for the MDiv and MAR degree programs. For the MACL degree program, it meets an advanced theological studies requirement or ministry specialization elective.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon successful completion of the course, our hope is that the student will be a:

Wise Interpreter who:

- Is able to explore and examine the various dimensions of peace and justice in the Bible, with special attention to how the Bible as a whole functions as a foundation for peacemaking and social justice;

- Articulate how Jesus Christ, along with his life and teachings, is foundational for peace, peacemaking, and social justice.

Mature Practitioner who:

- Is able to highlight and connect the biblical story and the way it portrays issues of violence, power, justice and peace with contemporary challenges and socio-political realities;
- Draws from historical and contemporary examples whereby particular people or communities who were informed and inspired by the Biblical story have worked for personal and social transformation;
- Embodies biblically informed and shaped practices within their communities in pursuit of social change.

Discerning Communicator who:

- Employs sacred stories to educate and train for social justice, conflict transformation, and restorative justice with a variety of participants and audiences.
- Demonstrates how peace and justice are essential features of God’s salvific and emancipatory work and mission in the world.

Transformational Leader who:

- Engages in formative practices for justice and peacebuilding rooted in the biblical story and its holistic mission and vision;
- Nourishes a conviction to witness to and work towards God’s peaceable kin(g)dom;
- Invites others into an examined life dedicated to justice and peacebuilding.

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:

I. Class Participation (20%)

Active engagement: Participate in class sessions, demonstrating thoughtful preparation for class.

Critical preparation: Develop a reading reflection for each class and complete any additional small activities assigned in preparation for various classes. For the reading reflection, choose at least one required text, and write a reflection that includes: at least three key insights or big ideas, at least two questions for discussion, and at least one connection or application to your own work and/or context. This can take many forms, including poetry, an image or diagram, and/or three or more paragraphs of prose. Post reflections to Moodle on Tuesdays by 11:59 p.m.

2. Personal Reflection (10%) - Due Sept. 28.

One of the objectives of the course is for students to be able to articulate a biblically informed vision of peace (or *shalom*) and justice. For this brief paper (1000 - 1500 words), you are asked to weigh, discern, and sort through your own perspectives, and those of others (including those whom we will read), in order to articulate your understanding of “gospel,” or God’s salvific activity and mission in the world. In focusing on the way we articulate such a vision the hope is that this vision will inform who we are and therefore what we do. It is also hoped that this reflection can cultivate the ability to clearly communicate such a vision for those providing leadership in the Church and other communities, organizations and in society-at-large.

3. Book Review X 2 (15% each) –

Book Review # due October 12; Book Review #2 due Nov. 9

Students can choose a book (preferably one that would feed focus on the subject of their final paper or project) and write a review of it. Each review needs to be between 1000 – 1250 words. Book reviews should summarize the overall argument of the book, and identify and explain key aspects of the author’s argument. You should also offer both a brief critical reflection of the text as well as a personal reflection of how it has shaped or is shaping you. A list of potential books to review will be provided. You will also be asked to present briefly on your book in class.

4. Final Paper or Project (40%) - Due December 14.

Option A: Write a paper that explores a specific topic that emerges from the course content. This paper needs to be 4000 - 4500 words in length.

Option B: Develop a robust workshop series, training guide, or collection of connected exercises and activities that uses one or more stories from the Bible to promote conflict transformation, restorative justice, social justice and/or trauma healing. Your written submission should be detailed enough that someone could facilitate it using your instructional guide. You must also provide a coherent statement on the development of your materials including an explanation of the choices you made, your intended participants/audience, and the process you used to create it.

Note: All assignments must use Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, and be double-spaced and submitted electronically through Turnitin via our Moodle page. Footnotes and bibliographies should follow the Chicago Manual of Style. You will receive additional verbal and written instructions on all required assignments in class and via Moodle.

BOOKS AND MATERIALS:

- Paul Virilio, *Pure War* (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2008).
- Perry Yoder, *Shalom: The Bible’s Word for Salvation, Justice and Peace* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997).
- John Dominic Crossan, *God & Empire* (New York, N.Y.: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007).
- Randy S. Woodley, *Shalom and the Community of Creation: An Indigenous Vision* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012).
- Osheta Moore, *Dear White Peacemakers: Dismantling Racism with Grit and Grace* (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2021).
- Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1992).
- Alexia Salvatierra and Peter Heltzel, *Faith-Rooted Organizing: Mobilizing the Church in Service to the World* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2014).
- Helder Don Camara, *Spiral of Violence* (London, UK: Sheed and Ward Pty Ltd., 1971).. (This will be made available via Moodle.)

Supplemental Text:

- William Herzog, *Parables as Subversive Speech: Jesus as Pedagogue of Liberation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994).

- R.S. Sugirtharajah (ed), *Voices from the Margins* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2016).

CLASS SCHEDULE: The course schedule will be provided via Moodle.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:

Class Attendance (for in-person and synchronous online courses):

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. If unusual or emergency circumstances prevent class attendance, the student should notify the professor in advance if possible. Multiple absences from class will result in lower grades. The student is responsible for the material presented in classes missed (from EMU Graduate Catalog). Students should be aware of the importance of regular class attendance, particularly in the case of classes that only meet once a week. Being absent for more than one class leads to a student missing a large portion of the class content. In addition to consistent class attendance, students should make every effort to arrive to class on time out of respect for the learning process, fellow students and faculty.

Online Learning, Technology Requirements and Communication (if joining a class by zoom):

The learning process requires presence and participation. This applies to classes taught online as well as in-person. To participate fully in online classes, students are expected to be engaged via Zoom during all normally scheduled class times, with camera turned on and microphone and keyboard available for class engagement when appropriate. Students should do the best they can, given their particular situation, to create an environment that will foster learning. Students should not be working or driving during scheduled class times. If students are not actively engaged in class discussions or responding to a professor's question, the professor may inform students that they have been marked absent for the class period, regardless whether they were "logged into" the class. As with in-person classes, students are invited to be fully present in the online environment.

Communication will largely be accomplished via the Moodle platform utilized by EMU and your EMU email. Check both frequently during the semester. Zoom will be used for synchronous online course sessions. Please review these [best practices](#) for online classes!

Writing Guidelines:

Writing will be a factor in evaluation: EMU has adopted a set of [writing guidelines](#) for graduate programs that include six sets of criteria: content, structure, rhetoric & style, information literacy, source integrity, and conventions (see page 9). It is expected that graduates will be able to write at least a "good" level with 60% writing at an "excellent" level.

Academic Accountability & Integrity:

EMU faculty and staff care about the integrity of their own work and the work of their students. They create assignments that promote interpretative thinking and work intentionally with students during the learning process. Honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility are characteristics of a community that is active in loving mercy and doing justice. EMU defines plagiarism as occurring when a person presents as one's own someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source (Adapted from the Council of Writing Program Administrators). This course will apply [EMU's Academic Accountability Policy](#) to any events of academic dishonesty.

Turnitin:

Students are accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. You should be familiar with EMU's Academic Integrity Policy (see link above) in order to meet the academic expectations concerning appropriate documentation of sources. In addition, EMU is using [Turnitin](#), a learning tool and plagiarism prevention system. In this class you will be asked to submit your papers to Turnitin from Moodle.

Moodle:

[Moodle](#) is the online learning platform that EMU has chosen to provide to faculty, administrators and students. Students will have access to course information within Moodle for any class they are registered for in a given term. The amount of time a student has access to information before and after the class is somewhat dependent on the access given to students by the individual faculty member. However, please note that courses are not in Moodle permanently – after two years the class will no longer be accessible. Please be sure to download resources from Moodle that you wish to have ongoing access to.

Graduate & Professional Studies Writing Center:

Please utilize the [writing program](#). They offer free individual sessions with a graduate student writing coach. Please visit the website to schedule an appointment.

Institutional Review Board (IRB):

All research conducted by or on EMU faculty, staff or students must be reviewed by the [Institutional Review Board](#) to assure participant safety.

Grading Scale & Feedback:

In most courses grades will be based on an accumulation of numerical points that will be converted to a letter grade at the end of the course (several CJP courses are graded pass/fail). Assignments will receive a score expressed as a fraction, with the points received over the total points possible (e.g. 18/20). The following is the basic scale used for evaluation. *Points may be subtracted for missed deadlines.*

94-100 = A outstanding	90-93 = A- excellent	87-89 = B+ very good
83-86 = B good	80-82 = B- satisfactory	77-79 = C+ passing
73-76 = C	70-72 = C- unsatisfactory	Below 70 = F failing

Graduate students are expected to earn A's & B's. A GPA of 3.0 for MA students and 2.75 for GC students is the minimum requirement for graduation.

Regarding feedback on papers/projects: Students can expect to receive papers/assignments back in a class with faculty feedback before the next paper/assignment is due. This commitment from faculty assumes that the student has turned the paper in on the agreed upon due date.

Library

The [Hartzler Library](#) offers research support (via e-mail, chat, phone, or SSC campus) and the library home page offers subject guides to help start your research. The library can help

you acquire resources not held by EMU through the Interlibrary Loan (ILL) system. The link to ILL is on the left side of the library homepage.

Office of Academic Access:

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your work in this course, it is your responsibility to contact the [Office of Academic Access](#). They will work with you to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. All information and documentation is treated confidentially.

Religious Holidays

EMU respects the diversity of religious holidays and wishes to provide reasonable accommodations for students who may be unable to fully participate in class, lab, exams, or other assignments due to observation of a significant religious holiday. Students should provide adequate notice (a week in advance) to the faculty of such requests.

Student Health & COVID-19

As Eastern Mennonite University monitors the emerging variants of Covid, students who are attending classes *in-person* must adhere to the university's protocol in regard to the pandemic. Students can find more information about EMU's current and past pandemic protocols at <https://emu.edu/coronavirus/>. You will also receive emails from university as decisions involving student wellbeing and safety in relation to the virus are made. Please note that during the school year, EMU Health Services is open and available for in-person full-time students to seek medical advice and treatment (and part-time students who choose to fill out the health form in order to access services). To learn more about the services available, and how to schedule an appointment, go to <https://emu.edu/studentlife/health/>.

Classroom Culture & Related Policies

EMU's [Life Together](#) statement describes the sort of learning community that we aspire to be. Learning thrives where there is free and open exchange of ideas, thoughts, emotions, and convictions. Open discourse requires trust and safety. While I anticipate that you may find that some aspects of the class challenge your views and theoretical frameworks, I invite you to respectfully express either agreement or disagreement without fear of consequences. If you feel that I am violating this commitment, please make an appointment to meet outside of class so that we can discuss the issue.

I hope we can welcome differences and demonstrate a willingness to analyze issues from frameworks that may or may not feel comfortable. I have opinions, which I may express from time to time. Please be sensitive in your class participation by not unfairly dominating discussions. Be aware of others' right to speak and welcome questions from your classmates. My goal is to create a brave space in which everyone learns to participate in scholarly dialogue that values listening, thinking, feeling, study, and professionalism. (*Adapted from Margaret Sallee and Kathryn Roulston*)

1. Our primary commitment is to learn from each other. We will listen to each other and not talk at each other. We welcome differences amongst us in backgrounds, skills, interests,

and values. We realize that it is these very differences that will increase our awareness and understanding through this process.

2. We will trust that people are always doing the best they can.
3. Challenge the idea and not the person. We debate ideas, not the individual sharing this idea or practice.
4. Each of us will strive to speak our discomfort. When something is bothering you, please practice sharing this with the group. Often our emotional reactions offer valuable learning opportunities.
5. Step Up, Step Back. Be mindful of taking up much more space than others. On the same note, empower yourself to speak up when others are dominating the conversation.
6. Stay engaged. When overwhelmed or stressed, it can be tempting to slip away from the class or group while meeting. Let us honor one another with focused connection. When we catch ourselves disengaging, let us gently refocus on the tasks at hand.

Course Extensions and Outstanding Grades:

For fall and spring semesters, all coursework is due by the end of the semester. If a student will not be able to complete a course on time, the student must submit a request for an extension. In consultation with the student's Academic Advisor and the Academic Program Coordinator, the student and the professor can negotiate a reasonable timeline to finalize the course requirements. If the request is granted the student will receive an "I" (incomplete) for the course which will later be replaced by a final grade when the work has been turned in on the agreed upon date. If the request for an extension is denied, the student will receive a grade for the work that has been completed up until the time the course was expected to have been completed. If no work has been submitted, the final grade will be an F (or W under unusual circumstances and with permission of the Program Director). Extensions will be given only for legitimate and unusual situations. Extensions are contracted by the student with the program for up to a maximum of 6 months after the deadline for the course work. *PLEASE NOTE: Grades for coursework submitted late may be reduced at the instructor's discretion and in line with their course policy on turning in coursework after the due date. If the extension deadline is not met, the instructor will submit the final grade based on what has been received to date.*

Inclusive, Community-Creating Language Policy:

Eastern Mennonite University expects all its faculty, staff, and students to adopt [inclusive written and spoken language](#) that welcomes everyone regardless of race or ethnicity, gender, disabilities, age, and sexual orientation. We will use respectful and welcoming language in all our official departmental documents and correspondence, including those put forth by way of Internet communication, and throughout all academic coursework, inclusive of classroom presentations and conversations, course syllabi, and both written and oral student assessment materials.

As an inclusive community, we strive to sustain safety and belonging for students of all gender and sexual identities expressed in the [LGBTQIA+ Student Support Policy](#).

Bias Response:

Bias incidents are harmful to the EMU community and/or individuals within the EMU community. Bias can be intentional or unintentional and may be directed toward an individual or group. A bias incident may take the form of a verbal interaction, cyber-interaction, physical

interaction, or interaction with property. Bias reporting is a resource for anyone who needs to communicate an incident or explore a better understanding around issues of discrimination and learning how to effectively respond. All members of the university community are encouraged to [report](#) incidents of bias.

Title IX:

The following policy applies to any incidents that occur (on or off campus or online) while you are a student registered at EMU. It does not apply if you are talking about incidents that happened prior your enrollment at EMU. It is important for you to know that all faculty and staff members are required to report known or alleged incidents of sexual violence (including sexual assault, domestic/relationship violence, stalking). That means that faculty and staff members cannot keep information about sexual violence confidential if you share that information with them. For example, if you inform a faculty or staff member of an issue of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or discrimination they will keep the information as private as they can, but is required to bring it to the attention of the institution's [Title IX Coordinator](#). You can also report incidents or complaints through the [online portal](#). You may report, confidentially, incidents of sexual violence if you speak to Counseling Services counselors, Campus Ministries' pastors, or Health Services personnel providing clinical care. These individuals, as well as the Title IX Coordinator, can provide you with information on both internal & external support resources.

Academic Program Policies:

For EMU graduate program policies and more CJP-specific graduate program policies, please see the complete [Graduate Catalog](#).