Course Objectives: The purpose of this course is 1) to teach integrative modes of learning about ministry, vocation, pastoral identity, and communal practice and 2) to reinforce the values of collegiality and of peer learning for future work in ministry.

The focus of integrative study this semester will be the interconnectedness of God’s creation. Through readings and discussion we will examine racism/antiracism, including white power and privilege, poverty, classism, war, multiculturalism and “radical welcome.” We will examine these issues from historical, biblical, theological-ethical, and socio-political perspectives, considering the implications for congregational life. But the central objectives are to become an inclusive community and to learn how to create one.

Course Policies: Regular attendance is expected, and you are reminded that CTS has a policy that stipulates missing more than 25% of class time will automatically result in a failing grade. While genuine emergencies and significant illnesses will be treated with compassion, you should make this class a priority throughout the semester. Please contact the instructor as soon as you know that you will be absent in order to make arrangements to make up the work that you miss. Excessive absences will result in a lower, or even failing, grade.

Plagiarism is a serious offense. You are expected to be familiar with and to abide by the seminary’s policy on plagiarism and cheating. If you have any questions about when and how to cite sources, please see the instructor. The front desk of CTS library and your student planner have helpful materials.

Free and open discussion is essential to the educational process. You are expected to treat one another in a respectful manner, especially when you disagree. You are also expected to maintain confidentiality with regard to in-class discussions. If you want to reflect with others who are not members of our class on issues that come up in class, please do so in a way that does not identify specific individuals.

Textbooks:
ThoughtfulChristian.com, Anti-Racism Study Pack (selected articles).
These and other resources will be placed on reserve in the CTS Library.

Process
This class will be primarily a discussion, reflection, and processing experience. We will critically engage materials about how humans interact in and with God’s good creation as the skeleton on which to flesh out the body of a community. You will be expected to bring your reflections on your papers and on the readings as your primary contribution to the conversation.
If cost of books or the library schedule prohibits your full participation, please see me.
Grading
Although ungraded, the 1 page reflection papers are required. They will assist your class
discussion. As such, they will count for 25% of the final grade (thus if you have them all
as assigned, you earn 25% of an A grade).

Class discussion and participation will count for 50% of the final grade (balanced
between being prepared [having read the material], being willing to be self-disclosing and
open to new ideas, encouraging the conversation of your peers, and supporting a
learning environment.

The class presentation on Session 9 will count for 25% of your final grade.

Course Outline (with reading assignments):

Session 1 (Jan. 20)
Getting acquainted. Introduction to peer learning and the interconnectedness of all
creation. Discussion of ground rules for conversation and confidentiality (ROPES
handout). Discussion of Cultural Identity Exercise.

Assignment for Session 2: Read Peggy McIntosh, “Invisible Knapsack,”
“Why Is It So Difficult to Talk about Race?” and “White Privilege” (Anti-
Racism Study Pack)

Session 2 (Jan. 27)
Small group discussion on white privilege. Where do you see it in our society, in our
churches, and in the seminary? Clarify – can you identify theological claims?

Assignment for Session 3: Read 4 articles on “A History of Racism in the
United States” (Anti-Racism Study Pack). Bring one page of reflections on
what in particular caught your attention in these articles—what questions
and concerns do they raise for you? As noted above, these reflections are not
graded, but you must bring something.

Session 3 (Feb 3)
Discussion of racism in the U.S. We’ll use your papers as conversation starters.

Assignment for Session 4: Read De La Torre (DLT), p 3-21. Bring approx. 1
page of questions/ideas about goodness and evil.

Session 4 (Feb. 10)
Thinking about sin and evil. Share ideas from your papers. Group conversation about the
church – does it seem a mix of goodness and evil? How so or how not? Consider white
privilege in the mix.

Assignment for Session 5: Read DLT, chapter 2 (22-56) and chapter 3 (57-69)

Session 5 (Feb. 17)
Group conversation linking ethical ideas and peer learning. What good are peers?

Assignment for session 6: DLT, chapter 4 (73-83 [intro to global relations]).
Bring 1 page noting what new information or thoughts this chapter
stimulated.
Session 6 (Feb. 24)
Discussion on interconnectedness of creation, global relations, and our congregations. Share information and thoughts from DLT. What about the hermeneutical circle? Before leaving, choose a partner for project: choose one area to present to rest of group in 3 weeks, from DLT (chapter 7, 9, 11, 13 or 14)

Assignment for session 7: DLT, chapter 5 (84-100 [poverty]) and 6 (101-121 [war]).

Session 7 (Mar. 3)
Group conversation on interrelatedness of racism, white privilege, poverty, war, and our congregations. Where will you find challenge, support, and companionship in future ministry as you continue to wrestle with these ideas?

Assignment for session 8: Read DLT, pages 143-147 and 203-206 (everyone read); And prepare (with your partner) to present chapter 7, 9, 11, 13 or 14 in DLT to the larger group.

Reading Week (Mar. 10) – no class

Session 8 (Mar. 17)
First pairs teach the others about their chapter. As a group, decide which unchosen chapter to read for session 10.

Session 9 (Mar. 24)
Concluding pair teaches others about their chapter. Discuss the importance of these ideas.

Assignment for Session 10: Read chapter in DLT chosen by class and write one page of reflections on implications for your ministry.

Session 10 (Mar. 31)
Share your thoughts about the different topics. Group discussion on implications these ideas have for your ministry. How will you continue to think about ethical ideas with peers? Can you recall a time the light of the Gospel was cast on a situation of racism, white privilege, poverty, war, or ecological abuse in your church? How might you facilitate such an event in the future?

Assignment for session 11: Review “Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist, Multicultural Institution” and apply to your congregation.

Session 11 (Apr. 7)
Each student: Describe your congregation/denomination. What do we need to know in order to better understand your religious organizational and spiritual life? Discuss and categorize where your congregation is in relation to anti-racism.


Session 12 (Apr. 14)
Group discussion of the new ideas and thoughts about liturgy and white privilege. Talk about the relationship of congregational life and the interconnectedness of all creation.
Holy Week, Easter Recess (Apr. 21) – no class

Session 13 (Apr. 28)
Our final class may meet in a restaurant for dinner, where conversation may revolve around your future ministries. What concrete ideas have stirred in you through this class? How can you keep connected to your peers for support and challenge? In light of our learnings about the interconnectedness of all creation, can you see ways your congregation has positively and negatively affected others (intentionally or not)? How might peer learning experiences be put to use there?

Final exam week (May 5)