

**CANADIAN SCHOOL OF PEACEBUILDING**  
**CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY**

**Colonial and Decolonial Theology: Thought and Practice**

PCTS/ BTS-5990C/3

**SESSION I: JUNE 23-27, 2014**

**Course Syllabus**

**INSTRUCTOR: Terry LeBlanc, PhD**  
**TIMES: JUNE 23-27, 2014, 9am-5pm**  
**E-MAIL: [terry@naiits.com](mailto:terry@naiits.com)**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Whether in the use of neo-Marxist critical method, the in-situ inculcation of mainline protestant liturgies, or the uncritical embrace of conservative fundamentalism, colonial imprints lie heavy on Indigenous “Christian” praxis and theology in North America. These imprints are a result of theologies constructed within specific philosophical and biblical frameworks historic to European Christian faith. Using several Indigenous teaching paradigms, this course will examine these philosophical and biblical foundations, asking whether a different Indigenous theology and praxis of faith in the person, work, life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus might emerge if other foundations were to be set in place.

*The course is offered either for training or for 3 hours of academic credit.*

**CORE TEXTS (Student must order these online, ahead of time):**

Costello, Damian. *Black Elk: Colonialism and Lakota Catholicism*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2005.

Heinrichs, Steve. *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry: Conversations on Creation, Land Justice, and Life Together*. Waterloo, Ontario; Harrisonburg, Virginia ;: Herald Press, 2013.

Kwok, Pui-lan. *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*. 1st ed. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.

Tinker, George E. *Spirit and Resistance: Political Theology and American Indian Liberation*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.

Wallace, Mark I. *Finding God in the Singing River: Christianity, Spirit, Nature*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005.

(All books are available on Amazon.ca or .com)

**NOTE: The Student will read Costello, Heinrichs, Kwok, and one of either Tinker or Wallace.** Please note that the student is expected to read the materials above in advance/during the week of class so as to contribute effectively to the discussion in class. The instructor will not read the materials during class time.

**In addition to the core texts, selected readings for class discussion and completion of the 4Mat assignments will be provided during class from the following sources:**

Aparecida, Vilaça and Robin M. Wright, ed. *Native Christians: Modes and Effects of Christianity among Indigenous Peoples of the Americas*. Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009.

Balia, Daryl M. and Kirsteen Kim. *Witnessing to Christ Today* Edinburgh 2010 Series. Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2010.

Jolly, Joseph. *Give Christ the Freedom to Build His Native Church*. Microform. Ottawa: National Library of Canada = Bibliothèque nationale du Canada,, 2003.

Kim, Kirsteen and Andrew Anderson. *Edinburgh 2010: Mission Today and Tomorrow* Regnum Edinburgh 2010 Series. Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2011.

Pachauu, Lalsangkima and Knud Jørgensen. *Witnessing to Christ in a Pluralistic World: Christian Mission among Other Faiths* Regnum Edinburgh 2010 Series. Oxford: Regnum, 2011.

*The Journal of the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies*, Vol 11, 2014

Twiss, Richard. *One Church, Many Tribes*. Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 2000.

Woodley, Randy. *Shalom and the Community of Creation: An Indigenous Vision* Prophetic Christianity. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2012.

(Should the student so desire, these materials can also be purchased and/or accessed online)

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES** (for credit)

The following are the general outlines of requirements for those taking the class for credit. Others are encouraged to read as much as possible, however, in order to receive maximum benefit from the course. Assignments can be submitted in person during the course or via email to the instructor, [silentdrums@mymts.net](mailto:silentdrums@mymts.net).

ASSIGNMENTS

DUE DATE

VALUE

Critical Book Review (Costello or Tinker)	June 23	20%
4Mats (3 @ 5%)	June 25, 26, 27	15%
Class Participation	June 23-27	20%
Topic Presentation	June 27	10%
Research Paper	August 8	35%

**ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES** (for credit)

1. **Critical Book Review, Costello or Tinker** **Due: Monday, June 23**

The assignment is to be 7-9 pages double-spaced, focusing on presenting, interacting with, and appraising the validity of the author’s assertions concerning the nature of Black Elk’s embrace of Catholic Christianity. The article is expected to be engaging of the material and the author’s discussion but not argumentative.

2. **4Mat – Article #1** **Due: Tuesday, June 24, class start**

3. **4Mat – Article #2** **Due: Wednesday, June 25, class start**

4. **4Mat – Article #3** **Due: Thursday, June 26, class start**

4Mats are 2 pages each and are to be completed as per the instructions attached with this syllabus. Please take careful note of the instructions and remember that the first page of the 4Mat is expected to be a summarization, and not interaction with what the author is saying. The 4Mat “Reflection expressed in Questions” section will be used to add fuel our conversations in class so you are expected to take this seriously.

6. **Topic Presentation** **Due: June 27 in class**

Options:

- 1) A theological study of a particular Indigenous people group within North America between 1850 and 2000 focusing on colonial influence in the formation of contemporary religious identity.
- 2) A brief biography of an Indigenous person who contributed significantly to the embrace of or resistance to Christianity among their people group between 1800 and 2000. What were her or his influences in shaping the contemporary experiences with respect to that people group?
- 3) A survey of contemporary efforts re: Indigenous decolonization in respect of theological and religious perspective and praxis of “spirituality.”
- 4) An overview of the variation within and across Indigenous people groups in present-day North America, focusing on current theological/religious understandings and presuppositions.

- 5) An analysis of the impact of Christian theology and praxis within a specific people group during the 20<sup>th</sup> century with respect to community health and well being, examining both positive and negative outcomes.

**6. Research Paper**

**Due: August 8 by midnight**

Select a topic from among the five options above. Your research paper should then seek to address the topic by asking questions focused through: an hypothesis that the situation either was or was not a colonial one; what Christian theology and praxis contributed to and/or had the net effect of eliminating from Indigenous people and their communities in this setting; the mechanisms obvious within the Indigenous context (cultural, social, and spiritual) that enabled the Indigenous people to cope with Euro-centric Christianizing pressures they experienced; what you discover concerning the theological reflection and concomitant praxis of Indigenous peoples during the period and circumstance in question.

The paper should be 18 to 20 pages in length – with the appropriate use of references and notes to identify sources quoted.

## STYLISTIC REQUIREMENTS

CMU has adopted the following as its standard guide for all academic writing:

Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual*. Fifth edition. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009.

The final paper should follow an accepted academic format for citations, bibliography, etc. (e.g. APA, Chicago). You may choose the format but whichever you use, be sure to use it properly and consistently.

## EVALUATION

In general, I expect you to *follow the guidelines* of the assignment and to discuss deviations from them with me before turning it in. In evaluating your work, *quality* is more important than quantity. I appreciate creativity, clear expression of ideas, evidence of engagement with the reading and class sessions, and projects that are of real interest and value to you.

In your papers, be sure to avoid any form of *plagiarism*. If you have doubts about what is appropriate, a useful website is <http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/>. Plagiarism is a serious issue and will result in grade reduction or action by the university (see university policy on this).

Good communication skills are essential for justice and peacebuilding work. Students will be expected to communicate knowledgeably, clearly, effectively, concisely and persuasively. All written work should be well informed, well organized and well documented.

Each completed assignment will be given a numerical grade (according to its value toward the final grade) and the corresponding letter grade. The final mark for each student is determined by the sum total of all numerical grades, which is then assigned a letter grade according to the scale below.

## LETTER GRADE/PERCENTAGE SCALE

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Points	Descriptor
A+	95-100	4.5	Exceptional
A	88-94	4	Excellent
B+	81-87	3.5	Very Good
B	74-80	3	Good
C+	67-73	2.5	Satisfactory
C	60-67	2	Adequate
D	50-59	1	Marginal
F	0-49		Failure

<u>Criteria</u>	A - Excellent	B - Competent	C - Below Expectations
<b>CONTENT</b> (quality of the information/ideas and sources/details used to support them)	- has clarity of purpose - has depth of content - displays insight or originality of thought -demonstrates quality and breadth of resources	- has clarity of purpose - has substantial information and sufficient support - contains some originality of thought -uses quality resources	- has clarity of purpose -lacks depth of content and may depend on generalities or the commonplace - has little originality of thought -uses mostly quality resources
<b>STRUCTURE</b> (logical order or sequence of the writing)	- is coherent and logically developed -uses very effective transitions	- is coherent and logically developed -uses smooth transitions	- is coherent and logically (but not fully) developed -has some awkward transitions
<b>CONVENTIONS</b> (appearance of the writing: sentence structure, usage, mechanics, documentation)	- has virtually no errors of conventions	- has minimal errors of conventions	- is understandable <u>but</u> has noticeable problems of sentence structure, usage, mechanics or documentation

<b>STYLE</b> (personality of the writing: word choice, sentence variety, voice, attention to audience)	<b>- is concise, eloquent and rhetorically effective</b> <b>-has nicely varied sentence structure</b> <b>-is engaging throughout and enjoyable to read</b>	<b>- displays concern for careful expression</b> <b>-has some variation in sentence structure</b> <b>-is generally enjoyable to read</b>	<b>- has some personality <u>but</u> lacks imagination and may be stilted and may rely on clichés</b> <b>-has little variation in sentence structure</b> <b>-is not very interesting to read</b>
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**NOTE:** The *CMU Student Handbook* is a useful guide for further information on CMU policies regarding grades, academic misconduct, and appeals. Grades are not final until vetted and approved by the Dean’s Office.

## FINAL DATE FOR WITHDRAWAL

Final date to withdraw from this course without academic penalty is July 15, 2014.

## SCHEDULE AND TOPICS & Readings List – Draft – Subject to change

DAY	THEMES	TIME
1	<b>Introduction</b> <b>Student &amp; Instructor Introductions</b> <b>Introduction to Course Outline</b> <b>Review of Syllabus / Course Assignments</b>  <b>Definitions and Framework for the Course</b>	Morning
1	<b>Approaches to European theology and praxis</b> <b>Historical concepts/constructs</b> <b>Contemporary setting</b> <b>Colonial and non-colonial concepts/constructs</b>	Afternoon
2	<b>Colonial Thought</b> <b>Shaping Influences</b> <b>Framing Values</b> <b>Major Themes</b>	Morning
	<b>Indigenous North America</b> <b>Definitions and Religious Frameworks - contact</b> <b>Roots of Faith and Theology</b>	Afternoon

2	<b><i>First in-course 4Mat assignment</i></b> Aparecida, Vilaça and Robin M. Wright (TBD)	
3	<b>Chronology of Decolonization Contemporary Setting Euro-centric foci</b>	Morning
3	<b>Indigenous Perspectives “Theologies” and Values Emerging Indigenous Theologies</b> <b><i>Second in-course 4Mat assignment</i></b> Woodley, “Shalom and the Community...” OR Twiss, “Rescuing Theology...” (TBD)	
4	<b>Christianity in Dialogue with Indigenous Thought Theological Differences and Similarities Framing Philosophies</b>	
4	<b>Indigenous Perspectives Indigeneity and Colonialism Change Facilitation</b> <b><i>Third in-course 4Mat assignment</i></b> Aldred, “The Resurrection of Story...” OR Jolly, “Give Christ the Freedom...” (TBD)	
5	<b>Topic Presentations/Discussion</b>	

Note: Coffee Breaks are normally 10:30-11:00 am and 3:30-4 pm.