

FORGIVENESS & MORAL REPAIR

Fall 2015 Syllabus



*He (she) who is devoid of the power to forgive,
is devoid of the power to love.*

-- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Without forgiveness, there really is no future.

-- Bishop Desmond Tutu

For me, forgiveness and compassion

are always linked:

How do we hold people

accountable

for wrongdoing

and yet

at the same time

remain

in touch

with their humanity

enough

to believe

in their capacity

to be

transformed?

-- bell hooks

Course Description: In this semester-long, on-line, three-unit class we will meet people from all over the world, from a variety of religious and cultural traditions, who have practiced forgiveness as a means of healing, peace and liberation. Through readings, films, and spiritual practice exercises we will develop interpersonal and pastoral skills in forgiveness. We will work on strengthening our "forgiveness muscles" and support others in doing so as well. We will also explore moral repair: how we individually and collectively might apologize, repent and atone after wrong-doing. This class will be experiential, drawing on personal narratives, neuroscience, psychology, practical theology and the wisdom and practices of Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism.

Course Requirements:

- Students are expected to participate in class, on-line, weekly.
- They will need to engage with the texts related to that week's theme, writing at least 1-2 posts and commenting on a classmate's post.
- They will also be asked to do one practice exercise and comment on at least one classmate's practice post each week.
- Students will be expected to post reflections on 4 of the suggested books or 8 of the suggested films or some combination thereof to deepen their understanding and practice of forgiveness and moral repair.
- Finally, students will be expected to submit a written and/or creative project by the end of the semester on some facet of forgiveness and/or moral repair. This may include:
 - *** An account of how they have incorporated forgiveness and/or repentance into their regular spiritual practice.
 - *** A sermon , worship service or class they have conducted on forgiveness and/or moral repair.
 - *** A reflection on steps toward forgiveness and/or repentance they have taken on a particular issue in their lives.

*** An in-depth comparison of at least two faith traditions' approach to a particular issue related to forgiveness and/or moral repair.

••• An in-depth exploration of one of the topics raised in class, using a multi-religious and counter-oppressive lens (e.g, child abuse in the church, forgiveness at the end of life, police shootings, etc.).

Students will be asked to name the kind of project they will be working on by Reading Week.

Course Objectives: By the end of Fall semester, students will be able to: (1) demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the power, complexity and limitations of forgiveness; (2) explain how grievance stories are created and how they can be dismantled; (3) identify similarities and differences in the ways various religious traditions approach forgiveness, repentance, repair and atonement; (4) reflect on their personal practice and struggles with forgiveness and repentance; and (5) listen and support others in their journeys toward forgiveness and moral repair.

Course Instructor: The class will be taught by Rev. Christine Fry, an ordained Unitarian Universalist minister. Chris has been teaching at Starr King for the Ministry for over twelve years offering classes on Forgiveness; Spiritual Practices for These Times; Illness, Health & Healing. She lives in Davis, California with her husband, Isao Fujimoto, a retired UC Davis professor and long-time community activist. Their daughter - Esumi - was born during Chris' second year at Starr King School for the Ministry and is now living in New York City and working as a nurse at NYU Medical Center.

Office Hours: Chris will be available to meet with students individually through email, phone, skype and, on occasion, in person. Please email Chris (revcfry@aol.com) ahead of time to schedule a meeting.



Fall 2015 Calendar

September 8 - 13, 2015

THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

September 14 - 20, 2015

GRIEVANCE STORIES

Week Three: September 21 - 27, 2015

AMISH GRACE

Week Four: September 28 – October 4, 2015

GETTING READY TO FORGIVE . . . MAYBE

Week Five: October 5 – October 11, 2015

FAMILY FEUDS & BETRAYALS

Week Six: October 12 – 18, 2015

WHEN A CHILD IS HURT

Week Seven: October 19 – 25, 2015

REPENTANCE & THE LANGUAGE OF APOLOGY

Week Eight: October 26 – November 1, 2015

READING WEEK

Week Nine: November 2 – 8, 2015

THE SUNFLOWER

Week Ten: November 9 – 15, 2015

RONALD COTTON & THE INNOCENCE PROJECT

Week Eleven: November 16 – 22, 2015

RACISM & FORGIVENESS

Week Twelve: November 30 – December 6, 2015

RECONCILIATION

Week Thirteen: December 7 – 13, 2015

AGING, FORGIVENESS & THE END OF LIFE

Week Fourteen: December 14 – 20, 2015

REFLECTING ON WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED SO FAR

SUGGESTED BOOKS & FILMS

Please Note: You only need to read 4 of these books or watch 8 of these films or some combination thereof over the course of the semester!

Films that are available through Netflix are marked NF-S (for streaming) and NF-D (for DVD). Films available through Amazon Instant are marked API. Films that can be loaned from the instructor are marked CF.

Books listed can usually be obtained through a library or at prices lower than listed at Amazon. Some may also be loaned from the instructor.

THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS (September 8-13,2015)

Suggested Books:

Michael Henderson, *No Enemy to Conquer: Forgiveness in an Unforgiving World* (2009), \$14.48. ISBN-10: 1602581401

Marina Cantacuzino & Archbishop Desmond Tutu, *The Forgiveness Project: Stories for a Vengeful Age* (2015), \$15.18. ISBN-10: 1849055666

Azim Khamisa, *From Murder to Forgiveness: A Father's Journey* (2012), \$13.82. ISBN-10: 1452542937

Class Film (required): "The Power of Forgiveness" by Martin Doblmeier

GRIEVANCE STORIES (September 14-20, 2015)

Suggested Book:

Fred Luskin, Forgive for Good (2003), \$10.59. ISBN-10: 006251721X

Jeffrie Murphy, Getting Even: Forgiveness & Its Limits (2004), \$19.50. ISBN-10: 0195178556

Suggested Films:

"Les Miserables" by Bille August (NF-DVD, API)

"The Spit-Fire Grill" by Lee David Zlotoff (API)

"In a Better World" with Mikael Persbrandt (API)

AMISH GRACE (September 21-27, 2015)

Suggested Book:

Donald Kraybill, Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy, (2010), \$14.79. ISBN-10: 0470344040

Suggested Film:

"Amish Grace" by Gregg Champion (API)

GETTING READY TO FORGIVE . . . MAYBE (September 28 – October 4, 2015)

Suggested Book:

Fred Luskin, Forgive for Good (2003), \$10.59. ISBN-10: 006251721X

Suggested Films:

"An Unfinished Life" with Robert Redford and Morgan Freeman (NF-DVD, API)

"Journey Toward Forgiveness," documentary including segments on Oklahoma City Bombing and Hospice (API)

FAMILY FEUDS & BETRAYALS (October 5 – 11, 2015)

Suggested Books:

Sue Thompson, The Prodigal Brother: Making Peace with Your Parents, Your Past and the Wayward One in Your Family (2010), \$13.25). ISBN-10: 1449700535

Louise De Salvo, Crazy in the Kitchen: Food, Feuds and Forgiveness in an Italian American Family (2004), \$4.94. ISBN-10: 1582342989

Janis Abrahms Spring, After the Affair: Healing the Pain & Rebuilding Trust When a Partner Has Been Unfaithful (2012), \$10.43. ISBN-10: 0062122704

Suggested Films:

"Around the Bend" with Michael Caine (API)

"Redwoods" with David Lewis (API)

"The Descendants" with George Clooney (NF-DVD, API)

WHEN A CHILD IS HURT (October 12 – 18, 2015)

Suggested Books:

Nancy Richards, Heal & Forgive: Forgiveness in the Face of Abuse (2005), \$8.20. ASIN: B00D5R5E8S

Marie Fortune and Joretta Marshall, Forgiveness & Abuse: Jewish and Christian Reflections (2013), \$20.00. ISBN-10: 0307276538

Martin Moran, The Tricky Part: A Boy's Story of Sexual Trespass, A Man's Journey to Forgiveness (2006), \$14.19. ISBN-10: 0307276538

Suggested Films:

"Antwone Fisher" with Denzel Washington(API)

"Priest" by Antonia Bird (NF-S)

"Ultimate Betrayal" with Marlo Thomas(API)

REPENTANCE & THE LANGUAGE OF APOLOGY (October 19-25, 2015)

Suggested Books:

Louis Newman, Repentance: The Meaning and Practice of Teshuvah (2014), \$22.84. ISBN-10: 1459669622

Gary Chapman and Jennifer Thomas, The Five Languages of Apology (2006), \$1.97), ISBN-10: 1881273571

Rabbi Rami Shapiro, Recovery – The Sacred Art: The 12 Steps as Spiritual Practice (2009), \$4.81. ISBN-10: 15944732590

Suggested Films:

"The Kite Runner" with Khalid Abdalla (NF-S, API)

"The Widow of St. Pierre" by Patrice Leconte (NF-S, API)

"28 Days" with Sandra Bullock (API)

"Acts of Worship" with Ana Reeder (API)

READING WEEK (October 26 – November 1, 2015)

THE SUNFLOWER (November 2-8, 2015)

Suggested Books:

Simon Wiesenthal, The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness (1998), \$2.36. ISBN-10: 0805210601

Solomon Schimmel, Wounds Not Healed by Time: The Power of Repentance and Forgiveness (2004), \$8.12. ISBN-10: 019517612X

Suggested Films:

“I Have Never Forgotten You: The Life & Legacy of Simon Wiesenthal” (API)

“Forgiving Dr. Mengele: The Eva Kors Story” directed by Cheri Pugh (NF-S)

RONALD COTTON & THE INNOCENCE PROJECT (November 9-15, 2015)

Suggested Book:

Jennifer Thompson-Cannino and Ronald Cotton, Picking Cotton: Our Memoir of Injustice and Redemption (2009), \$14.25. ISBN-10: 9780312599539

John Grisham, The Innocent Man (true story, non-fiction, 2006), \$8.62. ISBN-10: 0345532015

Suggested Films:

“After Innocence” with Ronald Cotton et. al. (2005), \$24.97.
ASIN: B000KJV1E6 (or through CF)

RACISM & FORGIVENESS (NOVEMBER 16-22, 2015)

Suggested Books:

Patricia Raybon, My First White Friend: Confessions on Race, Love, and Forgiveness (1997), \$13.50. ISBN-10: 0140244360

Ellis Cose, Bone to Pick: Of Forgiveness, Reconciliation, Reparation and Revenge (2005), \$12.34. ISBN-10: 0743470672

Martin Luther King, Jr., Strength to Love (2010), \$15.47. ISBN-10: 0800697405

Suggested Films:

“Banished” directed by Marco Williams (2008), \$26.95. ASIN: B0017LIG4S (or through CF)

“The Cats of Mirikitani” directed by Linda Hattendorf (2010), \$19.99. ASIN: B002ZMZBAA (or through CF)

“Mooz-lum” directed by Qasim Basir (NF-S, API)

RECONCILIATION (November 30-December 6, 2015)

Suggested Books:

Laura Davis, I Thought We'd Never Speak Again: The Road from Estrangement to Reconciliation (2003), \$13.86. ISBN-10: 0060957026

Catherine Claire Larson, As We Forgive: Stories of Reconciliation from Rwanda (2009), \$13.52. ISBN-10: 0310287308

Phil Cousineau, Beyond Forgiveness: Reflections on Atonement (2011), \$17.05. ISBN-10: 0470907738

Suggested Films:

"Reconciliation" with Eric Nenninger and Jack Maxwell (API)

"A Straight Story" by David Lynch (2000), \$9.79. ASIN: B0000424SD (or through CF)

"As We Forgive" directed by Laura Waters Hinson (2009), \$14.75. ASIN: B002ZRHHDFV (or through CF)

AGING, FORGIVENESS & THE END OF LIFE (December 7-13, 2015)

Suggested Books:

Stan Goldberg, Lessons for the Living: Stories of Forgiveness, Gratitude, and Courage at the End of Life (2009), \$18.09. ISBN-10: 1590306765

Ira Byock, The Four Things That Matter Most: A Book About Living (2014), \$17.99. ISBN-10: 1476748535

Suggested Films:

“Quartet” directed by Dustin Hoffman (NF-S, API)

“Beginners” directed by Mike Mills (NF-S, API)

“Wit” directed by Mike Nichols (2004), \$5.63. ASIN: B00005MKKV (or through CF)

“Raw Faith” about UU Rev. Marilyn Sewell before her retirement (2012), \$19.98. ASIN: B007IHH4MU

REFLECTING ON WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED SO FAR (December 14-20, 2015)