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:


Class Film (required): "The Power of Forgiveness" by Martin Doblmeier
GRIEVANCE STORIES (September 14-20, 2015)

Suggested Book:


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:


Suggested Film:

"Amish Grace" by Gregg Champion (API)
GETTING READY TO FORGIVE . . . MAYBE (September 28 – October 4, 2015)

**Suggested Book:**


**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:**


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: BOOD5R5E8S


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:


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:


Suggested Films:

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

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

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

Suggested Book:


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:


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:


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


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:


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)