

# Christian Education and Dismantling Racism

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EL3539 | Intensive Course | January 2021  
Course will meet synchronously over zoom:  
Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri 8-5:00 PM (1/4 - 1/8/2021)

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**Pronouns:** She, her, hers

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

### Christian education and dismantling racism

This course analyzes institutionalized racism and engages students in a series of frameworks from within Christian Education for critiquing and dismantling racism, and for supporting transformative forms of congregational learning. *Full course (1.0)*

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### Learning Objectives:

- recognize elements of racialization within the dominant culture in which you live, and understand how you negotiate your own identity in multiple spaces with respect to systems and structures of power
- articulate how different social realities molded by various histories give shape and meaning to current experiences, relationships, Christian beliefs and/or practices in complex ways
- demonstrate the capacity to ask complex questions of people from whom you differ with a clear stance of humility, and see conflict as a source of learning
- demonstrate a clear sense of how your faith sustains and challenges you in the work of dismantling racism
- design and support learning processes that seek to dismantle racism in faith communities

**Program Objectives:**

- (MDIV/MA) Graduates will form and lead within Christian community gathered around Word and Sacrament for bold participation in God’s mission.
- (MDIV/MA) Graduates, within a diversity of contexts, will confess the character, identity, and work of the Triune God in the world God loves

**Reading (required):**

- J. Garvey Berger. *Unlocking Leadership Mindtraps* (Stanford Briefs, 2019) [978-1503609013]
- M. Hess, “White religious educators resisting white fragility: Lessons from mystics” (available at moodle)
- I. Kendi. *Stamped from the Beginning* (Bold Type Books, 2017) [978-1568585987]
- M. Le Tran, *Reset the Heart: Unlearning Violence, Relearning Hope* (Abingdon Press, 2017). [978-1501832468]
- C. Meeks. *Living into God’s Dream* (Morehouse Publishing, 2016) [978-0819233219]
- R. Menakem. *My Grandmother’s Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending our Hearts and Bodies* (Central Recovery Press, 2017). [978-1942094470]
- D. Thompson, “Calling a thing what it is: A Lutheran approach to whiteness,” (available at moodle)

**PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH**

This course uses a combination of experiential engagement, cognitive study, and creative response assignments to support students in meeting the learning goals. Although we are scheduled for five full days of intensive engagement, not all of that time will be spent together. We are including here a full schedule of individual work, films/videos to watch, prayer to engage in, and exercises to do individually as well as in small breakout groups. Please preserve the entire time specified, but know that we will be varying the tasks, and some of them will be done by yourself. Please ensure that you have access to a quiet space during the week of the class.

**REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS****Pre-gathering assignments**

Since the pre-gathering time is so short – we are only able to give out assignments as of January 2<sup>nd</sup> and this class begins on January 4<sup>th</sup> – we cannot make many assignments.

Please do your best to record an introduction at this flipgrid site (<https://flipgrid.com/hess7403>) by January 3<sup>rd</sup>, responding to the prompt you will find there. This is a free site. It is best if you use a google chrome browser to access it, and

your luthersem.edu address to sign in. You will click on the large button, speak to your computer/tablet/phone's camera, and then click submit.

We would also ask that you try to do as much of the reading as you can in advance – we have published the required reading list as of October 30, 2020 – but we acknowledge that that may be difficult. If you have to prioritize your reading, we urge you to begin with the Kendi book and then move on to the Menakem book.

### **Gathering work**

During the five days that we gather together, we will be spending most of our time in collaborative, experiential exercises. You must be present for the entirety of the afternoon synchronous times to receive full credit for the course (12:30 pm to 5 pm each day).

We have designed this course with five units of engagement that you will explore in the mornings, and then you will gather with us synchronously in zoom in the afternoons. We are publishing these units far in advance of our gathering (on December 1<sup>st</sup>), so that you can work on them in advance if that is more manageable.

### **Post-gathering assignments**

Following our time together in person, you will design a learning event for a specific context (which you can choose) that uses materials from the class and your own original ideas to support dismantling racism. Please pay close attention to the learning project rubric available at moodle, and note that one element of that project must include a short worship contribution (a litany, an intercessory prayer, a song) as well as a short religious education resource (a handout, a video, etc.) that communicates something you've learned through our weekend gathering that is constructively applicable to your professional context.

### **GRADING**

Grades will be determined by the following percentages:

Morning unit completions	30%
Synchronous afternoon participation	30%
Final learning project design	40%

We will use the following general rubric for assessing specific work in the course (eg. you will see these numbers appear as grades on specific assignments).

**Marginal/Passing -- Level 4 – C-**

A good general understanding of the required knowledge, attitudes, and skills, plus the ability to apply them effectively in normal situations. There is some evidence of the skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The student fulfills all of the requirements of the lesson.

**Passing -- Level 5 – C+**

A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge, attitudes and skills, and the ability to apply them in a variety of situations. The student generally shows evidence of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation where appropriate and occasionally demonstrates originality and insight. The student produces work of consistent quality and works independently.

**High Passing -- Level 6 -- B**

A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge, attitudes and skills, and the ability to apply them in a wide variety of situations. There is consistent evidence of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation where appropriate. The student generally demonstrates insight, produces work of quality, meets the expectations of the lesson at a high level, and shows some evidence of originality.

**Superior work -- Level 7 – A**

A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them almost faultlessly in a wide variety of situations. There is consistent evidence of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation where appropriate. The student consistently demonstrates originality and insight and always produces work of high quality. The student is able to teach necessary skills to another student. The student works beyond the expectations of the lesson, and uses original ideas and concepts.

**UNITS**

The units are fully explained and detailed in the moodle section for this course. Here you will find a brief listing of the specific assignments, along with the flipgrid and padlet codes. Please note that the reflection on the previous day's CIQ is optional, but Vivian and Mary take it very seriously in preparing for the afternoon's gathering.

**Summary of assignments**

Main flipgrid group code: <https://flipgrid.com/hess7403> (this is the overall link that will get you to all of the flipgrid responses we are asking you to do)

Please introduce yourself prior to our gathering: <https://flipgrid.com/81d17331>

**Unit one:**

- your response to the opening prayer song (<https://flipgrid.com/81d17331>)
- any notes you have on the ground rules (asynchronous forum)
- your response to the Menakem exercise (<https://flipgrid.com/e9ec478b>)
- your notes on the power flower exercise, and a scan or photo of your flower (submitted as a moodle assignment)
- what does “intersectionality” mean to you? how is God calling you into tensegrity? (a prayer in the padlet)  
<https://padlet.com/mhess19/ghuqgb7b22ngzvum>

**Unit two:**

- optional reflection on the ciq transcript from Monday (moodle forum)
- reflection on “Holy Post in America” and “We Shall Remain” video (<https://flipgrid.com/a479bfbf>)
- where do you enter the *Stamped from the Beginning* history? (asynchronous moodle forum posting)
- reflection on the Strange Fruit video in the form of a prayer (<https://padlet.com/mhess19/od2qu1k7irqcy8zq>)
- reflect on breathing (do this while reading the padlet), take notes in your journal
- autobiography exercise uploaded to moodle

**Unit three:**

- optional reflection on the ciq (moodle forum)
- reflection on the Brené Brown video (flipgrid) <https://flipgrid.com/7f431910>
- reflection on the Kimberly Jones video (flipgrid) <https://flipgrid.com/642df243>
- contribute a prayer to the padlet (<https://padlet.com/mhess19/g28dhe8ufddb0zyh>)
- write out a case story and reflect on it using Boleman/Deal and Cormode charts, as well as other prompts found in the unit (Tran’s book, etc.); submit this to moodle

**Unit four:**

- optional reflection on the ciq (moodle forum)
- reflection on Brian Stout’s essay and accountability (<https://flipgrid.com/521a2def>)
- reflect on your social media participation in light of the mindtraps and submit it to moodle.

- write a draft theological statement and choose no more than three words from that statement and offer them as a prayer in padlet (<https://padlet.com/mhess19/h7gbf1e1rnelptev>)

### Unit five:

- optional reflection on the ciq (moodle forum)
- reflect on the debate/dialogue/disrupt matrix in light of your project (<https://flipgrid.com/c592c0c8>)
- begin to plan your final project. Reflect in flipgrid on the chart

### Final assignment:

Following our time together in person, you will design a learning event for a specific context (which you can define) that uses materials from the class and your own original ideas to support dismantling racism. Please pay close attention to the learning project rubric, and note that one element of that project must include a short worship contribution (a litany, an intercessory prayer, a song) as well as a short religious education resource (a handout, a video, etc.) that communicates something you've learned through our weekend gathering that is constructively applicable to your professional context.

There are many possible forms for a learning event design to take. Please watch the learning project video resource at moodle, and then consider carefully the context in which you wish to work. You may draw on pre-published curricular materials, but in doing so you must very carefully cite what you are drawing upon and you must demonstrate that you are curating materials for a specific setting, and seeking to share specific practices in that setting.

This project must be submitted to moodle by January 31<sup>st</sup>.

## POLICIES OF LUTHER SEMINARY

### Basic Course Understanding

Any course that invites us to examine issues of human pain and perplexity has the potential to be unsettling. Our ability to learn in such a course depends on several things: our ability to tolerate ambiguity; our willingness to dialogue honestly and respectfully with each other; our willingness to consider alternative interpretations; our acceptance of truth, no matter where it is found; our ability to take responsibility for both our beliefs and our anxiety about different beliefs; our comfort with “political and religious incorrectness”; and our ongoing struggle to integrate new information with present beliefs. We expect that in this course we will all work to create a spirit of

respect, curiosity, and dialogue. If you find that you are having personal difficulty in this course, please feel free to check in with us, or with Seminary Pastor or Dean of Students regarding a referral for consultation or counseling.

We believe that this course requires full engagement with one's peers and with the process. We assume that you will be with parishioners in much the same way that you are with peers in class. We will depend on your wise judgment as to the ways in which you engage various digital devices, but if we observe your use of them distracting your colleagues or detracting from your own learning we will ask that you put them away.

### **ADA Compliance Statement**

Reasonable accommodation will be provided to any student with a disability who is registered with the Office of Student Affairs and requests needed accommodation. If you are a student with a disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) and think that you might need special assistance or accommodation in this class or any other class, please contact the Dean of Students or contact your instructor directly.

### **Academic Honesty**

Members of the Luther Seminary community are expected to conduct themselves responsibly and honestly in academic matters. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses against this expectation and are subject to disciplinary action.

If instances of cheating or plagiarism are detected, one of the disciplinary actions shall follow: either the instructor records a failure for the assignment or examination, or the instructor records a failure for the course. In either case, the instructor shall bring the matter to the Office of the Academic Dean and the Office of the Dean of Students, and the question whether further disciplinary action should be considered will be determined in consultation with the instructor, the Office of the Academic Dean, and the Office of the Dean of Students. See the current Student Handbook for more details on this matter.

### **Plagiarism**

"Plagiarism is the dishonest act of presenting the words or thoughts of another writer as if they were your own.... If you quote from anything at all...you must put quotation marks around it, or set it off from your text. If you summarize or paraphrase an author's words, you must clearly indicate where the summary or paraphrase begins and ends.... In every instance you must formally acknowledge the written source from which you took the material." [Quoted from James A. W. Heffernan and John E. Lincoln, *Writing: A College Handbook* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), p.457.]

Some examples of plagiarism could include:

- Copying from a source text (whether online or offline) without proper acknowledgment.
- Turning in another student's work with or without that student's knowledge.
- Copying materials word-for-word from a source text, supplying proper documentation, but leaving out quotation marks.
- Paraphrasing materials from a source text without appropriate documentation.
- Turning in a paper copied from a website.
- Recycling your own work from a previous assignment, without permission of the instructor or proper citation

If instances of cheating or plagiarism are detected, one of the disciplinary actions shall follow: either the instructor records a failure for the assignment or examination, or the instructor records a failure for the course. In either case, the instructor shall bring the matter to the Office of the Academic Dean and the Office of the Dean of Students, and the question whether further disciplinary action should be considered will be determined in consultation with the instructor, the Office of the Academic Dean, and the Office of the Dean of Students. See the current Student Handbook for more details on this matter.

### **Title IX Statement**

Luther Seminary is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and Luther policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. Sexual misconduct — including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking — is also prohibited at Luther.

Luther Seminary encourages anyone experiencing sexual misconduct to talk to someone about what happened, so they can get the support they need and we can respond appropriately. If you wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct, want more information about filing a report, or have questions about school policies and procedures, please contact our Title IX Coordinator, Peter Susag, who can be found on our school's website.

Luther Seminary is legally obligated to investigate reports of sexual misconduct, and therefore it cannot guarantee the confidentiality of a report, but it will consider a request for confidentiality and respect it to the extent possible.

As a teacher, we are also required by Luther Seminary to report incidents of sexual misconduct that are shared with us and thus cannot guarantee confidentiality. We must provide our Title IX coordinator with relevant details such as the names of those involved in the incident.