Course Title: ***Transformative Justice*** (REL 405)

Class Meetings: May 11-15

Instructor:

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Course Description: Transformative Justice is a new, yet old way of thinking and doing justice. It is not a specific program or set of programs but it is a way of thinking about responding to the problem of crime. It offers a set of values that guides decisions on policy, programs, and practice. This course will look at a transformative response to crime as a resource for reconciliation of victims, offenders and community. It will study the effectiveness of the current retributive model and the role the media plays in its perpetuation. The student will be invited to consider a transformative model of justice that is grounded in Christian, as well as other faith traditions."

It is hoped that the student will:

(1) Understand the difference between retributive and restorative justice in theory and practice.
(2) Develop an awareness of the criminal justice system in Canada: its approach to crime, sentencing, incarceration, and reintegration, as well as the challenges it faces.
(3) Consider how a restorative approach to justice might serve the victim, offender, and the community.
(4) Explore the spiritual/Biblical roots of restorative justice.
(5) Examine models of restorative justice that have been developed in Canada and around the world.

(6) Consider how the faith communities might support transformative practices.

Textbooks: Zehr, Howard. *The* ***Little Book of Restorative Justice,*** Pennsylvania: Good Books, 2002.

Marshall, Chris. ***Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime and Punishment,*** William B. Eerdmans Co., 2001

Courseware package - distributed on the first day of class.

Class Times: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
lunch 12 – 1 p.m.

Class Style: Class meetings will attempt to draw on readings, media, guests, books and assignments to grasp the subject. Classes will be highly interactive as we seek to achieve this objective.

Expected Class Proceedings

- Introduction to syllabus
- Newspaper exercise
- Defining Terms - "Retributive Justice vs. Restorative/Transformative Justice"
- The Canadian Criminal Justice system
- Video - "A Test of Justice"
- Guest presentation: "A personal view from the inside"
- Discussion of Readings: Chris Marshall and courseware

- Introduction to Transformative Justice
- The Biblical roots of Restorative Justice
- "Dead Man Walking"
- Restorative/transformative Justice - "fleshing out the theory"
- Guest Presentation - "Circles of Support and Accountability"
- Video presentation
- Readings: "The Little Book of Restorative Justice" and courseware

- Models of Transformative Justice
- Victim/Offender mediation, alternative dispute mechanisms, electronic monitoring, Healing Circles, circle sentencing, etc.,

- Presentation - "The aboriginal perspective"
- Moving from a retributive to a transformative model
- Debriefing
- Discussion of assignments

Course Requirements:

(a) Media scrapbook (25%,).

Create a scrapbook (no less than **15 pages**) of newspaper clippings and magazine articles, select articles and stories that relate to criminal justice issues. For each article address the following questions:

1. What is the main thrust/angle of the story?
2. How is criminal justice portrayed?
3. How balanced or biased is the article?
4. What does the writer attempt to evoke in the reader in terms of thinking, feelings, and reaction?

Due Date: This is a pre course assignment (due May 11th)

(b) Interview (25%).

Interview (no less than **12 pages**) a person who is involved in criminal justice in some way either as an employee, an offender or a victim, exploring the following questions:

1. What is your experience of the criminal justice system?
2. What are your concerns?
3. Is the current model of justice working?
4. Do you think restorative/transformative justice is a good thing?
5. How can the criminal justice system in Canada be improved?
6. What role does the media play in the way Canadians feel about crime?
7. How can the community play a greater role in criminal justice?
8. Summarize your feelings/thoughts about the interview
9. What new insights have you gained?

Due Date: July 10, 2009

(c) **Research Paper (50%)**

Write a paper of no less than **2500 words** on a restorative justice theme. A list of potential topics is included below. Any other topics must be approved by the instructor:

Due Date: July 10, 2009

"Alternatives to incarceration; reducing the need for prisons?"

"Meeting the needs of victims in the criminal justice system"

"Youth Crime: seeking restorative solutions"

"Victim offender mediation, a tool for healing"

"The impact of aboriginal practices on the Canadian criminal justice system"

"The media and its impact on public attitudes towards crime"

"Spirituality as a positive factor in offender rehabilitation"

"A plan for involving faith communities in restorative justice"

"The Biblical case for a restorative approach to justice"

"Making our prisons a place for restorative justice practices"

"Allowing restorative justice to meet the needs of victims"

"The role of restorative justice in the legal system"

"The role of Circles in the reintegration of offenders"

"An eye for an eye?"

"Transformative Justice in the Old Testament"

Please send assignments **electronically** to the email noted above. When the assignment has been received a reply will be sent to confirm. Send the assignment in Microsoft Word format only please.

Course Grade:

Media Scrapbook	25%
Interview	25%
Paper	50%
Total	100%

Grading Schedule:

The grading scales for course grades are as follows:

Letter Grade	Description
A+	
A	Excellent
A-	
B+	
B	Good
B-	
C+	
C	Satisfactory
C-	
D+	
D	Minimal Pass
F	Failure

Course Standards:

i) Quality of Assignments:

The professor reserves the right to reject any work that does not comply with requirements and instructions.

ii) Academic Honesty:

It is a serious offense to present a piece of work for course credit as one's own if the work was done by some other person (plagiarism). Plagiarism may lead to loss of part or all of the marks for an assignment, failure in the course or other serious consequences.

To avoid plagiarism, credit sources whenever you use someone else's language or ideas. Such crediting must be referenced through use of APA format. Normally, simply including a work in your list of references is insufficient. Rather, you must specifically acknowledge a source sentence-by-sentence, as necessary.

iii) Late Assignments:

Lateness of assignments will cause grade reduction of 5% per day for each day the assignment is late.

Assignments will not be accepted (hence a failing grade of 0 assigned) beyond two weeks after the due date, unless otherwise negotiated. All assignments sent after July 10, 2009 will not be accepted, unless an extension has been granted from the Registrar's office.

iv) Class Attendance

This course is being offered in a compressed manner. Attendance is essential to master the course materials and participate in the interactive format. Unless there is an emergency, the students will be expected to attend all class meetings.

v) Term Paper format

Two of the guides commonly used by faculty are: *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian (6th Edition); and/or *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (Fourth Edition).

vi) Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty Policy

The seminary is committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breeches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the seminary. Even unintentional plagiarism is to be avoided at all costs. Students are expected to be familiar with the policy statements in the current academic calendar and the student handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean.