**University of Denver, Winter 2016 Nancy D. Wadsworth ASEM 2581-1 (CRN 3505) Office:** Sturm 467

**Sturm Hall 175 Phone:** 871-2972

**Tues & Thurs, 2:00 – 3:50p** **Office Hours:** W, F 2:00-4:00p

**Email:** [nancy.wadsworth@du.edu](mailto:nancy.wadsworth@du.edu)

**ASEM: Forgiveness, Politics and Film**

**(“Political Forgiveness”)**

**Winter 2016**

## Description

What does it mean to use a framework of “forgiveness” or “reconciliation” to address ideologies, socio-economic systems, and individual actions that have led to profound injury, conflict, injustice, and even genocide? How can one group—or one individual—find peaceful ways to come to terms with another who has damaged or destroyed members of his/her community? What does it mean for former perpetrators and oppressors to “reconcile” in meaningful ways with those they have victimized? It seems confounding. And yet the framework of reconciliation has been used, sometimes with amazing results, in places as diverse as Africa, Europe, Latin America, and the United States, in settings as small as family relationships, and as large as national conflicts. Apology, forgiveness, and reconciliation are in fact potential paths to interpersonal, social, and political healing. This course will investigate a number of philosophies and applied frameworks that have been employed as transformative and peacemaking strategies in various interpersonal, social, and political contexts. We will examine the value (and limitations of and obstacles to) core reconciliation concepts, analyze how they have been applied, apply them to some aspect of our own lives, and consider their possible application to ongoing problems in the world today.

## Objectives

In this course students will:

* Be exposed to a variety of definitions of and approaches to apology, forgiveness and reconciliation, in a number of geographic, interpersonal, and political contexts
* Consider the role of memory, trauma, and recognition in forgiveness processes
* Discover how idiosyncratic cultural resources like rituals can facilitate and/or hamper forgiveness processes
* Understand some of the productive tensions between forgiveness and justice models
* Be able to differentiate between political, interpersonal, psychological, and moral or religious realms of forgiveness
* Be able to explain the benefits and limitations of forgiveness-based models to prompt individual or cultural shifts
* Gain analytical skills that will help evaluate the limits of reconciliation approaches
* Team teach, in a small group, a segment of course material.
* Employ personal reflection in order to leverage theoretical insights
* Use writing, on a daily basis, to facilitate all the above learning objectives.

**Required Course Readings**

The following required books are available at the DU bookstore (or, if you prefer, any online source), and the Jung is also available online via the library. It will be easier for all of us if we’re reading from the same copy, but if you prefer the online versions, please bring your e-reader or laptop to class (and not just your phone, please). We will be reading them in the order listed.

Simon Weisenthal, *The Sunflower* (Also available online via library.)

Carl Jung, *The Undiscovered Self* (Nal Publishing, 2006; also available online via library.)

Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (Doubleday, 1999).

You will complete 10 **learning modules** throughout the course (one per week). Each module will typically consist of a number of activities, such as:

* assigned readings from the syllabus texts
* related web links or videos (usually viewed online before class)
* professor-led lessons
* assignments to post comments and responses to online discussion questions
* a writing, blog or small group project assignment.

Modules that involve reading or exercises via Canvas are available under **Modules** in canvas. See the **course schedule** on the syllabus and in Canvas for specific dates.

**Course Requirements**

**Engagement and Community Membership**

This course is intellectually challenging, writing intensive, and emotionally *intense*. But as we explore this material together, we will also be building a supportive community of learning, in which you can integrate difficult course concepts and develop your own personal take on the topic(s) of forgiveness and reconciliation with support from the other members of the class. Respect and civility are important, as always.

**Class Participation and attendance:** My baseline expectation for participation includes showing up (physically or virtually, depending on the assignment) having already thought about and ready to discuss the readings, participate in small group work in a cooperative learning environment, or other online or in-class activities. **NOTE:** You can miss two days of class for any reason and still receive a 90% attendance, but after two days you will need explicit permission or receive less than A-level on attendance grade.

**Online Discussion Board:** Before most classes, students will participate either in small groups or as a whole class in Canvas discussions on the reading (prior to class)—which I’d like everyone to read, even when you’re not posting. (You’ll post 5 Canvas discussions total. I’ll assign you to Canvas posting groups when the attendance is settled.) Sometimes you will be responding to specific questions for analytical and personal reflection on the reading, other times the reflection topics are un-guided. You will also regularly be in discussion with one another on Canvas via replies to threads. Due times/dates will be listed on the discussion forum and/or the learning module checklist.

***Canvas Reflections Guidelines:* (Scored on a 0-5 point scale, 5 being highest score.)**

1. Select one or two ideas from the reading that resonate for you, positively, negatively, or in some other way, and write approximately 1 paragraph’s worth of careful (not just stream of consciousness) response. How do these passages interest (which could be move, bother, or challenge, etc.) you in some way?
2. *Be specific* about what in the passages gets you thinking, and try to tie your thoughts to questions about or themes in the course. That may mean quoting a passage directly, or at least referring to the page numbers on which the ideas that interests you are raised.
3. Where possible, consider drawing out the connections you see between the passage(s) and other readings, films, or conversations we’ve been having in the class. In other words, *use your reading reflections to develop ideas across the readings.*
4. Edit your reflections for errors, coherence, and clarity, as sloppy writing will detract from your score.
5. I encourage you, where possible, to respond to fellow students’ posts and depending on how productive our discussions are, I may end up assigning one follow-up response to some discussions.
6. You are always expected to take the time to read everyone else’s response in any discussion forum. That may mean returning to the forum after everyone else has posted.

**Journal**: This will be a private (just between you and me as professor) **forum** designed for more personal reflection. Sometimes we will use this space to brainstorm or draft for longer writing assignments. You will post at least 2 journal entries.

**Teach-Ins:** In groups of 3-4, students will present some background research on one subtopic within a particular week’s theme. Students essentially teach about 45 minutes worth of material, which should include some kind of class discussion and/or activity that enhances the learning.

**Writing:** ASEM courses are designed to involve a good deal of writing, but in an interdisciplinary context—meaning you are often drawing from different kinds of disciplinary frameworks (such as political science, memoir, psychology, sociology).

You will write two formal papers that result in a total of three turned-in papers: (1) a **personal essay**, written in two different stages, that draws from some of the approaches to political forgiveness you will be exposed to in order to analyze how reconciliatory processes might be relevant to a challenge in your own life; and (2) a more traditional **“compare and contrast”** essay in response to guided analytical prompts I provide. The final, expanded iteration of the personal essay will involve a synthesis of theoretical material and personal insights gained in the class. I may decide to assign a brief final oral presentation based on this sequenced assignment.

We may also do a fair amount of in-class or pre-class (online) writing, either to begin or edit an assignment, or in conjunction with course discussion. When possible, there will be opportunities to workshop and redraft papers.

**Scoring Breakdown**

Participation (inc. preparation & timeliness) 20%

Attendance 10%

Canvas posts and journal entries (online) 15%

Teach-In 10%

Personal essay, phase 1 (5-6 pgs) 10%

Analytical paper (6-8 pgs) 15%

Personal essay, phase 2 (8-10 pgs) 20%

**Total 100%**

**General Paper guidelines:** I will post full paper assignments once we get going.But, in general, please know that I expect your papers to be thoughtful, clear, reasoned essays in response to the assignments I will hand out. If you already know your writing skills need improvement, please *take extra time on your papers and, if possible, get some outside help by making appointments with DU’s Writing Center*. I am happy to work with you during my office hours if you are struggling, and you can “talk through” a paper, although I do not read entire paper drafts.

The grading criteria will vary according to the different written assignments, but here are some general guidelines:

***Personal Essay Sequence:* (Scored on regular grade scale.)**

1. Take the risk to grapple with something difficult from your life experience for the assignment. You do not have to be specific about what it is if you wish to keep that information private. (For instance, you may be writing about an abuse experience, but you don’t have to specify what kind of abuse.)
2. Carefully answer each of the question prompts given.
3. Grapple with questions, confusions and ideas that come up; these will be useful for class discussion later. (Remind me to talk about what “grappling” is.)
4. For Phase Two, really consider how the frameworks we’ve been exposed to might shed light on your dilemma and/or experience, as well as where those frameworks might be limited.

***Analytical Paper:* (Scored on regular grade scale.)**

1. Do you have a **thesis** – that is, a central assertion, argument or analytical question up front according to which the rest of the essay is organized?
2. Do you use **concrete evidence** from the readings or class material to support your thesis? Have you engaged directly, not just in a vague way, with the relevant readings?
3. Have you written **clear transitions** that lead the reader from one idea to the next?
4. Did you **proofread** your work for typos and grammar?
5. Did you push yourself to **think** carefully and critically – not just throw out a sloppy, impressionistic, last-minute document that you expect at least a B on? (You won’t get it.)
6. Is there a real **conclusion** in the paper that summarizes what you’ve done and offers any relevant last thoughts?

**Late papers and missing assignments:** Work uploaded late will lose 1/3 grade per day. Work not uploaded at all will receive a minus grade, which then will be averaged in with your other grades. If you face a legitimate emergency, contact me beforehand and perhaps an extension can be arranged.

###### Classroom etiquette

* If you are disruptive in class (or online), I reserve the right to dismiss you immediately. (Ringing cell phones, incidentally, are disruptive; turn them off.)
* The class may raise provocative and/or emotional issues for some of us; please respect that we come from different perspectives and always avoid personal attacks when making a point.
* It is important that we respect a safe climate for debate and discussion. That also means taking the time to *listen* carefully to one another.
* Whenever possible, use evidence from the course material to make an argument or ask a question. This will enhance your credibility, and factor into your final grade.
* Try not to interrupt each other during discussion. In small groups, you may want to select a discussion facilitator to make sure that everyone who wants to has a chance to speak.
* If you tend to dominate discussion and have a lot to say, do hold back sometimes so that other people have a chance to jump in. Likewise, if you tend to be quiet, push yourself to engage more actively than you are used to doing. It’s all good for intellectual growth.

## Students with Disabilities

I encourage students with disabilities, including non-visible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, head injury and attention deficit/hyperactive disorder, or other psychiatric disabilities, to see me within the first two weeks of class so that necessary accommodations can be made to facilitate the learning experience. See me either after class or during my office hours. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit the relevant letter from Disability Services Program early in the semester so that your needs may be addressed. For more information about disability services at DU, go to <http://www.du.edu/disability/> .

**Course Schedule**

\*subject to change, with notice

**Part 1: History, Psychology and Memory**

**Week 1: Dilemmas at the End of Time**

**NOTE:** Due to my having to be at a conference Wed-Sat this week, we will not meet in person on Thursday, but instead we will engage online. Please follow the instructions below.

T, January 5

Go over syllabus and expectations in class.

Discuss the plan for this irregular week.

Th, January 7

NO CLASS.

❑ Discuss *The Sunflower*, Part 1 (the story itself, before the commentaries).

❑ Post brief reading reaction to Canvas forums by 4 p.m.

Weekend

❑ Reply to at least one post over the weekend and read all posts/responses before **Tuesday 1/12**.

❑ Download and read Personal Reflection Paper assignment. (I encourage you to start drafting over the weekend, as it’s **due next Friday**. You do not need to have read any other class material to write this paper.)

**Week 2: Forgiving the Unforgivable**

T, January 12

❑ We will discuss the following essays from Part 2 of *The Sunflower*, so please have read them: Alkalaj, Améry, Bejski, Berger, Brown, Cargas, Dalai Lama, and Fisher.

**❑ Canvas Group 1** posts on The Sunflower reading by noon (see prompt):

**❑** Voices from the Holocaust Archives reading assignment.

In class:

Documentary, *Forgiving Dr. Mengele*, part 1.

Go over Personal Reflection Paper assignment.

Student teach-in sign-up sheet.

Th, January 14

❑ Discussion of Fleischner, Fox, Goulden, Hertzberg, Hollis, Kushner, Langer, Ozick, Praeger, Pran, Speer, and Wu.

❑ **Canvas Group 2:** post due by noon.

Finish and discuss *Forgiving Dr. Mengele.*

**Personal Reflection paper due by Friday, midnight.**

**Week 3: Carl Jung and the Human Shadow**

T, January 19

❑ *The Undiscovered Self*, chapters 1-3.

❑ **Canvas Group 3:** post due by noon.

**Student teach-in** on Jung’s *The Red Book*.

Discussion.

Th, January 21

❑ *The Undiscovered Self*, chapters 4-7.

❑ **Canvas Group 1:** post due by noon.

Jung explication and discussion

In-class exercise “Finding Your Own Shadows”

**Analytical paper assignment handed out**. **Due Tues, Feb 9, 10 a.m.**

**Week 4: Shadows, Trauma, and Paradoxes of Memory**

T, January 26

❑ Bettina Aptheker, excerpts from *Intimate Politics*

❑ (Before class) watch video clip of Aptheker introducing her book

❑ (All students) **Prompted journal entry #1 due by noon**.

Possible visit from Brenda Baumgardner, licensed counselor and survivor.

Th, January 28

❑ Judith Herman, “A Forgotten History.”

❑ Readings from Caruth, and Van Der Kolk and Van Der Hart from Trauma: Explorations in Memory

❑ **Canvas Group 2:** post by noon.

**Student teach-in** on post-traumatic stress and memory.

In-class exercise (NPR, This American Life, [Maul in the Family](http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/485/surrogates))

**Part 2: The Problematics of Social and Political Apology**

**Week 5: Trauma and Collective Memory: Australia’s Stolen Generations**

T, February 2

❑ Nicholas Tavuchis, *Mea Culpa: A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation* (Stanford University Press, 1993), sections.

❑ **Canvas Group 3:** post by noon.

Th, February 4

❑ Readings on indigenous people and intergenerational trauma.

❑ Readings on Australia’s stolen generations.

❑ **Canvas Group 1:** post by noon.

**Student teach-in** on Australia’s Stolen Generations and reconciliation process.

Watch and discuss Kevin Rudd’s apology to Australia’s Stolen Generations

Possible visit from Paula Palmer.

Sun, February 7

**❑ Analytical Paper upload due by noon.**

**Week 6: Mourning and Moving Forward: Rwanda after Genocide**

T, February 9:

❑ Martha Minow, “Memory and Hate” and “Breaking the Cycles of Hatred”

❑ Rwanda genocide BBC backgrounder

❑ Lindsey Hilsum, The Rainy Season, Granta 125

❑ **Canvas Group 2:** post by noon.

Documentary, *In the Tall Grass,* part 1 (Penrose KTD182.9)

Th, February 11:

❑ Minow, “Between Nations and Between Intimates”

❑ Girma Negash, “Mourning Rwanda,”

❑ Readings on New York Times coverage of Pieter Hugo’s “Portraits of Reconciliation”

❑ **Canvas Group 3:** post by noon.

**Student teach-in** on post-genocide Rwanda or Rwandan colonial history

**Final paper assigned. Due Sunday, March 13th.**

**Week 7: Collective Memory Close to Home: John Evans and the Sand Creek Massacre**

T, February 16

❑ DU John Evans report, Sections

❑ View Governor Hickenlooper’s Apology for the Sand Creek Massacre.

Join students in Prof. Jared Del Rosso’s Sociology of Denial class. Room TBA.

Panel discussion with descendants.

❑ **All class Canvas** post by noon.

Th, February 18

❑ Billy J. Stratton, “Our Thanksgiving Responsibility: Native Americans, Honest History, and the Simple Power of Remembrance,” Salon, November 29, 2014.

❑ All: Girma Negash, “The Problematic of Political Apology”

❑ **Canvas Group 1:** post by noon.

**Week 8: South Africa’s Truth & Reconciliation Process**

T, February 23

❑ Desmond Tutu, Chs 1-8

❑ **Canvas Group 2:** post by noon.

Th, February 25

Desmond Tutu, Chs 9-End

❑ Online: Watch video segment on South Africa and Nelson Mandela

❑ **Canvas Group 3:** post by noon.

**Student teach-in** on Desmond Tutu or South Africa post-Apartheid

Discuss No Future without Forgiveness, Chs. 8-end

Watch and discuss film: *Long Night’s Journey into Day*

**Week 9: Breaking Cycles: Interpersonal Psychology Model**

T, March 1

❑ Everett L. Worthington, Jr., *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Theory and Application,* Chs. 1-3

Th, March 3

Worthington, 8-10 Worthington, 12 and 14

**❑ (All) Journal entry due by noon.**

**Week 10: Race in America, and Final Reflections**

T, March 8

❑ TaNahesi Coates, “The Case for Reparations.”

Discussion

Final paper ideas sharing.

**❑ Final paper due Sunday, March 13.**