

## General Education Submission Form

Electronic submissions are preferred.

A. GE component for which course is being proposed:

### Thinking Globally and Understanding Society

B. Submitted by Brad Berky—Westmont in San Francisco

C. Ideally, submissions should be discussed by the entire department prior to submittal.  
 Chair has reviewed and approved the course.

D. Course being proposed (please attach syllabus):

### Faith, Poverty and Justice

E. This course

<input type="checkbox"/>	Has not been modified, but is being submitted to check its suitability
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has had its syllabus rewritten to communicate the course's contribution to GE
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has had its contents modified to address the relevant GE issues
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is a new course designed to fulfill the GE requirement

F. This course is being submitted as

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>A Template.</b> Applicable to courses with multiple sections which require only general training in the discipline. The submission should come from the department chair and should clearly identify what course content and what elements of the syllabus the department has agreed will common to all sections. Upon approval by the GE Committee, any course whose syllabus is determined by the department to meet the specifications of the template is approved to satisfy this area requirement. A copy of each syllabus should be forwarded to the GE Committee for record keeping purposes.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>An Individual Course.</b> Applicable to courses requiring specialized training in the discipline or are typically offered by a particular instructor. The course should be resubmitted and reassessed in the event of a change in staffing or syllabus.

G. Statement of rationale:  
(Include a list of the area certification criteria (former called GE objectives) and GE Student Learning Outcomes (if applicable). These certification criteria and GE SLOs are listed in the [GE Committee Combined](#) document. After each certification criterion and GE SLO, list several course activities (lectures, readings, assignments, etc.) that address it. If it is not completely obvious, explain how the activities relate to the certification criterion or outcome. Please attach a copy of the syllabus which has been annotated to identify the corresponding activities. Electronic annotations are required. Please use the *comment* feature in Word to annotate electronic copies).

- **See attached statement and course syllabus**

### **Statement of Rationale:**

In a world where the divide between the global rich and the poor continues to increase and where calls for social justice and equality are often misunderstood by many within and outside of the Christian community, there is need to re-approach and reframe the biblical narrative regarding these topics is more urgent than ever. This is a course that seeks to help students to see anew the biblical roots of justice not simply as an add on to personal faith and evangelism, but as essential to sanctification and fully understanding the heart of God. In pursuit of this aim, the course will look at themes related to poverty, marginalization, justice and compassion via a range of biblical/theological, socio/cultural, developmental and spiritual/narrative lenses. It will also offer students opportunities to make connections between theory and praxis through local field research and integrative writing and oral presentation assignments outlined on the attached course syllabus.

This new course also supplements change in curricular focus of the Westmont in San Francisco program on global poverty and development studies and the desire to have the majority of WSF courses speak to these themes in strongly interdisciplinary ways that work for all campus majors while also fulfilling a variety of GE requirements beginning spring semester 2020. As such this course will incorporate the following course activities in fulfillment of both the Thinking Globally and the Understanding Society certification criteria/learning outcomes:

### **I. Thinking Globally**

Certification Criteria--Students will be able to:

1. Describe differences between at least two cultures; one of which is nonwestern and can offer explanations or historical contexts for those differences;

The course will incorporate readings and a unit focused on global religious/theological understandings of justice within urban America and the global South as well as cross-cultural perspectives on globalization and transformational development principles and practices.

2. Recognize the value and significance of other cultures without romanticizing.

The course will critically explore the cultural challenges and trapping of charity, missions and development while also highlighting liberation-oriented theological perspectives on poverty and justice emanating from the 2/3rd world and ethnic minority communities in the U.S. Through a required local field research project students will also engage cultural difference and diversity in ways likely to engender both appreciation and realism.

3. Identify ways in which cultures influence formulations of knowledge; they will identify ways in which they personally are affected;

See above. Through required readings, class discussions and local field action-research projects amidst the diverse cultural context of San Francisco, students will be exposed to a range cross-cultural issues related to poverty and justice as well as having opportunity to reflect on the praxis implications of these issues as a more self-aware global citizen.

4. Recognize global inequities, injustices, and/or inter-religious issues and commit themselves to thoughtful, concrete responses growing out of their Christian faith;

The course explores issues of poverty, inequality and justice from a global perspective and in conversation with readings/perspectives representing non-western viewpoints as well as engaging these issues from distinctively Christian perspectives.

5. Recognize the limits of their global understanding.

See all of the above. Reading, writing and field study-research assignments are focused on “seeing from below” and with a decidedly global orientation; the accompanying goal being that students gain a deeper awareness of how one’s social location, life experience, social privilege etc. condition what one is able to see and not see.

Student Learning Outcome (assessed as part of Global Awareness ILO)

Students will be able to articulate how a particular topic is approached in at least two different cultures or distinct geographical areas.

The course will expose students a variety of global/cross-cultural perspectives on themes of poverty, justice and transformational development.

## **II. Understanding Society**

Certification Criteria—Students will be able to:

1. Identify foundational theories that offer explanations of social, political, economic, and/or cultural phenomena;

The course will provide students with a range of biblical/theological and socio-cultural foundations for understanding poverty and justice while also helping them to critically reflect on the intersections between theory and praxis in engaging these topics.

2. Apply foundational theories to analyze contemporary problems or controversies;

See above. The course is intentionally focused on helping students critically analyze and apply the theoretical aspects of the themes addressed through weekly reflective writing assignments and a semester end local action research project and class presentation.

3. Make personal and social application of various theories—informed by a biblical perspective.

In sum, the core orientation and approach of this course is built around this GE learning outcome, that is to identify the links between faith and praxis and to apply one's learnings in ways that personally and spiritually appropriated as outlined in the course syllabus

**Faith, Poverty and Justice**  
**Brad Berky**  
**Westmont in San Francisco**

**Course Description:**

What does Christian faith have to do with social justice? What is justice and why does it matter? What is my responsibility and relationship to the homeless/poor I encounter? Is the biblical call to justice and compassion a “pipe dream” in response to the realities of poverty and injustices we see around us? How does one follow the call of Jesus to care for the poor and not get discouraged or overwhelmed? Are there models of faithful engagement out there that can inspire new visions for a broken world? This course will consider these and other questions, examining the essential relationship between faith and justice, particularly in the Christian tradition. Local, national and global poverty will be explored with an emphasis on cultivating holistic, biblically-informed and praxis-oriented understandings of justice, compassion and solidarity with the “least of these” in our midst. We will explore the socio-cultural and theological challenges surrounding globalization, economic injustice and related issues that impact the freedom, dignity and well-being of the vast majority of people in the world today. We will also look at issues of power, privilege and our individual/corporate responsibility in creating more just, engaged and sustainable lifestyle practices and commitments. Finally, we will examine models of transformational development and engagement as well as the narrative journeys of notable Christian faith figures/movements that have sought to integrate a vibrant spirituality with a deep, lived commitment to social justice and solidarity with the poor and marginalized. Through these explorations the aim of this course is that students will develop the socio-analytic and theologically-reflective skills needed recognize and critically-engage the interplay between Christian faith and effective social action informed by the biblical imperative to “do justice, love kindness and walk humbly” (Micah 6:8).

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

Students who successfully complete this course should be able to do the following:

- Develop a biblically and theologically-informed understanding of justice, including perspectives found within the Old Testament, the teachings of Jesus, the Early Church and Reformed, Anabaptist and Liberation theological viewpoints.
- Incorporate the tools of social analysis and theological-reflection in formation of an integrative understanding of poverty, development, social inequality, power and privilege as well as a faith-based vision for redemptive action and response.
- Gain an understanding of notable Christian individuals and movements focused on integrating spirituality and social justice via incarnational presence/solidarity with the poor and marginalized, including both Catholic and Protestant representatives.

- Articulate a personal faith-praxis vision for living more justly in conversation and engagement with the course themes and activities.

### **Required Texts:**

Ken Wytsma, *Pursuing Justice: The Call to Live and Die for Bigger Things*, Thomas Nelson Publishing: 2014

Daniel Groody, *Globalization, Spirituality and Justice*, Orbis Books: 2015

Bryant Meyers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*, Orbis Books, 2011

Steve Corbett, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor*, Moody Publishers: 2014

Michelle Ferrigno Warren, *The Power of Proximity: Moving Beyond Awareness to Action*, IVP Books: 2017

Shane Claiborne, *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical*, Zondervan: 2016

### **Elective Texts** (Select One/Narrative Journeys):

Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness: The Autobiography of the Legendary Catholic Social Activist*, HarperOne, 2009

Malcolm Muggeridge, *Something Beautiful For God: Mother Teresa's Journey Into Compassion*, HarperOne, 2003

Gregory Boyle: *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*, Simon And Shuster: 2010

Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*: Spiegel & Grau: 2015

### **Course Assignments & Evaluation**

#### Participation (20%--200 points)

This course is oriented toward an unusual measure of participative engagement and discussion. It provides opportunity to ask questions, articulate arguments, hear a diverse range of views, and build on one another's ideas. Active participation is essential. Your preparation for class is crucial to the shared learning in the course. In order to be prepared for class you will need to thoughtfully read the required readings before the class for which they are listed. Your class participation grade will reflect these considerations: 1) faithful engagement in all class activities and discussions; 2) how often you contribute questions, comments/responses and 3) the extent to which those contributions are thoughtful, draw others out and indicate that you have come prepared for class. Outstanding participation in these three areas typically results in 95 points; satisfactory participation 85 points and unsatisfactory participation 75 points. Class attendance, timely submission of all assignments and regular reading quizzes will also be factored into your final participation grade.

#### Weekly Journal (30%--300 points)

The integrative journal will be comprised of weekly responses/reflections to the class readings, lectures, guest speaker presentations, class discussions and field study activities. Prompts for

these weekly entries will be provided by the course professor via Canvas and during last five minutes of select class sessions. Students are required to submit entries of approximately one page (single-spaced) each week and occasionally will be asked to share reflections in class with prior permission. The grade for this assignment will reflect the depth and connections made between the course topics and reading and one's critical engagement of these in thought and praxis. Outstanding work in this regard typically results in 190+ points; satisfactory work 170+ points; and unsatisfactory work under 150 points.

#### Group Agency Project and Presentation (30%--300 points)

In small groups students will research, engage and report on a local community service agency focused on justice advocacy and/or working among the poor/marginalized in the Bay Area. Students will be provided a list of recommended agencies to choose from or they may select one on their own with prior permission of the professor. These projects will incorporate a) online and field research, local interviews and volunteer involvements; b) a 6-8 page (double spaced) paper summarizing the agency and it's work; and c) a 10-12 minute class PowerPoint or Prezi slide presentation during the last two weeks of the semester. Guidelines for this project will be posted on Canvas. Outstanding work will typically result in 285+ points; satisfactory work 255+ points; and unsatisfactory work under 225 points.

#### Final Integrative Essay (20%--200 points)

This final assignment requires students to critically reflect on their primary learnings/take a-ways throughout the semester and to submit these in the form of a 5-7 page essay describing "My One Big Idea" and related to course themes/insights as well as offering an oral summary or a creative presentation (i.e. spoken word, musical/movement or other artistic offering) in class during the final two weeks of the semester. Guidelines/further instructions for this assignment is found on Canvas. Outstanding work herein typically results in 190 points; satisfactory work 170 points; and unsatisfactory work 150 points.

#### **Grading**

Final grades will be the total points the student has earned out of 100 total possible points:

Participation	200 points
Weekly Journal	300 points
Agency Project & Presentation	300 points
Final Integrative Essay/Presentation	200 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000 points</b>

Final grades will be calculated using the following scale:

- A: 900+ points
- A-: 850+ points
- B+: 800+ points
- B: 750+ points
- B-: 700+ points
- C+: 650+ points

## **Course Policies & Guidelines**

Class Preparation: This course has significant reading load, therefore adequate preparation is essential not only to succeed, but also to thrive. Always bring your reading journal assignment for the day's discussion with you to class. Cell phones must be turned off or silenced and put away for the duration of class. Laptops and tablets are permitted for note taking and related class activities only.

Conduct: This course presents us with the opportunity to share our views on a range of issues as we explore and discuss a wide range of diverse, sometimes controversial topics. This can arouse strong feelings, opinions, and values. Differences among us will surface, and that is not only acceptable, it is important. At the same time, we are also seeking to approach these topics with a spirit of empathy, hospitality and humility. As we encounter the texts, guest speakers, field trip hosts and one another the expectation is that we will do so with respect and tolerance.

Attendance: Attendance is required. One excused absence due to illness or other excuse is permitted beyond which you will receive a no points for participation on days that you are absent. It is always your responsibility to catch up on what you missed and to make up any work.

Deadlines: Assignments are given with ample time for completion. Any late work will receive a penalty of five points off the assigned grade for each 24-hour period it is late until 48 hours have passed. After that, the assignment receives zero credit. Extensions are only considered in case of documented emergencies.

Academic Integrity: In accordance with Westmont's Community Life statement, all students are expected to uphold high ethical standards. Any work done for this class is assumed--and required--to be your own. Students are expected to read and be familiar with the Westmont Community Life statement and Westmont's statement on plagiarism at:

[http://www.westmont.edu/\\_offices/provost/Plagiarism/PlagiarismStudentInformation.html](http://www.westmont.edu/_offices/provost/Plagiarism/PlagiarismStudentInformation.html).

Any students who are suspected of violating the principles of academic integrity will be held accountable for their actions and are eligible for a failing grade in the assignment and/or course.

### **Course Schedule:**

**Week 1:** The Challenge in Connecting Faith, Poverty and Justice in Our Times

**Week 2:** Toward an Understanding of Poverty and the Poor I: Biblical-Theological Perspectives

**Week 3:** Toward an Understanding of Poverty and the Poor II: Socio-Historical Perspectives

**Week 4:** Toward a Holistic Christian Understanding of Justice I: Biblical-Theological Perspectives

**Week 5:** Toward a Holistic Christian Understanding of Justice II: Socio-Historical Perspectives

**Week 6:** Models/Approaches for Understanding Poverty and Justice: Protestant Perspectives

**Week 7:** Models/Approaches for Understanding Poverty and Justice: Catholic Perspectives

**Week 8:** Challenges and Trappings of Charity, Missions and Development

**Week 9:** Principles and Practices of Transformational Development I: Theological Foundations

**Week 10:** Principles and Practices of Transformational Development II: Socio-Cultural Foundations

**Week 11:** Living Justly: Integrating Spirituality and Social Justice in Solidarity with the Poor and Marginalized I

**Week 12:** Living Justly: Integrating Spirituality and Social Justice in Solidarity with the Poor and Marginalized II

**Week 13:** Narrative Journeys Among the Poor and Marginalized I: Dorothy Day/Mother Teresa

**Week 14:** Narrative Journeys Among the Poor and Marginalized II: Greg Boyle/Bryan Stevenson

**Week 15:** Student Project Presentations