COURSE DESCRIPTION
The Book of Acts: Reflections on Discipleship, Racial Identity, and Community
Vancouver School of Theology
SUMMER 2019

PURPOSE: The Book of Acts speaks of the beginnings of a Christianity so revolutionary and so path breaking that we Christians have often failed to capture its vision. The book of Acts positions Christian life between two abiding concerns, Diaspora and Empire, between those concerned with building and sustaining the nation-state and those concerned with sustaining life in the midst of scattering and fragmentation through immigration and migration, and through exile and loss. The book of Acts also positions the Christian life fully in the life of the Spirit of God, being led by the Spirit to places we would prefer not to go and to people we would prefer not to be with – in order to create a stunning new reality of communion and life together. This course will reflect on the book of Acts with a view toward the racial dilemma of the western world, and the contemporary challenges of building serious Christian community that deeply understands and honors diversity.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The student will be able to articulate a theological vision of the book of Acts
The student will be able to explain the racial configuration of western life
The student will be able to analyze the structures of whiteness
The student will be able to articulate the specific challenges of building Christian community in the western world

REQUIRED READINGS: please purchase online


White Fragility: Why it’s So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism, by Robin Diangelo, Beacon Press, 2018 (This book is to be read before the start of class)

Selected Poems and Short Stories -- will be distributed before or during class

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Reading and class participation: All Students including auditors are expected to do all the required readings and participate in class discussions. 100% attendance is required of all students.
2. Students will read an assigned section of the book of Acts and an assigned section of the Commentary on Acts as well as an assigned poem or short story (that the professor will select) before the beginning of each class period. The schedule of assigned readings will be published before the course starts.

3. Students for Certificate and degree credit will write three one-page reflections on these materials to be submitted the day before class. Students may be called on to read their reflections to the class. More details will be given in class.

4. Basic degree students (Diploma; MA; M.Div) will be required to do an additional written assignment after the course; details will be distributed in class. Approximately 750-1250 words/3-5 pages.

5. Advanced degree students (Th.M) will be required to do an additional written assignment after the course; details will be distributed in class. Approximately 3000-35 words/12-14 pages.