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**IDS 151 C**  
**MESSIAH COLLEGE CORE**  
**CREATED AND CALLED FOR COMMUNITY**  
**COURSE SYLLABUS**

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Instructor: Cynthia A. Wells, Ph.D.  
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Office: Boyer Hall 101; x7378  
Office Hours: 1:00 –1:50 M, W &  
by appt

Class Meeting Times: MWF 1:50 -2:50  
Meeting Room: Boyer 274

**I. Course Purpose and Description**

**Catalog Description:** The central question to be considered is: “What is my vocation as a faithful steward of God's creation?” Through examining literary, historical, artistic, philosophical and theological works, the student will engage in the biblical themes of forgiveness, compassion, non-violence, peacemaking, justice, and racial and gender reconciliation through the lens of the College’s unique religious identity and foundational values, with a particular focus on the importance of community.

**II. Required Texts**

Bender, H., S. *The Anabaptist Vision*. Scottdale, PA: Herald, 1944.

Jacobsen, D and Sawatsky, R.J. “Gracious Christianity,” unpublished manuscript.

Nouwen, H.. *The Wounded Healer*. New York: Image Books.

Rodriguez, R. R. *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez*. New York: Bantam, 1983.

Tolstoy, L. *Death of Ivan Ilyich*. Translated by Lynn Solotaroff. New York: Bantam Classics, 2004.

Tutu, D. *God Has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time*. New York: Doubleday, 2004.

**III. College-wide Educational Objectives**

1. To develop those abilities essential to liberal education.
2. To gain knowledge common to liberal education.
3. To become biblically literate and theologically reflective.
4. To attain specialized knowledge and abilities in at least one area of study.
5. To develop an understanding of one’s identity and Christian vocation.
6. To develop the intellect and character necessary to express Christian commitments in responsible decisions and actions.
7. To become servants, leaders, and reconcilers in the world.

#### IV. Course Purpose and Objectives

The *Created and Called for Community* course applies the intellectual skills learned in First-Year Seminar to content directly related to Messiah College's Mission, Identity, and Foundational Values. Created in the divine image, students are God's agents for service, leadership, reconciliation in the broader community. The course is designed to "nurture the moral imagination"<sup>1</sup> by asking questions of life and learning, those questions which students must engage in order to participate fully in their academic pursuits, service, and Christian vocation.

All Core Courses Messiah College share common objectives. As a result of completing the course, students will:

1. Students understand the mission and identity and the Confession of Faith of Messiah College.
2. Students explore the biblical and theological implications of the Old Testament emphasis of being created in the image of God and the New Testament emphasis of becoming a new creation.
3. Students are introduced to the defining characteristics of different kinds of communities, including those that are faith-based, academic, national, international, ethnic, inter-ethnic, and professional.
4. Students develop a working definition of Christian Vocation as it relates to reconciliation, service, and leadership.

#### V. Course Expectations

##### 1. Assignments

- a. **Unit Exams:** An essay exam will be given at the end of each unit in this course, creation, community, and vocation respectively. Each exam will be worth 15% of your total course grade, for a combined total of 45% of your course grade. Creation Unit Exam: February 25<sup>th</sup>; Community Unit Exam: April 6<sup>th</sup>; Vocation Unit Exam: During Final Exam Period
- b. **Commonplace Book:** The Commonplace Book is both a literary and reflective journal; it encourages you to imagine connections, examine contrasts, contemplate relationships among ideas, and consider implications. In short, the Commonplace Book is a place to fully comprehend the material, appropriate its meaning, and, thus, to help prepare you to engage in class dialogue. You will be asked to write, on average, two to three entries each week, coinciding with each class period's readings. In addition, periodically you will receive assigned questions to include and reflect upon in the context of your Commonplace Book. I will collect your journals at various points throughout the semester in order to respond to your reflections and questions and assess the quality of your engagement with course material. Grading of the journal will be based on the quality of your engagement with course material, comprehensiveness of readings covered, and your attention to assigned questions. The Commonplace Book will not be graded on spelling, grammar, or mechanics. However, the Commonplace Book must be readable. You will need to purchase a bound book [e.g. bound

journal, spiral notebook] or create an electronic data file to use as your book for the term. You will need to bring your Commonplace book to class each day, as it will serve as a basis for class dialogue. Commonplace Book is worth 15% of your course grade.

- c. **Creation Project.** Students will interact with the assigned texts by producing a project that demonstrates their understanding of a theme of creation, creativity, or stewardship. The assignment may take the form of visual art, music, drama, or creative writing. The finished work must include an artist's statement explaining the connection between the created work and course materials. The Creation Project is worth 10% of the course grade. Due February 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- d. **Rodriguez Essay.** Students will compose an essay following their reading of "Hunger of Memory, addressing the following questions: How do the cultural expectations of family, ethnic group, and religious community influence Rodriguez's life? Where and when do they conflict with some of his hopes and dreams? What are your experiences in reconciling individual desires with fulfilling the expectations of the communities of which you are a part? This essay is worth 10% of the course grade. Due April 11<sup>th</sup>.
- e. **Faith Journey Map.** The faith journey map is a culmination project enabling the student to integrate themes of creation, community, and Christian Vocation in application to his or her own life context. Students will trace their religious and spiritual roots from birth to the date of the assignment. Students will analyze how particular communities and/or the absence of particular community contexts have shaped their journey of faith. Students will imagine how these contexts and experiences have shaped vision of Christian Vocation. Finally, these ideas and questions should be interwoven into a meaningful "product". Students may develop a script based on interviews with influential family or home community members who can offer perspective on the development of the student's faith narrative. Students may choose to visually represent a metaphor of their faith journey. Course themes and content should be embodied in the final product. Students will present their "Faith Journey Maps" via display in the residence hall. The Faith Journey Map is worth 15% of the course grade. Due May 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- f. **Class Participation.** Participation in course dialogue is a central objective of the course. Class participation, as such, will account for 5% of your course grade.

## 2. Attendance and Participation

This course is a seminar; active participation is an essential aspect of the learning experience. Much of our class time will be devoted to discussion; faithful attendance is essential. Students are expected to arrive on time and be prepared to contribute to class discussion and activities by reading the assigned materials. While you will not be given an attendance grade, poor attendance will negatively affect your grade. All absences are considered unexcused unless you document a reason for your absence: illness, family emergency, intercollegiate athletics contest, academic or arts competition, or class field trip.

### 3. Grading

- a. Criteria: The purpose of all course assignments is to enhance your engagement with key ideas and to fulfill the learning objectives of this course. All course papers, exams, and projects will be graded on creativity, coherence, and organization/presentation. All assignments, with the exception of the Commonplace Book, will be graded on mechanics (grammar, spelling, citations).
- b. Formats. All papers must be submitted typed; format should be double-spaced using a 12-point font with one-inch margins on every side.
- c. APA Guidelines: Your assignments should conform to citation guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA) or Modern Language Association (MLA).
- d. Late Assignments: If you cannot complete an assignment on time, please contact me in advance. If you do not complete an assignment on time and do not contact me, you will receive a zero for the assignment. Except in unique circumstances, all late assignments will receive an appropriate point deduction.

### VI. Course Competencies and Expectations

1. **Inclusive language**: Please use inclusive language when speaking about or addressing human beings in written and oral communication. The process of changing from more habitual language patterns to more inclusive ones is not easy, and it is expected that a spirit of grace will be present in the classroom as we help one another move toward inclusive language patterns.(see Appendix A).
2. **Academic Integrity**. Academic integrity is a value central to Messiah College. Essentially, academic integrity supports the value of ideas and of personal integrity. Giving the impression that you have written or thought something that you have actually borrowed from another violates the precepts of academic integrity and thus our expectations of students. ([www.messiah.edu/advisinghandbook/academic/integrity.shtml](http://www.messiah.edu/advisinghandbook/academic/integrity.shtml)).

### VII. **Miscellaneous**

1. Messiah College welcomes students with disabilities. Any student whose disability falls within guidelines provided by the American with Disabilities Act should inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester of any special accommodations/equipment needs necessary to complete the requirements for this course. Students must register documentation with the Office of Disability Services located in Hoffman Hall. If you have questions, call extension 5358.
2. I look forward to getting to know you and to partnering with you toward a fulfilling experience this term. If questions arise or you would like to discuss anything with me outside of the class setting, please come to my office hours or contact me to set up an appointment. If you have a personal emergency, you may call me at home [432-1365]. Please contact me at the college for course-related questions.
3. I would be most comfortable if you called me Cynthia.

4. This course is a pilot. I am pleased to walk this journey of a new course with you. Throughout the course, I will invite your feedback and ideas in order to document areas of improvement and strength for the future. I encourage you to share your feedback on the course and its content at any point during the course. Your ideas and input are invaluable to me as your instructor and to the college as it pursues excellence in education.

## VIII. Course Schedule

### UNIT ONE: CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

*Earth's crammed with heaven / And every common bush afire with God.*  
-Elizabeth Barrett Browning

RP-Reading Packet  
LR-Library Reserve  
BB-Blackboard

| <b>Class Dates</b>     | <b>Topic/Assignments</b>  |
|------------------------|---|
| Monday, January 31     | <b>Course Overview and Introductions</b><br>Syllabus Review   |
| Wednesday, Feb 2       | <b>Biblical Theologies of Creation</b><br>Read Birch, B. C. "In the Image of God." In <i>What Does the Lord Require?:</i> RP 1-12<br>Johnson, J. W. "Creation." In <i>God's Trombones</i> . African American sermon. LR<br>Genesis 1:1-2:25 |
| Friday, February 4     | <b>Biblical Theologies of Creation [cont]</b><br>Read Jacobsen, D. & Sawatsky, R. J. "Introduction" and "God and Creation." In<br><i>Gracious Christianity</i>  |
| Monday, February 7     | <b>Story as Creative Act</b><br>Read L'Engle, M. "Story As Creative Act." In <i>The Rock That Is Higher</i> To be<br>supplied<br>Tolkein, J. R. "Leaf by Niggle," RP 13-26<br>Exodus 31:1-5   |
| Wednesday, February 9  | <b>Stewardship of Creation</b><br>Read Sheldon, J. K., and Foster, D. K. "What Knowledge Is Required for<br>Responsible Stewardship of Creation?." <i>Christian Scholar's Review</i> . RP<br>27-35.<br>Psalm 104; Isaiah 40: 21-31          |
| Friday, February 11    | <b>Stewardship of Creation [cont]</b>   |
| Monday, February 14    | <b>Creation Calls Forth Reconciliation</b><br>Read Jacobsen, D., & Sawatsky, R. J., "Humankind," In <i>Gracious Christianity</i> .<br>2 Corinthians 5: 17-21  |
| Wednesday, February 16 | <b>Exploring our Creativity</b><br>Read Walker, A. "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens." In <i>Search of Our Mothers'</i><br><i>Gardens: Womanist Prose</i> . LR<br>John 1:1-5   |

Thursday, February 17

*Core Convocation: 9:45 a.m.*

*Dr. Josiah Young, Speaker*

*Miller Auditorium*

*[All Core Students Required to Attend]*

Friday, February 18

**Exploring Our Creativity**

Read Dillard, A. "Chapter One." In *The Writing Life*. RP 36-45

Acts 17:24-30

Monday, February 21

**Creation as Visual Art**

Read Wolfe, G. "Art, Faith, and the Stewardship of Culture." *Image*. RP 46-50

Wednesday, February 23

**Sharing of Creative Projects**

Friday, February 25

**Exam: Creation Unit**

## UNIT TWO: COMMUNITY

Monday, February 28

**Christian Community: The Church**

Read : Exodus 19-20

O'Conner, Flannery, "The Displaced Person", LR

Wednesday, March 2

**Christian Community: The Church**

Read: *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, BB

Jacobsen, D., & Sawatsky, R. J. "Being Church." Gracious Christianity

Acts 1-2

Friday, March 4

**Christian Community: The Church**

Read: Bender, H. S. *The Anabaptist Vision* (1944)

Jacobsen, D., & Sawatsky, R. J. "Spirit and Life." Gracious Christianity

Acts 3-4

March 5-13

***No Class-Spring Recess***

Monday, March 14

**Campus Community**

Read Bogue, E. G. "An Agenda of Common Caring: The Call for  
Community in Higher Education." RP 51-61

Messiah College *Community Covenant* from *Student Handbook*.

Hosea 4: 1-6

Wednesday, March 16

**Community in the United States**

Read: King, M. L. King, Jr. (1963). "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" BB

John 17

- Thursday, March 17 *Core Boyer Convocation, 9:45 a.m.*  
*Speaker, Dr. Paul Boyer*  
*Meet in Miller Auditorium*  
*[All Core Students Required to Attend]*
- Friday, March 18 **Community in the United States [cont]**  
 Read: Putnam, R. D. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital" RP 62-69  
 Putnam, R. D. "Bowling Together: The United States of America." *The American Prospect*. BB  
 John 17
- Monday, March 21 **International & Inter-ethnic Community**  
 Read Gordimer, N. "African Emergent." RP 70-78
- Wednesday, March 23 **International & Inter-ethnic Community**  
 Read Anyi, W. "The Destination." RP 79-92
- Friday, March 25 *No Class: Easter Recess*
- Monday, March 28 *No Class: Easter Recess*
- Wednesday, March 30 **Community Challenges & Authority**  
 Read: Rodriguez, R. (1983). *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez*. New York: Bantam.
- Friday, April 1 **Community Challenges & Authority [cont]**  
*Rodriguez Essay Due*
- Monday, April 4 **Building Community in the Public Sphere**  
 Read: Luke 10:25-37 and Matthew 5  
 Jacobsen, D., & Sawatsky, R. J. "The Future" and "Conclusion"  
 Roth, J.D. In God We Trust. RP 93-108
- Wednesday, April 6 **Unit Exam: Community**

### UNIT THREE: VOCATION

*The place God calls us to is the place where our own deep gladness  
 and the world's deep hunger meet.*

–Frederick Buechner

- Friday, April 8 **A Foundational Theology of Christian Vocation**  
 Read: Smith, G. "Thinking Vocationally" In *Courage & Calling: Embracing Your God-Given Potential*. RP 109-117  
 Sittser, G. *The Will of God as a Way of Life*. RP 118-128  
 Buechner, F. "Vocation." From *Wishful Thinking* RP 129  
 Romans 12

- Monday, April 11 **God's Hope for the World**  
 Read: Tutu, D. (2004). *God Has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our World*.  
 Introduction; Chapters 1-4  
 Ephesians 4: 1-16
- Wednesday, April 13 **God's Hope for the World and Your Life**  
 Read Tutu, D. (2004). Chapters 5-8, Postscript  
 Jacobsen, D., & Sawatsky, R. J. "Hearing God's Voice."
- Friday, April 15 **Spiritual Renewal**  
 Read Eliot, T.S. The Four Quartets RP 130-144  
 Jacobsen, D.J. and Sawatsky, R.J. Fullness of Salvation in *Gracious Christianity*  
 1 Corinthians 12-13
- Monday, April 18 **Discernment**  
 Guest Speaker: Personal Strengths Career Development
- Wednesday, April 20 **Service, Sacrifice, and Longing**  
 Read: Nouwen, The Wounded Healer  
 The Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi RP 145  
 Mark 8: 31-38  
 See Film: Babette's Feast Viewing Times TBD Week of April 11<sup>th</sup>
- Thursday, April 21 **Service Day**  
 Class Participation as a Group
- Friday, April 22 **Reconciliation and Justice**  
 Read: Hines and DeYoung (2000). "First Things First" and "A Godly Explosion that Brings Cohesion." *Beyond Rhetoric: Reconciliation as a Way of Life*. RP 164-179  
 Acts 10  
 Douglas, Frederick. *Narratives in the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave: Written by Himself, Chapter 10* BB
- Monday, April 25 **Reconciliation and Justice [cont]**
- Wednesday, April 27 **Compassion and Leadership**  
 Read: Tolstoy. "The Death of Ivan Illych"  
 Mahan, B. J. "Forgetting Ourselves on Purpose." In *Vocation and the Ethics of Ambition*. RP 180-194
- Thursday, April 28 **Core Convocation**  
 Speaker: Lauren Winner

*Meet in Frey 110*  
*[All core students required to attend]*

Friday, April 29

**The Outcome of Lives of Vocation**

Read: Schweitzer, Albert, "I Resolve to Become a Jungle Doctor," *Out of My Life and Thought: An Autobiography*. RP 195-204

Monday, May 2

**Sharing of Faith Journey Maps**

Final Exam Period

**Unit Exam: Vocation**

## STATEMENT ON INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

### Rationale

In its statement of Foundational Values, Messiah College recognizes the importance of the person, affirming that every person is to be respected and valued . . . because each person is created in the image of God. Divinely created and sharing equally in God's design, each human is worthy of respect and honor, regardless of characteristics including but not limited to gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, ability, or marital or parental. As an expression of that conviction and in recognition of God's gift of love to each of us, inclusive language should be used in all levels and forms of communication at the College in reference to human beings.

Further, the College's Foundational Values affirm that every person must be responsible in their pursuit of truth. Every member of this educational Christian community-teacher and learner; scholar and thinker; faculty, staff, and student-should uphold the pursuit of truth, using language that seeks to avoid false assumptions and inaccurate or negative stereotypes, biases, or prejudices. We uphold the use of communication that reflects a high ethical standard of truth-seeking and scholarship by avoiding misrepresentation or discrimination of any kind. As an expression of that commitment to truth, inclusive language is used to achieve clarity by neither rendering certain people invisible nor misrepresenting by overemphasizing or generalizing traits of individuals or groups.

Language, as a means of signifying and communicating, is not static or value-free. It is, by its very nature, fluid and dynamic. Thus, patterns and significance of language evolve as culture and ethos change. Language is a powerful means of not only reflecting culture but also constructing and reinforcing beliefs and biases. It describes reality, but it also shapes reality. The use of inclusive language provides a means of positively influencing the social environment by contributing to the sense of worth, empowerment, freedom, and ability of all human beings. At Messiah, it thereby has a positive impact on campus climate, allowing all members of the community to function in an environment of equal opportunity and expectation.

Because of our Christian frame of reference and in recognition of the ways that language shapes as well as reflects culture, Messiah College has a particular responsibility to assure that language is used in ways that do not exclude members of the community or distort the significance of contributions made by all persons to our historical and present-day experience. Through our communication and use of language, greater sensitivity motivated by love becomes the norm.

In sum, Messiah College is a Christian community of divinely created beings informed by God's love and pursuing truth in every endeavor. We are committed to the use of inclusive language as a means of reflecting our Christian commitment and responsibility as we serve as a creative and liberating force in the world.

## Policy

Definition of Inclusive Language: Inclusive language is written or verbal communication that accurately reflects and affirms the presence, role, status, and value of all members of society by trying to avoid language that excludes certain groups of individuals or that distorts the role or value of those individuals in the community.

Forms of Exclusive or Discriminatory Language. Improper language usage can lead to various forms of blatant inaccuracy and discrimination. Inclusive language seeks to remedy forms of linguistic discrimination. (N.B. For a person who is not part of the excluded or affected group, it is difficult to perceive the discriminatory nature of his or her language and thus requires extra sensitivity and receptiveness.) The following illustrate examples of linguistic discrimination:

Invisibility occurs when certain phrases exclude or ignore a person or group (e.g., using he to mean people of either gender). Inclusive language acknowledges the presence of such unrepresented persons or groups.

Extra visibility occurs when a personal characteristic irrelevant to the context is emphasized, making the individual or group seem out of the norm (e.g., a blind singer or a Chinese doctor rather than simply a singer or a doctor when the modifier to the subject has no bearing on the topic discussed). Inclusive language refuses to place extra emphasis on irrelevant differences.

Trivialization occurs when certain phrases unnecessarily devalue or denigrate the actions, activities, and occupations of a person or group (e.g., even a woman can do it). Inclusive language avoids the belittlement of individuals and groups.

Stereotyping occurs when oversimplified and overgeneralized labels are applied to a person or group, thereby denying individuality (e.g., African-Americans are good dancers). Inclusive language refuses to limit or pigeonhole any individual or group.

Imposed labeling occurs when individuals or groups (often minority or less powerful groups) have a name or term given to them by another individual or group (e.g., Euro-Americans historically called Americans of African heritage Negroes but that group's generally preferred name for themselves is African-Americans). Inclusive language avoids the use of such labels or allows the group to define themselves. It is important to be aware of and honor the way a group prefers to be named. It must be recognized that sometimes particular groups- preferences and labels change or are in flux and one specific appellation may not be embraced as the norm.

**Policy Statement:** Messiah College calls for all members of the College community to be informed and intentional about the use of inclusive language. Further, Messiah College expects members of the College community to use inclusive language in official written and oral communication intended for internal and external audiences. For some, this requires an intentional shift from habitual usage; grace should be exercised as community members conscientiously try to adhere to the policy. This policy should be understood within the context of the basic tenets of academic freedom, and is a complement to, rather than an infringement of, the College's policy on Academic Freedom.