

# Justice, Reconciliation, and Diversity on Biblical and Theological Grounds

## GE Proposal: IS 193-M, “Engaging Cultures”

### Statement of Rationale

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#### Statement of Rationale: Introduction

Introduction: I am proposing that a course taught abroad on the Westmont in Mexico program—IS 193-M, Engaging Cultures—be considered to meet the JRD GE requirement. While our department had originally planned to propose that the Spanish capstone course (SP 196) meet this requirement, we were advised to choose another course that would serve a broader swath of students from a variety of majors. We therefore landed on IS 193, a required course on WIM, a semester abroad program that attracts students from multiple disciplines. For example, in both 2022 and 2024, the 18 participants in WIM each year represented 11 distinct majors—from the arts and humanities to engineering and pre-health majors.

Additionally, addressing the JRD in this particular course could potentially bring something new because it would center the Latine/Hispanic experience in discussions of race, racism, justice, and reconciliation—in both the US and in Mexico—while also addressing the black experience as well (in both countries). As the Latino and Latina student population at Westmont is rapidly growing, we feel this is a particularly relevant topic.

Please note: I teach IS 193 this fall on WIM, and I am also submitting a Mayterm proposal for a “Mayterm in Mexico” that will offer this same course but, because it is more compressed, will focus primarily on the issues of race, class, and culture. I hope to teach this, if approved, in 2027.

#### Certification Criteria

**Criterion 1:** *Courses satisfying this GE will develop biblically and theologically grounded understandings of justice, reconciliation, and diversity. These will enable students to understand justice and reconciliation in terms of the gospel and appropriate disciplinary frameworks, recognize sin, rebellion, and brokenness as such, and discern their responsibility in the work of justice and reconciliation within their own local context.*

This certification will be met through readings, lectures, and class discussions:

- Several chapters from *Faithful Antiracism: Moving Past Talk to Systemic Change*, by Christina Barland Edmondson & Chad Brennan:
  - Ch. 2, “Faithful Antiracists Apply the Bible”
  - Ch. 3, “Faithful Antiracists Stand for Justice”
  - Ch. 8, “Faithful Antiracists Follow the Example of the Early Christians”
  - Ch. 11, “Faithful Antiracists Help to Change Our Society”
- Additional articles include:
  - González, Justo L., “Poverty,” chapter 2 in *Santa Biblia: The Bible Through Hispanic Eyes*.

- Tamez, Elsa, “Racial and cultural revelations of God,” chapter 2 in David Batstone, ed., *New Visions for the Americas: Religious Engagement and Social Transformation*.
- Soerens, Matthew & Jenny Yang, “Thinking Biblically about Immigration,” chapter 5 in *Welcoming the Stranger: Justice, Compassion, & Truth in the Immigration Debate*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.
- Optional selections from M. Daniel Carroll R., *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

Assignments include answering guided questions on the readings and writing regular reading logs on the selections, all of which serve as a basis for class discussions as well as notes for both their final paper on their overall growth in Mexico (see syllabus) as well as an essay on a “Faithful Response to Race and Racism.” In this 4-5-page essay, students will articulate the following: (1) How have your views of race and racism (both in the US and in Mexico) been affected by what you have learned thus far? (2) Taking into account what you have learned about these topics from a *biblical perspective*, how will you utilize and incorporate the knowledge you have gained in your life of faith and Christian practice? (In other words, what present and future actions might this learning inspire?) These written assignments, as well as class participation, will be the primary assessment in this area.

**Criterion 2:** *Courses satisfying this GE will examine personal actions, social norms, and systemic practices involving race and racism in the United States as they relate to historic and contemporary patterns of belonging and exclusion, attending to how historical particularities and differences in power shape the responsibilities different parties have in the work of justice and reconciliation in light of God’s kingdom.* (

This certification will be met through readings, lectures, and videos; regular reading logs; class discussions; the final essay; and both formal and informal oral presentations by the students. Readings and video homework include introductory readings on the concept of race, whiteness and mestizaje; the history of race and racism in the United States (with particular emphasis on the Mexican American experience); and race and racism in Latin America, with particular emphasis on Mexico.

### **Race: Introduction**

- “The Difference Between Us,” episode 1 in *Race: the Power of an Illusion* (video series) **OR** chapters 2 & 3 in Goodman, Moses & Jones, *Race: Are We So Different?*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. > “Inventing Race” (ch. 2) & “Creating Race” (ch. 3).
- Goodman, Moses & Jones, “Inventing Whiteness,” chapter 5 in *Race: Are We So Different?*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.
- Núñez, Cecilia et al., “Latino is not a Race,” UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Institute
- “Are Mexicans White?” video clip, *American Experience* 21:4 (PBS)
- Gómez, Laura, “The Elusive Quest for Whiteness,” chapter 3 in *Inventing Latinos: A New Story of American Racism*
- Navarro, “For many Latinos, racial identity is more culture than color” (NY Times)

### **Race and Racism in the US**

- Goodman, Moses & Jones, “Living with Race and Racism,” chapter 7 in *Race: Are We So Different?*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

- “Views of how much discrimination racial and ethnic groups in the US face,” Pew Research Center, 2025 (comparative analysis)
- *Voces: American Historia, The Untold History of Latinos* (3-hour PBS video series) > selections
- “Understanding systemic racism and resulting inequity in Latino communities,” 2021 Executive Summary, UnidosUS.
- “The history of discrimination against Mexican Americans” (video clip, PBS)
- Blakemore, Erin, “The long history of anti-Latino discrimination in America,” History.com

*The articles above are core readings; the articles below will be divided into several teams, depending upon their interest (e.g., history, sociology, medicine, immigration, politics, etc.). Each team will prepare a formal oral presentation (with visuals and discussion questions) to the class on 1-2 of the articles below:*

- Gómez, Laura, “Idealized Mestizaje and Anti-Black and Anti-Indian Racism,” chapter 2 in *Inventing Latinos: A New Story of American Racism*
- “Latino sounds of anti-blackness with Fordham Law Professor Tanya Hernández” (1-hour video lecture on Houston Public Media)
- Noé-Bustamante, “Latinos Experience discrimination from other Latinos as much as from non-Latinos” (Pew Research Center, 2022)
- Molina, Natalia, “How scientific racialization shapes Mexican immigration 1848-present” (video lecture by UCSD professor of history and urban studies)
- Blakemore, Erin, “The largest mass deportation in American history,” History.com (about “Operation Wetback”)
- Findling, Mary G. et al., “Discrimination in the United States: Experiences of Latinos” (dealing with health care, 2019)
- Canizales, Stephanie L. & Jody Agius Vallejo, “Latinos and Racism in the Trump Era” (2021)

### **Race and Racism in Mexico & Latin America**

- Charles, Mark & Soong-Chan Rah. “The Doctrine of Discovery and Why it Matters,” chapter 1 in *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing, Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery*
- Vision, Ben III. “Wayward mixtures: the problem of race in the colonies” in *Before Mestizaje: The Frontiers of Race and Caste in Colonial Mexico*
- “The caste system in colonial Mexico” (painting analysis)
- Sanabria, Harry, “Cultural Politics of Race & Ethnicity,” chapter 5 in *The Anthropology of Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.
- Wolf, Eric R. “The Virgin of Guadalupe: A Mexican National Symbol”
- Dulitzky, Ariel, “A Region in Denial: Racial Discrimination and Racism in Latin America,” chapter 2 in *Neither Enemies nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos*

- Linthecum, Kate, "Mexico's new racial reckoning: A movement protests colorism and white privilege" (LA times)
- Stringer, Thomas, "Understanding Social Class in Mexico: An Intersectional Framework"
- Zizumbo-Colunga, Daniel, "Study reveals racial inequality in Mexico"
- Krozer, Alice & Andrea Gómez, "Not in the Eye of the Beholder: Racialization, Whiteness, and Beauty Standards in Mexico," *Latin American Research Review*, 2023
- "The Hidden Black History of Mexico" (PBS video)

Optional readings:

- Tellez & Flores, "Whiteness, Nation, and Status in Latin America"
- Chanady, "Identity, Politics, and Mestizaje"
- Wade, "Race in Latin America"
- Collier, "Restructuring Ethnicity in Chiapas and the World"
- López Caballero, "Which heritage for which heirs?"

As above, assignments include answering guided questions on the readings and writing regular reading logs on the articles/videos, all of which serve as a basis for class discussions and both their final paper on their overall growth in Mexico (see syllabus) as well as an essay on a "Faithful Response to Race and Racism" (described above).

Here, reading logs will not only include reflections on the readings themselves, but must also include students' own observations (in the US and abroad). At times, interviews with locals will also be required and will be shared with the class during discussions. Additionally, following discussion of core readings, students will be divided into teams of 3 to delve deeper into an issue of their choice, read 2-3 articles (from the optional list), and then prepare a coherent group oral presentation to the class summarizing the articles (using PPT/visuals) and preparing discussion questions. Near the end of the semester the students will also write a final paper (4-6 pages) addressing their growth in this area (see below for essay prompt).

**Criterion 3:** *Courses satisfying this GE will model Christlike dialogue reflecting God's desire for justice and reconciled relationships among all image-bearers, especially when confronting challenging or sensitive issues.*

This certification will primarily be met as the professor evaluates students' attitudes and behavior during class discussions. All students will receive a participation grade; part of this grade deals with how students engage each other with thoughtfulness, respect, and empathy.

In our first class meeting, we will discuss specifically the section of the syllabus dealing with "Honor and Respect in the Classroom": *Westmont's Community Life Statement calls us to treat each other according to two commands from Jesus: "Love one another as I have loved you," and "Love your neighbor as yourself." Further, our Diversity Matters document indicates that as we abide by these commandments, we learn to honor and respect one another. In this class, we will embody these commitments as we interact with one another and with the class material.*

Students will receive a participation grade at the midterm and conclusion of the semester. A significant part of the grade involves how students listen to, engage with, and treat each other in class.