

# CANADIAN SCHOOL OF PEACEBUILDING CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

## Covenants of Peace and Justice

BTS-5995/3 (graduate)  
SESSION I – JUNE 6-10, 2011

### Course Syllabus

**INSTRUCTORS:** Stan McKay

**TIMES:** SESSION I – JUNE 6-10, 2011, 9am-5pm

**E-MAIL:** [dotmckay@mts.net](mailto:dotmckay@mts.net)

---

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce a Cree Christian perspective on living in covenant relationships. An examination of biblical covenants, historic First Nations treaties and contemporary struggles for justice will be the focus for exploring the role of peacemakers in a global context. There will be discussion about the centrality of the natural world in developing approaches to peacemaking. There will be time each day in “sharing circles,” which will enable students to share from their perspectives and learn from each other. The final day may include a feast and conversations about our philosophies of life that help or hinder our work for justice and peace. Bring a folding chair or blanket so that we can spend time outdoors for a part of each day.

*The course is offered either for training or for 3 hours of academic credit.*

## CORE TEXTS AND DISCRETIONARY READING

Core Texts:

Miller, James Roger, Compact, Contract, Covenant  
Aboriginal Treaty Making in Canada  
(University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 2009)

Boldt, Menno and Long, J. Anthony, editors  
The Quest for Justice, Aboriginal Peoples and Aboriginal Rights  
(University of Toronto Press, 1985)

Ross, Rupert, Return to the Teachings, Exploring Aboriginal Justice  
(Penguin Books, Toronto, 1996)

Suggested discretionary texts:

Canada Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples,  
Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples  
(Ottawa: The Commission, 1996)

Canada, Office of the Treaty Commissioner,  
Treaty Implementation: Fulfilling the Covenant  
(Saskatoon, Sask.: Office of the Treaty Commissioner, 2007)

Brown, Terry and Lind, Christopher,  
Justice as Mission, An Agenda for the Church  
(Trinity Press, Burlington Ontario, 1985)

Baum, Gregory and Wells, Harold, editors  
The Reconciliation of Peoples, Challenge to the Churches  
(Orbis Books, New York, 1997)

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES** (for credit)

The following are the general outlines of requirements for those taking the class for credit. Others are encouraged to read as much as possible, however, in order to receive maximum benefit from the course. Assignments can be submitted in person during the course or via email to the instructor, \_\_\_\_@\_\_\_\_.

ASSIGNMENT	DUE DATE	VALUE
<i>Pre-course reading reflection</i>	<i>June 6</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Reflective Essay</i>	<i>June 10</i>	<i>30%</i>
<i>Oral Participation</i>	<i>June 10</i>	<i>15%</i>
<i>Final Research Essay</i>	<i>July 16</i>	<i>40%</i>

## **Assignment Guidelines** (for credit)

### ***Pre-course reading reflection (20%) Due first day of class***

Read the United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples  
Write an essay focusing on articles 8, 11, 15, 21, 25, 28 and 33. You may also wish to address other articles. Make an assessment on how we have addressed these matters historically. Give examples of actions that you observe by governments that support or undermine the intent of the United Nation. Conclude with a reflection on the delay of the Canadian and the United States governments in signing this declaration.

Value: 20% of final grade. Length: 3 - 4 pages Due: Monday, June 6, 2011, 10:00 a.m.

### ***Reflective Essay:***

Write a 2 - 3 page essay. Choose either a or b

The class on Tuesday will focus on biblical records of covenant and the Southern Numbered Treaties from the sixth chapter of Compact, Contract, Covenant, Miller, J. R.

- Write a reflection on the biblical accounts of an evolving understanding of covenant and conclude with a section on how this relates to treaties in Canada.
- Write a reflection on Chapter 6 of Compact, Contract, Covenant, pages 150 - 186, with particular attention to the struggle between the written and oral traditions. Conclude with a section on how a biblical understanding is relevant to treaty making.

Value: 30% of final grade. Due: Friday, June 10 at 10:00 a.m.

### ***Oral Participation***

At 12:00 noon on Friday, June 10, 2011, the students enrolled in the course for credit will be a part of a sharing circle (with the instructor) to reflect on the learnings during the week.

Value: 15% of final mark

### ***Final Research Paper:***

Renewing Treaties and Covenants in a Journey to Justice and Peace

What are the issues that changed the approach to “treaty making” in Canada’s history? The Quest for Justice and a Returning to the Teachings for Aboriginal Peoples is creating energy for the work of reconciliation. Reflect on the Royal Commissions on Aboriginal Peoples’s recommendations for change in the Canadian society. Can peacemakers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century be wholistic and incorporate the need for environmental healing as a component of the task for us, and those who are yet unborn? How do we participate in the renewal of treaties and covenants?

Value: 35% of final grade Length: 10 - 15 pages, Due: July 15, 2011, 5:00 p.m.

## **STYLISTIC REQUIREMENTS**

The final paper should follow an accepted academic format for citations, bibliography, etc. (e.g. APA, Chicago). You may choose the format but whichever you use, be sure to use it properly and consistently.

## **EVALUATION**

*Note: Canadian Mennonite University Academic Office will mail marks to students in September. It is the responsibility of the instructor and the student to arrange how to return marked papers/projects to the students.*

In general, I expect you to *follow the guidelines* of the assignment and to discuss deviations from them with me before turning it in. In evaluating your work, *quality* is more important than quantity. I appreciate creativity, clear expression of ideas, evidence of engagement with the reading and class sessions, and projects that are of real interest and value to you.

In your papers, be sure to avoid any form of *plagiarism*. If you have doubts about what is appropriate, a useful website is <http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/>. Plagiarism is a serious issue and will result in grade reduction or action by the university (see university policy on this).

Good communication skills are essential for justice and peacebuilding work. Students will be expected to communicate knowledgeably, clearly, effectively, concisely and persuasively. All written work should be well informed, well organized and well documented.

Each completed assignment will be given a numerical grade (according to its value toward the final grade) and the corresponding letter grade. The final mark for each student is determined by the sum total of all numerical grades, which is then assigned a letter grade according to the scale below.

## **LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Handing an assignment late should be arranged with the instructor before the due date for the assignment. If the due date is already past, marks will be deducted for the papers. The Canadian School of Peacebuilding has set Aug 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011 as the very last day that students can hand work into instructors. This is so grading can be completed and share with students as quickly as possible.

## LETTER GRADE/PERCENTAGE SCALE

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Points	Descriptor
A+	95-100	4.5	Exceptional
A	88-94	4	Excellent
B+	81-87	3.5	Very Good
B	74-80	3	Good
C+	67-73	2.5	Satisfactory
C	60-67	2	Adequate
D	50-59	1	Marginal
F	0-49		Failure

<b><u>Criteria</u></b>	<b>A - Excellent</b>	<b>B - Competent</b>	<b>C - Below Expectations</b>
<b>CONTENT</b> (quality of the information/ideas and sources/details used to support them)	- has clarity of purpose - has depth of content - displays insight or originality of thought -demonstrates quality and breadth of resources	- has clarity of purpose - has substantial information and sufficient support - contains some originality of thought -uses quality resources	- has clarity of purpose -lacks depth of content and may depend on generalities or the commonplace - has little originality of thought -uses mostly quality resources
<b>STRUCTURE</b> (logical order or sequence of the writing)	- is coherent and logically developed -uses very effective transitions	- is coherent and logically developed -uses smooth transitions	- is coherent and logically (but not fully) developed -has some awkward transitions
<b>CONVENTIONS</b> (appearance of the writing: sentence structure, usage, mechanics, documentation)	- has virtually no errors of conventions	- has minimal errors of conventions	- is understandable <u>but</u> has noticeable problems of sentence structure, usage, mechanics or documentation
<b>STYLE</b> (personality of the writing: word choice, sentence variety, voice, attention to audience)	- is concise, eloquent and rhetorically effective -has nicely varied sentence structure -is engaging throughout and enjoyable to read	- displays concern for careful expression -has some variation in sentence structure -is generally enjoyable to read	- has some personality <u>but</u> lacks imagination and may be stilted and may rely on clichés -has little variation in sentence structure -is not very interesting to read

**NOTE:** The CMU *Student Handbook* is a useful guide for further information on CMU policies regarding grades, academic misconduct, and appeals. Grades are not final until vetted and approved by the Dean's Office.

## **FINAL DATE FOR WITHDRAWAL**

Final date to withdraw from this course without academic penalty is June 10, 2011.

## SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

Draft 3/22/10 – Subject to change

### Monday, June 6

10:00 -12:00 Introductions: - smudging ceremony (optional) and circle of sharing, likely meeting outdoors  
Traditional Cree values  
- peace in extended family and community  
- use of teachings, ceremonies and traditions  
Readings:

Returning to the Teachings, Ross, Rupert (Penguin Books, Toronto, 1996) chapter 1, pages 5 - 28

*Canada. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Ottawa : The Commission, 1996). READ Vol. 4, Chapter 3 – Elder's Perspectives*  
Also available online: <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ap/rrc-eng.asp>

1:00 – 5:00 Interdependence - commercial life, peace treaties, friendship and alliances  
Readings:  
Compact, Contract, Covenant, Aboriginal Treaty Making in Canada  
Miller, J. R., (University of Toronto Press, Incorporated, 2009)  
Chapters 1, pages 3 - 32

### Tuesday, June 7

9:00 – 12:00 Biblical Covenants and the Numbered Treaties  
Readings: Genesis 9: 8 - 17 and Jeremiah 31: 31 - 34  
The Quest for Justice, Boldt and Long,  
(University of Toronto Press, 1985, pages 165 - 179

1:00 - 5:00 Treaties 1, 4, and 5 - negotiations on the prairies. What is the spirit and intent of the treaties/ What is the significance of an annual payment?  
Readings:  
The Quest for Justice, Boldt and Long, pages 19 - 46  
Compact, Contract, Covenant, Miller, pages 123 - 149

### Wednesday

9:00 – 12:00 Treaties and Justice  
- the experience of moving together and apart  
- economic upheaval and political marginalization  
- clash of philosophies of life  
Readings:  
Returning to the Teachings, Ross, Rupert, chapters 3 and 4, pages 52 - 100  
Compact, Contract, Covenant, Miller, J. R. chapter 9, pages 250 - 282

1:00 - 5:00 Modern Challenges

- societal issues and social disintegration
- residential schools and compulsory education
- child care and incarceration

#### **Thursday, June 9**

- 9:00 - 12:00      The Natural Order and Resource Development
- peacemaking and the environment
  - “all my relations” teaching
  - “fall of creation” teaching
  - Anthropocentric concept of salvation
- 1:00 - 5:00      Case Study - Manitoba Hydro Development and the Inter-Church Task Force
- Readings:  
Quest for Justice, Boldt and Long, pages 286 - 303

#### **Friday, June 10**

- 9:00 – 12:00      Treaties as Peace Covenants
- Readings:  
 Canada. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (Ottawa : The Commission, 1996). READ Vol 2 Restructuring the Relationship– Part I, Chapter 2– Treaties, Also available online:  
<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ap/rrc-eng.asp>  
Compact, Contract, Covenant, Miller J. R., Chapter 2, pages 33 - 65
- 12:00              Sharing Circle
- 12:30 - Possibly arranging a feast outdoors
- 1:00 – 3:00      Carrying First Nation’s Teachings of Respect and Humility (non-violence) into the Future
- How do we work for justice and peace?  
 Can we be a part of a peace treaty?  
 Are we all treaty people?
- Readings:  
 Canada. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (Ottawa : The Commission, 1996). READ Vol 5 – Renewal: a 20 year Commitment, Chapter 1 – Laying the Foundations of a Renewed Relationship  
 Also available online: <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ap/rrc-eng.asp>
- Compact, Contract, Covenant, Miller, J. R.  
 (University of Toronto Press, Incorporated, 2009)  
 Chapter 10

Note: Coffee Breaks are normally 10:30 - 11:00 a.m. and 2:30 - 3:00 p.m.





