

# Peace and Justice: Latin American Perspectives

**HTE653, 3 credit hours**

## Location

SEMILLA, the Latin American Anabaptist Seminary in Guatemala City, Guatemala

## Dates

January 3–24, 2011; Tentative, depending on airfares and airline schedules

## Registration deadline

October 15, 2010

## Description

This course is offered at the Latin American Anabaptist Seminary (SEMILLA) in Guatemala City. From a Latin American perspective, it explores the biblical understanding and dimensions of peace and justice along with the Anabaptist heritage of peacemaking with the purpose of promoting practical Christian ways of preaching peace. The biblical vision of shalom, the life and mission of Jesus Christ, the Anabaptist witness, and the experience and journey of the church in Latin America are examined in order to find light, learning, and inspiration for the task of peace. Special attention will be given to how the followers of Jesus can embody, practice, and witness the holistic message of peace in the midst of challenging situations of suffering, injustice, social conflict, war, and violence. Students take part in activities such as visits to peace and social organizations, testimonies and talks by Guatemalan peacemakers, visits to places of extreme poverty and places affected by injustice and war, visits to historical and Mayan places, and worship in local churches.

## Instructors

Willi Hugo Pérez Lemus, rector of SEMILLA

Ted Koontz, Ph.D., Professor of Ethics and Peace Studies, provides leadership for the group

## Course costs

Costs for the course have three components:

- Tuition and fees for the three-credit hour course (financial aid applies as it would for any Interterm course)
- \$1,675 for expenses at SEMILLA
- \$450–700 for airfare. Students will travel as a group; airline reservations will be made by AMBS for the group.

These costs are based on a **minimum of eight students** participating. If fewer than eight students register, the course will be cancelled.

## **Guatemala Interterm Basics, January 3-24, 2011**

Sponsors: AMBS and SEMILLA (Latin-America Anabaptist Seminary), Guatemala City

**SEMILLA** (“seed” in Spanish) is the name of the Latin American Anabaptist Seminary located in Guatemala City, Guatemala. Every two years AMBS offers a course on location at SEMILLA taught by a seminary faculty member there. During Interterm 2007 Willi Hugo, rector (dean) of the seminary and an AMBS adjunct faculty member, will teach HTE 653, Peace and Justice, Latin American Perspectives. This is an unusual opportunity to learn directly from those who are struggling with the meaning of salvation in the midst of Central American realities.

### **Facilities**

SEMILLA shares a new facility with CASAS (Central American Study and Service) program, a department for language and cultural study for North Americans. AMBS students will be housed in this facility and CASAS will provide meals. Lunch and snack times as well as occasional chapels are shared with CASAS faculty, administration and students. A Spanish/English library is available with significant holdings in areas of theology, anthropology, Latin American and Anabaptist history.

SEMILLA is committed to a philosophy of transformative learning which includes significant cultural and experiential exposure to the realities of Central American life. The regular structure for the AMBS-SEMILLA course taught previously included morning class, afternoon field trips (to view the historical murals at the palace, to a dump, to community projects, etc.), and evening study time. The course included several trips outside Guatemala City—for example, one to an indigenous Kech’i area where Mennonites have been active and one to Antigua to see historic buildings from Roman Catholic mission history.

### **Registration, Cost and Financial Aid**

Registration: *October 15 is the registration deadline. A \$300 non-refundable deposit is due at the time of registration.*

Program: \$1,675 per student includes lodging, meals and transportation to events that are part of the program, including two overnight trips outside Guatemala City. *A \$300 non-refundable deposit is due at the time of*

Airfare: AMBS will book tickets for the group, unless a student makes special arrangements. The estimated cost for round trip travel to Guatemala is between \$450 and \$700. *If airfare is arranged through AMBS, the ticket cost must be paid to AMBS before the ticket will be purchased.*

Tuition and books: tuition costs are the same as for any three-hour class at AMBS and financial aid can be used to cover these costs as it can be used for any other course. There will be some costs of books and copied materials, likely similar to a typical AMBS course.

Spending money. Although CASAS provides all meals, students may want to bring money for snacks, for non-program related travel in the city, and for purchasing crafts. There is a mall with a food court near the SEMILLA building. Although evenings are set aside primarily for reading and writing, some further exploration of the city may be possible at that time. Guatemala is well known for weaving and other kinds of artisan crafts so students may want to bring money for gifts. Bringing \$200 should be adequate for these purposes (unless you want to bring back lots of craft items!)

Getting money in Guatemala. The SEMILLA-CASAS staff will change U.S. cash, travelers checks or personal checks into Guatemalan Quetzales for us.

### **Transportation**

To and from Guatemala. The group will tentatively plan to travel to Guatemala on January 3, 2011 and return on January 24, flying out of Chicago. Transportation to Chicago from AMBS and return will be arranged for those traveling with the group from Elkhart. In the past interested students added several extra days at the end of the class time for additional visits.

*Passport.* You will need a valid passport. It is important that the name on your plane ticket is exactly the same legal name as appears on your passport. Tourist visas for Guatemala are not necessary for US citizens.

*Airport taxes.* Departure tax from Guatemala City was approximately \$30 recently.

Within Guatemala. Since students will be staying on the SEMILLA campus transportation needs will be minimal. Course related travel within and outside the city will be handled by SEMILLA. Bus transportation within the city is not difficult.

### **Health**

Because this is a short term course taught within Guatemala City, there is no need for special vaccinations. Malaria is not a concern in Guatemala City or in the high altitude Ketch'i areas we will hopefully visit. Malaria medicine can be easily obtained in the city if you decide to travel to an area where there is malaria. Although there could be some slight possibility of contracting malaria on a side trip, the potential side effects of taking malaria medicine (nausea) discourage some students from taking it for such a short trip.

Even with precautions taken to prevent sickness, almost every North American who spends any time in Central America gets travelers diarrhea for a day or two. It's simply part of the adjustment process! In many ways a positive attitude goes a long way in keeping students healthy. As well, some suggest taking vitamins can help keep the immune system strong.

It is important to have health insurance with coverage in Central America. While lack of decent health care is a serious problem for many in Guatemala, there are a number of very good hospitals and physicians in Guatemala City. SEMILLA and CASAS students rarely need to use them but they are available.

## **What to Bring**

As people pack their bags they have a tendency to pack too much. Although most people in Guatemala don't have much money, one can buy almost anything.

In terms of clothing there are several things to keep in mind. First, Latin Americans, and Guatemalans in particular, tend to dress well. They often view North Americans as sloppy dressers. So to fit into this culture students are encouraged to dress as do most Guatemalans; comfortably but not sloppily. While women in Guatemala City do wear pants, skirts and dresses are quite common. This is especially true in the countryside. Shorts and sleeveless tops are not often seen. One of the realities of living in a culture where machismo (male chauvinism) is rampant is that women, especially North Americans, tend to attract more attention than they would appreciate. This is a normal part of life more annoying than harmful. Inevitably women learn to ignore unsolicited stares and the occasional catcall. Nevertheless one way to reduce the amount of attention one may receive is by making a conscious decision to dress with a higher degree of modesty. It is a good idea to keep this in mind when packing. The weather in Guatemala is rather spring-like all year round. By the middle of the day it is usually warm (25C, 80F) but nights are almost always cool (10C, 50F). Looking at trends, though, it tends to be colder in December through February and hotter in April and May.

### Some suggestions of what to bring:

5 shirts or tops

2 pairs washable pants or skirts

pair of jeans

1 pair of shorts (women can wear them around SEMILLA)

socks, underwear, etc for a week's wear

1-2 pairs sturdy, comfortable shoes

sweater/sweatshirt

one or two towels (small towel for traveling), washcloth

alarm clock

swimming suit, sun block

umbrella or rain jacket

backpack or bag for shorter trips

camera/film

mosquito repellent for side trip

extra glasses if you wear glasses

Spanish/English dictionary

A washing machine is available at the SEMILLA-CASAS building for \$1.00 a load.

## **Communication**

Mail. The postal system has recently been renovated in Guatemala. Mail arrives fairly regularly, usually within two weeks or so of having been sent from the States. From Guatemala to the States it's a bit slower. Given the short length of time students may not want to use the postal system. If needed, the mailing address is:

SEMILLA

Apartado 11, Periferico

Las Charcas, Z. 11

Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala  
Phone/fax: 001 (502) 485-7620

Phone. To call the US or Canada from Guatemala students can call collect or with only an AT&T calling card. Another method is with a pre-paid calling card available here at the CASAS-SEMILLA campus. CASAS also has a fax machine that is available for student use.

E-mail. Internet access is currently available at several computers at SEMILLA. If for some reason those connections are not working properly, it is possible to check e-mail from a web-based personal account (i.e. hotmail) at a pay-per-service internet café at a nearby hotel. The SEMILLA e-mail address is [semilla@intelnet.net.gt](mailto:semilla@intelnet.net.gt).

You may bring along a laptop computer if you wish.

**More information**

Contact Ted Koontz, AMBS 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart IN 46517  
Phone: 574-296-6219  
Email: [tkoontz@ambs.edu](mailto:tkoontz@ambs.edu)

ggk 10/23/02, rev tk 2006, rev tk 2008, rev tk 2010

**(Previous syllabus, for reference only)**

**HTE 653 Peace and Justice, Latin American Perspectives**

**Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary**

**SEMILLA – January 2009**

**Willi Hugo Perez Lemus, Rector of SEMILLA, Instructor**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

From a Latin American perspective, this course explores the biblical understanding and dimensions of peace and justice along with the Anabaptist heritage of peacemaking with the purpose of promoting practical Christian ways of preaching peace. The biblical vision of shalom, the life and mission of Jesus Christ, the Anabaptist witness, and the experience and journey of the church in Latin America are examined in order to find light, learning, and inspiration for the task of peace. Special attention will be given to how the followers of Jesus can embody, practice, and witness the holistic message of peace in the midst of challenging situations of suffering, injustice, social conflict, war, and violence. This course is offered at the Latin American Anabaptist Seminary (SEMILLA) in Guatemala City.

**This course is considered a “course in the concentration” for the M.A.T.S. theology and ethics and the M.A.P.S. degrees. It also fulfills the requirement for an elective in ethics in the M.Div program. With special arrangements, it can meet the theology elective requirement instead.**

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

In this course students will:

1. Gain an overview of the Latin American reality along with the challenges which emerge from that context for the task of peace.
2. In light of the gospel, examine the meaning of peace and its implications for the followers of Jesus Christ amidst the situations and struggles of the Latin American context.
3. Examine in a critical manner the Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage and the influences and contributions of other Latin American theologies in order to expand and enrich their vision of peace.
4. Review the challenges, both the theological along with the existential, that today provoke intense reflections on the role that the church should play regarding the topics of peacemaking, justice, and social responsibility in the contemporary setting.
5. Explore the Anabaptist-Mennonite witness and journey of peace in Central America, together with other church and social initiatives, in order to recapture their experiences as well as their lessons for the peace task of the church.

6. Analyze ways and paths through which Christian believers can put into practice both the gospel's teachings and the Anabaptist heritage of peacemaking in the present context.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This course works best with a seminar-style approach, allowing each student to take an active part in shaping and developing the content. The following activities are part of the course:

1. Reading of the assigned texts and essays before course begins.
2. Bibliographical investigation and practice on different themes (assignments).
3. Classroom presentations and discussions.
4. Learn about the work of the Mennonite church or other denominational groups that have addressed an issue or problem with justice and peace in concrete ways.
5. Visiting different churches and organizations trying to understand how they are doing peace and justice theology.
6. Testimonies and talks by Central American brothers and sisters.

## **REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION**

1. Reading requirements: Students are expected to read 1,000 pages of the basic readings and other recommended texts and essays. Students have to report at the end of their final project or paper how many pages they have read (or if the student has read the 1000 required readings, she/he can write: "I have read all assigned pages").
2. One investigative response or essay on selected topics regarding peace, justice, and/or peacemaking in Central or Latin America.
3. Final project and class presentation (combination of oral and written reports). For example, from the relevant issues and challenges discussed in class, students can present a design/detailed proposal or project through which Christians can proclaim and witness the message of peace in a particular context.
4. Keeping a journal: Each student will keep a reflective journal in order to integrate the main experiences and learnings during both the course and her/his time in Guatemala. (The journal will be presented and shared once a week).
5. Active class participation and attendance.

Each student will be assigned a letter grade in this course. The following factors will be used to determine your grade:

- |                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| a. Statement of readings              | 10% |
| b. Investigative response or essay    | 20% |
| c. Final project & class presentation | 30% |
| d. Keeping a journal                  | 25% |
| e. Participation and attendance       | 15% |

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **Required readings**

*Guatemala: Past, Present, and Future.* Anthology for the Inter-Cultural Program. Semilla-CASAS: 2004.

*Peace and Justice, Latin American Perspectives.* Anthology of selected essays related to peace studies in Central and Latin America. SEMILLA, 2008. (It can be provided at the beginning of the course but most of the readings can be sent before January by e-mail or others means).

Pérez, Willi. *Theology and Practice of Peace in Central America: Appropriating the Christian-Anabaptist Understanding of Peace in a Context of Violence and Conflict.* Unpublished document. VA, 2004.

Other readings and essays will be provided during the course.

### **Recommended texts**

Bell, Daniel M. JR. *Liberation Theology After The End of History: The refusal to Cease Suffering.* London & NY: Routledge, 2001.

Boff, Clodovis and George Pixley. *The Bible, the Church, and the Poor.* Orbis Books, 1989.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Discipleship.* Ed. Geoffrey B. Kelly and John Godsey. English Edition, Vol. 4. Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001.

Classen, Susan. *Vultures and Butterflies: Living the Contradictions.* Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1992.

Driver, John. *How Christians made Peace with War: Early Christian Understandings of War.* Scottdale: Herald Press, 1988.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Images of a Church in Mission: Toward an Ecclesiology of Transformation.* Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1997.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Kingdom Citizens.* Scottdale, PA & Kitchener, Ont.: Herald Press, 1980.

Enns, Fernando, Scott Holland & Ann Riggs Ed. *Seeking Cultures of Peace, A Peace Church Conversation.* PA: Cascadia Publishing House, 2004.

Escobar, Samuel and John Driver. *Christian Mission and Social Justice.* Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1978.

Fabella, Virginia and Sergio Torres, Ed. *Irruption of the Third World: Challenge to Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983.

Galeano, Eduardo. *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*. NY: Monthly Review Press, 1998.\*

Galilea, Segundo. *Following Jesus*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1981.

Hersberger, Guy F. *War, Peace, and Nonresistance*. Herald Press, 1981.

Jeffrey, Paul. *Recovering Memory: Guatemalan Churches and the Challenge of Peacemaking*. Uppsala, Sweden: Life and Press Institute, 1998.

Jones, L. Gregory. *Embodying Forgiveness: A Theological Analysis*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995.

Klassen, Walter Ed. *Anabaptism in Outline: Selected Primary Sources*, Scottdale, PA & Kitchener, Ont.: Herald Press, 1981.

Krauss, C. Norman. *The Authentic Witness*. Michigan: Eerdmans, 1979.

Kreider, Allan & Eleanor, and Paulus Widjaja. *A Culture of Peace: God's Vision for the Church*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2005.

Lee Woodward, Ralph Jr. *Central America: A Nation Divided*. 3d Ed. NY: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Pérez Brignoli, Héctor. *A Brief History of Central America*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989.

Rasmusson, Arne. *The Church as Polis*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995.

Schipani, Daniel S., Ed. *Freedom and Discipleship: Liberation Theology in an Anabaptist Perspective*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989.\*

Shclesinger, Stephen & Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*. Harvard University Press, 1999.

Sobrinho, Jon, S.J. *Spirituality of Liberation: Toward Political Holiness*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Christology at the Crossroads: A Latin American Approach*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1978.

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\* Or more recent edition.

Soto, Elizabeth. *Family Violence: Reclaiming a Theology of Nonviolence*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008.

Stayer, James M. *Anabaptists and the Sword*. Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1972.

Sugirtharajah, R. S. *Voices from the Margin, Interpreting the Bible from the Third World*. Orbis Books, 1995.

Swartley, Willard ed. *Essays on Peace Theology and Witness*. Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1998.

Swartley, Willard M. *Slavery Sabbath War & Women*, Scottdale PA, 1983.

Tooley, Michelle. *Voices of the Voiceless: Women, Justice, and Human Rights in Guatemala*. Scottdale; Herald Press, 1997.

Trocme, André. *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*. Herald Press, 1973.

Volf, Miroslav. *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.

Yoder, John Howard. *He Came Preaching Peace*. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1985.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Nevertheless: Varieties of Religious Pacifism*. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1992.

\_\_\_\_\_, *The Original Revolution: Essays on Christian Pacifism*. Scottdale, PA & Waterloo Ont.: Herald Press, 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_, *The Politics of Jesus*. 2d Ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994.

Yoder, Perry B. *Shalom: The Bible's Word for Salvation, Justice, and Peace*. Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1987.\*

Yoder, Perry & Willard Swartley, eds. *The Meaning of Peace: Biblical Studies*. 2d Ed. Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2001.

Wright, N. T. *The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering Who Jesus Was and Is*, Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1999.

### **Other Recommended Essays and Articles**

Bell, Daniel M. Jr. "Deliberating: Justice and Liberation." In *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*. 182-195. Edited by Stanley Hauerwas

and Samuel Wells. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

Hauerwas, Stanley. "Jesus Christ and the Social Embodiment of the Peaceable Kingdom." In *The Hauerwas Reader*. 318-326. Edited by John Berckman and Michael Cartwright. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001.

Horsley, Richard A. "Ethics and Exegesis: Love your Enemies and the Doctrine of No Violence." Chapter 3. In Willard M. Swartley, Ed., *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation in the New Testament*. Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992.

Martínez, Juan. "Latin American Anabaptist Mennonites: A Profile." *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 74 (July 2000): 463-77.

Míguez Bonino and others. "The Latin American Theologians". In *Theology in the Americas*. 273-314. Edited by Sergio Torres and John Eagleson. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1976.

Rasmusson, Arne. "Justice and Solidarity in a Communitarian Perspective." (Article online); available from <http://www.puertachile.cl>

Yoder, John Howard. "Exodus and Exile: Two Faces of Liberation." *Crosscurrents* 23 (1973): 297-309



Monday 12	Tuesday 13	Wednesday 14	Thursday 15	Friday 16	Saturday 17	Sunday 18
<p>Class with Willi Hugo 8:30-12:00</p> <p>12:30 Lunch at Semilla</p> <p>Afternoon: free</p> <p>Evening at Semilla</p>	<p>Visit APREDI (ex gang members) Asociación para la prevención del delito)</p> <p>12:30 Lunch at Semilla</p> <p>2:00 Debriefing/ Reflection</p> <p>Evening: View Precarious Peace Video</p> <p>Evening at Semilla</p>	<p>Class with Willi Hugo 8:30-12:00</p> <p>12:30 Lunch at Semilla</p> <p>2:00: The church's reaction to the violence (Dennis Smith)</p> <p>Evening at Semilla</p>	<p>Trip to Santiago Atitlán</p> <p>Tour</p> <p>Stay with families from ANADESA In the evening.</p>	<p>Activities with ANADESA</p> <p>Cross Lake Atitlán</p> <p>Leave for Chichi</p> <p>Arrive to Chichi</p> <p>Meet with Tomás Ventura to discuss Catholicism /Mayan Sprituality</p> <p>Evening at Ruth and Noemi Project</p>	<p>Talk with Vleriano Pasqual of National Restitution Project</p> <p>Lunch</p> <p>Leave for Utatlán/Gumeraca j Mayan ruins in Santa Cruz del Quiche</p> <p>Evening at Ruth and Noemi Project</p>	<p>Mass in Chichi, free time in market</p> <p>Evening at Semilla</p>

<b>Monday 19</b>	<b>Tuesday 20</b>	<b>Wednesday 21</b>	<b>Thursday 22</b>	<b>Friday 23</b>	<b>Saturday 24</b>	<b>Sunday 25</b>
Class with Willi Hugo 8:30-12:00	Class with Willi Hugo 8:30-12:00?	Class with Willi Hugo 8:30-12:00	Trip to Puerto San José	Class with Willi Hugo	Time with families in Carranzas (outskirts of Guatemala City)	Debriefing/Final Evaluations
12:30 Lunch at Semilla	12:30 Lunch at Semilla	12:30 Lunch at Semilla		12:30 Lunch at Semilla		
Visit local peace initiatives: RedPaz and MCC	2:00 Reflection/Debriefing	Afternoon: free		2:00 Leave for Carranzas		
				Evening service in Carranzas	4:00: Return to Semilla	
Evening at Semilla	Evening at Semilla	Evening at Semilla	Evening at Semilla	Night with host families in Carranzas	Evening at Semilla	Evening at Semilla
<b>Monday 26</b>						
AMBS leaves for the US Fight time and number?						