Enemy Love and Solidarity with the Marginalized:
An Interdisciplinary Conversation with Matthew's Gospel

Course Description: Many of the New Testament writings highlight love within the messianic community as an essential and central value. Matthew’s Gospel presses beyond this internal love ethic to exhort Jesus’ followers toward love of enemy and solidarity with the “least of these.” In this course, students will explore Matthew's ways of expressing and defining these exhortations to love broadly and deeply and will consider theological, ethical, psychological, and leadership dimensions of this framing of love.

Course Objectives: Each student will...
1. Gain understanding of Matthew’s love ethic and specifically the call to love enemies and live out mercy and justice in solidarity with “little ones” (“least of these”) in light of a narrative reading of the whole Gospel.
2. Engage various authors around contemporary theological and ethical appropriations of Matthew and clarify student’s own theology and love ethic in light of their study.
3. Explore psychological dimensions of experiences of love with the goal of moving toward integrated praxis.
4. Consider how the student’s own leadership development might engage the issues of the course for the faith communities they serve and will serve.

Course Texts and Readings
______. “Matthew’s ‘Least of These’ Theology and Subversion of ‘Us/Other’ Categories.” In Matthew: Texts @ Contexts. Edited by Nicole Wilkinson Duran and James P. Grimshaw, 287-301. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013.


Expectations and Assignments:

1. **Attendance and Participation** (10%): The student will receive a grade for active participation in class discussion that demonstrates thoughtful interaction with course readings and respectful conversation. Case studies will be used to guide class conversations toward interdisciplinary and praxis integration and to prepare the student for their final assignment.

2. **Case Dilemma** (10%): The student will write a 500-word case based on a real-life ministry dilemma that involves a barrier to loving across boundaries. The media lesson, “How to Write a Good Case,” is provided to give assistance in crafting plot and characters in the case. This case will form the basis of the final case paper, so prompt feedback from the instructor on ways to improve the case will be provided for this purpose.

3. **Paper on Love in Matthew** (30%): The student will choose a topic focused on Matthew’s love ethic (e.g., draw from course topics in A weeks of course schedule) for thorough study. The resulting paper (2000 words) should argue a thesis on the topic of choice and should included ten resources (e.g., commentaries, monographs, journal articles), including at least 5 peer-reviewed articles or essays. The student will present a brief synopsis of their paper for the class in Module 7.

4. **Integrative Case Paper** (50%): The student will provide a written analysis of their case dilemma (#2) that includes (a) the case dilemma itself (revised; 500 words); (b) analysis of the case from the perspective of Matthean reflection on love (e.g., enemy love, solidarity with the least, justice, mercy and/or a particular Matthean text; 750 words); (c) analysis of the case from social science perspective (750 words); (d) analysis of case from theological or ethic perspective (750 words); and (e) an integrative reflection on these various perspectives as applied to leadership implications for the case, including any remaining aspects of non-integration for the student (750 words).
## Course Schedule

### Seven Modules (two-week frames; 2.75 hours in class per week)

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<tr>
<th>Module 1: <em>Framing the conversation from Matthew and from interdisciplinarity, with a focus on personal and spiritual formation</em></th>
<th><strong>Readings and Assignments Due</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Week A:</strong> Course introduction, Matthew’s love ethic in literary context</td>
<td>[No requirements in first week]</td>
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| **Week B:** *Guest collaborator—Dr. Carla Dahl*  Engaging interdisciplinary conversations, Spiritual formation toward love | - Sandage & Brown  
- Brown, Dahl, Corbin Reuschling  
- View: “How to Write a Good Case” |

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<th>Module 2: <em>Exploring the Jewish roots of Matthew’s love commands and Matthew’s hermeneutic of Torah and Prophets</em></th>
<th><strong>Readings and Assignments Due</strong></th>
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| **Week A:** Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount, Kingdom and love in Matthew | - Brown, “Matthew 5:1-16”  
- Powell |
| **Week B:** *Guest collaborator—Dr. Peter Vogt*  OT foundations for Matthew’s love ethic | - Sanders  
- Snodgrass  
*Case Dilemma due* |

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<th>Module 3: <em>Traversing the connections between the command to love enemy and Matthew’s Christology and theology proper</em></th>
<th><strong>Readings and Assignments Due</strong></th>
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| **Week A:** Love of enemy in Matthew 5, The example of the Matthean Jesus | - Brown, “Matthew 5:17-48”  
- Carter  
- Stassen |
| **Week B:** *Guest collaborator—Dr. Kyle Roberts*  Theological precursors and implications of enemy love | - Bauckham  
- Murphy |

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<th>Module 4: <em>Exploring the ethics of Matthew on love and justice</em></th>
<th><strong>Readings and Assignments Due</strong></th>
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| **Week A:** Justice and love in Matthew, The issue of Matthean eschatological judgment | - Pregeant  
- Wolterstorff |
| **Week B:** *Guest collaborator—Dr. Wyndy Corbin Reuschling*  Ethical deliberation on Matthew and love of enemy and the “least” | - Liu and responses by Ogletree, Stackhouse  
- Corbin Reuschling |
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<th>Module 5: Discerning barriers and pathways to love in conversation with psychology</th>
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<td><strong>Week A:</strong> Matthew 25:31-46</td>
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| **Week B:** *Guest collaborator—Dr. Steven Sandage*  
Love and attachment theory, Barriers to love and love as crossing barriers | -Lewis, et al, selected sections |

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<th>Module 6: Exploring ways to envision love beyond charity and benevolence</th>
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| **Week A:** “Little ones” and “least of these” solidarity across Matthew | -Brown, “Matthew's ‘Least of These’”  
-Luz  
-Gutiérrez |
| **Week B:** *Guest collaborator—Dr. Ben Lim*  
Solidarity in human relationships, Difference and love | -Polema  
- Maltby & Hall |

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<th>Module 7: Discerning implications of enemy and solidarity love for Christian leadership</th>
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| **Week A:** Implications of Matthean categories of love for churches and Christian ministries | -Wink  
-Cheung |
| **Week B:** *Guest collaborator—Dr. Denise Muir Kjesbo*  
Leading in ministry toward deeper ways of loving | *Integrative Case Paper due* |

**Guest Collaborators:**
1. Carla Dahl, Ph.D. (Social Science) Professor of Formation and Assistant Director for Leader Development, Doctor of Education Program, Bethel University, St. Paul, Minnesota
2. Peter Vogt, Ph.D. (Old Testament) Pastor, Trinity Baptist Church, Maplewood, Minnesota and Adjunct Faculty, Bethel Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota
3. Kyle Roberts, Ph.D. (Systematic Theology) Associate Professor of Public and Missional Theology at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, Minnesota
4. Wyndy Corbin Reuschling, Ph.D. (Ethics) Professor of Ethics and Theology, Ashland Theological Seminary, Ashland, Ohio
5. Steven Sandage, Ph.D. (Psychology) Albert and Jessie Danielsen Professor of Pastoral Psychology and Theology, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts
6. Ben Lim, Ph.D. (Psychology) Professor of Marriage & Family Therapy, Bethel University, San Diego, California
7. Denise Muir Kjesbo, Ph.D. (Ministry Leadership) Professor and Lead Faculty, Children’s and Family Ministry, Bethel Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota