



March 6, 2026

Dear Dr. Nazarenko and other Members of the G.E. Committee,

It is my privilege to submit **ENG133JRD: Latino/a Literature of the United States** for General Education Certification to meet “Common Skills and Emphases” category three: “Justice, Reconciliation, and Diversity on Biblical and Theological Grounds.” This course is a revision of my previous ENG133-01 course from Spring 2025. The English Department is proposing to list this course under a unique course number, ENG133JRD, in order to differentiate it from other sections of ENG133 without a JRD focus. This course will draw from my dissertation research and disciplinary expertise in Religion and Literature, Race and Ethnicity in Literature, and U.S. Latino/a Literature. The texts I have assigned in this class reflect how U.S. Latino/a writers have wrestled with questions of race, justice, poverty, violence, and identity. Notably, this wrestling is intertwined with Biblical and Theological reflection. These texts raise questions such as: what is God’s response to those who suffer injustice, particularly on account of racialization? What duties does God place on individuals, nations, and societies in order to live justly with one another? How does an ethnic/national group with diverse racial heritage (Most notably European, Indigenous American, and African heritage) consider its own identity? This course helps students to navigate these questions alongside our assigned texts, developing an understanding of U.S. Latino/a literature, culture, and history that is inseparable from Biblical and Theological reflection on God’s heart for justice, reconciliation, and diversity.

## Certification Criteria

*1. 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 criterion will be met in a number of ways this semester. Students will read a number of biblical and theological works about Justice, Reconciliation, and Diversity, especially from a Latino/a perspective. While we will cover a variety of perspectives, we will focus on contributions by Latino/a Protestant Evangelicals, such as Orlando Crespo, Robert Chao Romero, and Andrés Montoya. Biblical and theological understanding will also be the focus of key classroom exercises and conversations.

*2. 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 criterion will be met in a number of ways this semester. This class is not lecture dependent, but will involve brief lectures on historical and literary context, drawing on scholars of Latinidad and Religion such as Miguel León-Portilla, David Carrasco, Felipe Hinojosa, Theresa Delgadillo, Lloyd Barba, Timothy Matovina, José Limón, and Gaston Espinosa—in addition to those Biblical and Theological authors already discussed. Students will connect literary readings to social and historical realities from their own experience and from our non-literary readings. Students will reflect on these comparisons through their brief and substantial written assignments.

*3. Model Christlike dialogue reflecting God's desire for justice and reconciled relationships among all image-bearers, especially when confronting challenging or sensitive issues.*

This criterion will be met in a number of ways this semester, predominantly through readings and discussion, both as a regular component of classroom participation as in the course's two oral exams. A stated Course Learning Objective is the demonstration, in writing and speech, of "Christian charity, rhetorical sensitivity, and intellectual precision." In classroom discussion, our classroom community will make every effort to understand peers' contributions from a place of positive intent. Our classroom values of compassionate yet rigorous dialectic will be uniquely challenged by the one-on-one oral exams. In these situations, students will encounter appropriate "pushback" from the instructor: invitations to consider multiple perspectives or respond respectfully to an opposing interpretation of a text or topic. We will also reflect on how our texts model—or occasionally fail to model—Christlike dialogue. Particularly relevant will be Crespo's *Being Latino in Christ*, Chao Romero's *Brown Church*, Elizondo's *Galilean Journey*, Montoya's *the iceworker sings*, as well as Rudolfo Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima* and Julia Alvarez's *Afterlife*.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

*1. Students will analyze issues of justice and injustice involving race and racism in the United States in biblically and theologically grounded ways.*

- **Class Participation:** A day-one exercise, reading the Biblical source passages for the Westmont *Biblical and Theological Foundations of Diversity* Statement.
- **Readings:** Excerpts of Orlando Crespo's *Being Latino in Christ*, Robert Chao Romero's *Brown Church*, Virgilio Elizondo's *Galilean Journey*. Biblically reflective literary texts such as Andrés Montoya's *the iceworker sings* and Julia Alvarez's *Afterlife*.
- **Written Assignment:** The **Biblical and Theological Application Essay** and **Term Paper** assignments will require students to use Biblical and Theological

- principles in their exploration of assigned literary texts. Students will ask questions about issues of justice, as well as their own convictions, in their daily **Annotations**.
- **Oral Exams:** One of the most significant ways students will demonstrate facility with using Biblical and Theological frameworks to discuss U.S. Latina/a literature will be in two one-on-one oral exams.
2. *Students will identify Christian responsibilities to pursue justice and reconciliation in diverse relationships, practices, and structures according to the character of God's loving reign expressed in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.*
- **Readings:** Students will discuss social-historical analysis of injustice as a part of Robert Chao Romero's *Brown Church* and Virgilio Elizondo's *Galilean Journey*, both of which are, in part, works of historical theology which lean heavily on application. Students will also explore how our texts offer examples of individuals both living into and resisting God's plan for justice and reconciliation. Noteworthy texts here will be Hectór Tobar's *The Tattooed Soldier*, Montoya's *the iceworker sings*, and Alvarez's *Afterlife*.
  - **Written Assignments:** Students will consider how they and other might work towards justice and reconciliation in their **Term Paper** and **Reflection Essay**. These essays will serve as student's contribution to this course as a matter of both scholarship and discipleship.
  - **Class Participation:** Class discussion will require students to practice courage and honesty about sensitive material, to use terminology which respects the dignity of God's Image-Bearers, and to engage those Image-Bearers who are their peers in good faith.

I am excited to offer this course in the Fall and grow with my students in greater obedience to Christ's reconciling love. Please reach out if I can answer any questions.



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