MC/SE 602 – Church and Community: Introduction to the Public Ministry of the Church

Fall 2011
Instructor: Lubomir Martin Ondrasek
ondrasek@uchicago.edu 773-955-7635

Time: Sept. 23-24; Oct. 21-22; Dec. 2-3. Fridays: 6:00 – 10:00 pm; Saturdays: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm. There will also be an extra assignment that will take approximately 1.5 hours to complete.

Place: CUME, 90 Warren Street, Roxbury, MA 02119 Office Hours: By appointment before or after class.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an introductory course in the field of Christian Social Ethics with an emphasis on the biblically and theologically grounded public ministry of the church. Using a biographical approach, students will be introduced to the importance of a holistic social ministry and prophetic role of the church in society, accentuating the ethics of responsibility which has its origin and grounding in God. Particular attention will be given to the life and work of Walter Rauschenbusch, Reinhold Niebuhr, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Eldin Villafañe. Teaching and facilitating student learning will be conducted through careful reading and evaluation of the required texts, class lectures, student discussions and presentations, small group activities, and video presentations.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In general, this course aims to better equip students to “think theologically, engage globally [and] live biblically,” especially as it relates to the public ministry of the church. More specifically, by the end of this course students will acquire basic analytical skills and moral reasoning, which will enable them to critically assess social and political issues of our day from a Christian perspective and they will also learn how the church can faithfully and creatively engage these issues. The goal is to both inform and inspire students through the reading and discussion of biographies and writings of select Christian thinkers and practitioners who dedicated their lives to the positive transformation of society.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

I. READING (25%)

Required Texts


**Recommended Texts**


---

6. **CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (25%)**

Regular attendance and class participation are imperative for succeeding in this course. Please make every effort to come to class on time, bring relevant texts with you and be prepared to discuss them, and don’t leave early unless absolutely necessary.

7. **FINAL PAPER (50%)**

Select any two thinkers we discussed in class and write a clear, coherent, creative and cogent essay in which you compare and contrast their respective approaches to the public ministry of the church. You should explicitly draw upon required readings, class lectures and discussions. The paper should be 12-15 pages long, meet the standard academic guidelines, and be submitted electronically as an email attachment on or before December 18, 2011.

**READING ASSIGNMENTS**

**WEEKEND 1 (September 23-24):**

- Evans, Christopher H., *The Kingdom Is Always but Coming: A Life of Walter Rauschenbusch*.
- Brown, Charles C. *Niebuhr and His Age: Reinhold Niebuhr’s Prophetic Role and Legacy*.

**WEEKEND 2 (October 21-22):**

• Colles, Robert. *Dorothy Day: A Radical Devotion*.

**WEEKEND 3 (December 2-3):**

• Carson, Clayborne, ed. *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*
• Villafañe, Eldin. *Beyond Cheap Grace: A Call to Radical Discipleship, Incarnation and Justice*.
• Villafañe, Eldin. *Seek the Peace of the City: Reflections on Urban Ministry*.