I. **Course Objectives:** The Student:

A. Develops his or her biblical, theological, ethical, and socio-ecclesiological reflection on social issues.

B. Develops skills for the analysis of social issues through critical interaction with: (1) class lectures, (2) current literature on the issues, and (3) fellow students (Task Force).

C. Develops an understanding of and describes types of action which the Christian and Church can take for ministry to the issues.

II. **Textbooks**

A. **Required:**

B. **Recommended:**


III. Course Requirements

A. **Common Reading:** As background for course and class lecture/discussion the student should complete assigned reading by the following day:

**October 11:**
- Stassen & Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics*, pp. 81 – 98; 327 - 344

**October 25:**
- Mott, pp. 49 - 89;
- Stassen & Gushee, pp. 345-365

**November 1:**
- Mott, pp. 3 - 17; 165 – 178;
- Stassen & Gushee, pp. 467-491

B. **Critical Analysis and Reflection on three Required Texts:**
Provide a brief three-page analysis of each of the following books: *Beyond Cheap Grace* by Villafañe, *The Hole in Our Gospel* by Stearns, and *The Justice Project* by McLaren, et al. Include a brief synopsis of each book’s content. Select two key themes/ideas in each book that will be helpful to your ministry, explaining why and how you would utilize it.

*Beyond Cheap Grace* due **October 11**
*The Hole in Our Gospel* due **October 25**
*The Justice Project* due **November 1**

C. **Required Further Reading:** Each student is required, in addition to the common reading and critical book review/reflection, to read at least 200 pages in areas relevant to Task Force assignment.

List due **November 3**
D. **Issue Report:** Each student will write a 8-10 page report* on the issue (see appendix I) assigned.

Respond to the following:

1. Clarification: What is the nature of the problem of the issue assigned? What are the major positions defining/analyzing the issue?

2. Conceptualization: What are the biblical and theological bases for a Christian response to the issue?

3. Confrontation: In what ways can the Christian and the Church respond concretely to the issue? (Identify program ministries and models)

*Integration: Integrate class lectures and course required readings (McLaren, Mott, Stassen & Gushee, Stearns, Villafañe) where applicable.

**Issue Report due November 3**

E. **Task Force Groups:**

Whether in the church, para-church, or other institution in our society one may be called upon to participate in a task force researching a particular issue. The objective of the Task Force Groups are (1) to give students an “hands on” experience in cooperative exploration of one social issue; and (2) to develop skills for doing ethical analysis and research on social issues.

1. Each student will participate in an assigned task force group which will research a particular social issues.

2. Each task force group will give a class presentation of “findings” on **November 3.**

**Class Presentation:**

(a) Will be 30 minutes in length, with an additional 15/20 minutes for class discussion.

(b) Format for presentation may include: lecture, film (or other media), panel discussion, etc.

(c) Presentation should contain at least: (1) **Clarification**, nature of the problem investigated, the major positions encountered during the course of the research and conclusions reached to date; (2) **Conceptualization**, biblical and theological warrants for position taken; and (3) **Confrontation**, practical methodology to address
IV. **Evaluation**

The course will be evaluated as follows:

- **Issue Report** = 50%
- **Critical book review/reflection** = 30%
- **Task Force Class Presentation** = 20%

Minus any penalty for unfulfilled requirements (e.g., reading list, regular attendance).
Christian Ethics and Social Issues

(Course Outline)

Introduction:
A. “Knowing each other”
B. Scope, Objectives, Methods and Requirements of Course
C. Social Ethics: Nature, Limitations and Challenges
D. Task Force Groups

The “Hermeneutic Circle” in Social Ethics: A Paradigm

I. Clarification: Social Analysis and Faith
   A. The Social Context of Ministry
   B. Social Analysis as Social Discernment

II. Conceptualization: Scriptural and Theological Norms
   A. Scriptures in Theological & Ethical Construction
   B. The Twin Pillars of Ethics: Love & Justice
   C. Other Theological Themes in Social Ethics

III. Confrontation: Social Spirituality – The Public Witness of the Church
   A. The Church and Its Public Ministry: Lessons from Jesus
   B. The Witness of Dietrich Bonhoeffer: DVD/Discussion
Task Force Groups Presentation

APPENDIX I

Social Issues for Task Force

1. “Amos” - Poverty and the Church
2. “Epaphroditus” - Racism and Xenophobia in post-September 11 America
3. “Mary” - Immigration and the Church in the U.S.A.
4. “Job” - The Plight of Urban Public Education
5. “Esther” - Globalization and the Church

APPENDIX II

Suggested Procedure for Task Force

1. Select a Chairperson and a Secretary.

2. Select three or four future dates for meeting of groups to:
   a. Delegate assignments for research.
   b. Give progress report on status of research and plan class presentation.
   c. Meet to finalize plans for class presentation.

3. Class presentation of Task Force
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