Course Title: Living Systems in the Urban Context
Location: Gordon Conwell Boston Campus; Room C-213
Time: Monday Evenings (9/8-12/1/2014), 6:30pm-9:30pm.

Instructor Contact Information:
- Jeffrey Bass: bass@egc.org (email is best way to contact)
- Jin Min Lee: jmlee@egc.org (email is best way to contact)
- 617-262-4567 (9 am to 5 pm most weekdays)

Course Objectives:
To develop Biblically-oriented, relationally-competent pastors and leaders who:
- Understand the biblical foundation and basic concepts of Living System Ministry; and are able to use appropriate tools for analyzing systems and applying a systemic perspective to ministry. (50%; Cf. M.Div. degree goals: 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9)
- Understand how to analyze a system (ministry, organization, issue) and recommend strategies to accomplish relevant Christian goals within that context; and understand how systems and Living System Ministry concepts and tools are used in practical ministry. (25%; Cf. M.Div. degree goals: 3, 7, 8)
- Understand the five disciplines of systems thinking; understand structure and leverage in systems; and see the importance of a systemic perspective and approach in ministry. (17%; Cf. M.Div. degree goals: 3, 7)
- Understand the richness and complexity of the context of urban ministry generally and in urban Boston in particular. (8%; Cf. M.Div. degree goals: 2, 6, 7, 8, 9)

General Class Schedule: 6:30 – 9:30 pm
- Group Activities 45 minutes
  - Worship/Prayer
  - Announcements
  - Spiritual Journey
  - Reflection Time
- Lecture 80 minutes
- Break 15 minutes
- Learning Groups 40 minutes

Note: Learning groups will not meet in Weeks 1 and 2. In Weeks 10 and 11, the learning groups will be dedicated to student presentations of their ministry model analyses.
Texts and Key Resources:

10. Systems Analysis Template (from EGC; for use in Model Analysis paper)

Recommended Reading

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

1. Ministry Case Study Preparation

   Systems Thinking in Ministry take home test, p. 8   due Oct. 6   25%
   Systemic Analysis of Ministry Model   50%
   (1) Model Selection Proposal, p. 10   due Oct. 20
   (2) Ministry Model Analysis Paper, p. 11   due Nov. 17
   + “System Analysis Template on SAKAI
   (3) Oral Presentation Outline, p. 12   due Nov. 24

2. Class Participation

   Attendance & class participation
   Self-introduction, contact information   due Sept. 8
   Self-introduction, essay question   due Sept. 15
   Spiritual Pilgrimage, oral presentation & text, p. 7   sign up for date
   Church Visit Report, p. 12   due Dec. 1

   * Bring 1 hard copy of each assignment to class
   * AND upload the assignment on SAKAI (by MONDAY at 6:30 pm the day they are due)

Late Work

Late work receives a half-grade deduction if received within two weeks of the due date. After two weeks, late work receives a full grade deduction.

Much of the learning in this class occurs through group interaction and class participation. Doing the reading and regular attendance is therefore critical, and will be a factor in determining your class participation grade (which accounts for 25% of your overall grade for the course). Being present at both the lecture and your discussion group counts as class attendance each week. If you are not able to make a class (or need to leave early) due to an unavoidable conflict or health reason, please let your discussion group leader know in advance. By CUME policy, you cannot pass the course if you have 4 or more absences.

Much communication will be done by e-mail. Students should have at least weekly access to e-mail and the internet. If not, please contact your discussion group leader to work out an alternate arrangement.
# 2014 MC621 Class Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9-8</td>
<td>Class Orientation - Jin Min Lee</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Introduction to the City, Urban Ministry, the Quiet Revival – Jeff Bass</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Self-introduction, p. 1 due</strong></td>
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<td>9-15</td>
<td>Dynamics of Team Learning – Jeff Bass and Jin Min Lee</td>
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<td><strong>Self-introduction, p. 2 due (essay)</strong></td>
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<td>9-22</td>
<td>Applying Systems Thinking in Ministry – Jin Min Lee</td>
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<td>9-29</td>
<td>Introduction to System Dynamics – Steve Peterson</td>
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<td>10-6</td>
<td>Understanding our Time - Introduction to Living System Ministry – Jeff Bass</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Systems Thinking Take Home Test due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10-13</td>
<td>Reading Week – No Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>Embracing our Poverty or Why Works Doesn’t Work – Jeff Bass</td>
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<td><strong>Model Selection Proposal due</strong></td>
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<td>10-27</td>
<td>Discovering our Wealth or Redemptive Ministry in a Hard Reality – Jin Min Lee</td>
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<td>11-3</td>
<td>Aligning with God’s Living System Order– Jeff Bass</td>
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<td>11-10</td>
<td>Reading Week – No Class</td>
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<td>11-17</td>
<td>Opening our Doors or Working Effectively in the Living System – Jin Min Lee</td>
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<td><strong>Ministry Model Analysis paper due</strong></td>
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<td>11-24</td>
<td>Beginning our Journey or The Really Big Picture – Dr Doug and Judy Hall</td>
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<td><strong>Oral Ministry Reports</strong></td>
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<td>12-1</td>
<td>In-depth ministry models from EGC (BEC, Starlight, AbNet)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Oral Ministry Reports</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Church Visit Report due</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Class evaluations</td>
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Class Content:
Class 1: Orientation and Introduction to the City, Urban Ministry, Quiet Revival
  • Objective: Understand the richness and complexity of the context of urban ministry generally and in urban Boston in particular.
  • Readings:
    o New England’s Book of Acts, Section 1, pp 1 – 42. SAKAI

Class 2: Dynamics of Team Learning
  • Objective: Sensitize the students to the impact of the structure of a system through firsthand experience in a simulation game and evaluate its implication for ministry.
  • Readings:
    o Senge, Introduction, pp. xi – xvii and Parts I and II pp. 1 – 125, *Fifth Discipline*
    o Lencioni, The Fable, pp. 1-184, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*

Class 3: Applying Systems Thinking to Ministry
  • Objective: Understand the five disciplines of systems thinking: mental models, personal mastery, shared vision, team learning and systems thinking. Understand the importance of structure and leverage in systems.
  • Readings:
    o Senge Part III and IV, pp. 129 – 252, *Fifth Discipline*
    o Lencioni, The Model, etc. pp. 185-224, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*
    o Meadows, Intro, Parts 1-2, pp. 1-111, *Thinking in Systems*

Class 4: Introduction to Systems Dynamics
[September 29, 2014. Lecture: Steve Peterson]
  • Objective: Understand a system dynamics approach to system thinking. Understand and practice the use of system dynamics tools to gain insight into real-world systems.
  • Readings:
    o Meadows, Part 3, Appendix, pp. 112-195, *Thinking in Systems*
    o Bridgewater, et. al., A Community-Based Systems Learning Approach to Understanding Youth Violence in Boston. 2011 Journal article and editorial. (10 pages) SAKAI
    o YVSP Special Edition Review (57 pages) SAKAI
    o “Connecting the Disconnected: A Survey of Youth and Young Adults in Grove Hall. (27 pages) SAKAI
Class 5: Understanding our Times - Introduction to Living System Ministry
[October 6, 2014. Lecture: J. Bass]

- Objective: Understand the terminology and basic concepts of Living System Ministry, such as Cat and Toaster, Primary and Secondary cultural, and the Great Transition. Understand how to analyze a system using the System Analysis Template.
- Readings:
  - Hall, Part One, pp 5-80, *The Cat and the Toaster.*

*Reading Week! No class October 13, 2014.*

Class 6: Embracing our Poverty or Why Works Doesn’t Work

- Objective: Analyze ministry system, understand how our ministry efforts are impact by unintended negative returns and reflect on personal counterproductivity.
- Readings:
  - Hall, Part Two, pp 81- 125, *The Cat and the Toaster*
  - Corbett and Fikkert, pp 13 – 219, *When Helping Hurts*

Class 7: Discovering our Wealth or Redemptive Ministry in a Hard Reality

- Objective: Understand the redemptive method and apply it to ministry models.
- Readings:
  - Brown, Introduction and Ch 1-6, pp xii-213, *Daring Greatly*

Class 8: Aligning with God’s Living System Order

- Objective: Understand the difference between aligning with God and just doing ministry and explore the application of different system tools.
- Readings:

*Reading Week! No class November 10, 2014*

Class 9: Opening our Doors or Working Effectively in the Living System

- Objective: Learn methods to implement Living System practice and how to initiate multiplication.
Readings:

Class 10: Beginning our Journey or The Really Big Picture
[November 24, 2014. Lecture: Doug and Judy Hall]
- Objective: Understand how Living System Ministry concepts tie together and how they apply to urban ministry.
- Readings:

Class 11: In-depth ministry models from EGC
[December 1, 2014. Lecture: Ruth Wong, Brian Gearin, Sarah Durfey]
- Objective: Understand and learn the phases of a Living System Ministry approach based on actual EGC ministry application – Boston Education Collaborative/Urban Education; Starlight Ministry/Homelessness; Abolitionist Network
- Readings:
  - 25-50 pages related to a systemic approach to urban education. SAKAI
  - 25-50 pages related to a systemic approach to homeless ministry. SAKAI
  - 25-50 pages related to a systemic approach to human trafficking. SAKAI
- Class Evaluation

GUIDELINES FOR ORAL CONTRIBUTIONS

1. Sharing Your Spiritual Pilgrimage
   At the start of each class, we will have a personal sharing time so that we can get to know each other better and reflect together on our lives, dreams, ministries, and struggles.
   - Sign up for a day to share.
   - Oral presentation should be no longer than 5 minutes. *(Presentations will be timed, and you will be asked to stop at 5 minutes, so plan accordingly.)*
   - Turn in a written version or outline of your pilgrimage the day you present and upload it on SAKAI before you come to class.
   - Use the topics (A, B, & C) below as an outline for your pilgrimage. The questions are to spark ideas and memories. You don’t need to follow them rigidly, but please do address all three topics (salvation, identity, one struggle).

   A. Salvation
   Share how you became a believer, how you were discipled, and, if known, how you perceive your calling from God. At about what age were you when you first came to faith? Did the way you were discipled affect your calling? How?
B. Identity
Describe the context of your life before and after coming to faith, including your own origins, ethnically and geographically. Include some oral history of your family. If you have little sense of ethnicity, tell how that might affect you in ministry.

C. Struggles
Much of what we learn in ministry is through our failures and struggles. Choose one, and reflect on what you learned, are learning, or hope to learn through this experience.
(1) a difficult experience you went through; how do you perceive it now? or
(2) a current struggle you are now having, such as a conflict you sense in yourself or in your situation, or some decision you have to make.

2. Learning Groups
A. The class will be divided into learning groups.
   • The learning groups will follow the lecture most weeks.
   • Discussion will be based on the readings assigned for that week.
   • Discussion will be led by one of the instructors.
B. Active participation in learning groups will be a major factor in your grade at the end of the term. Overall, class participation accounts for 25% of your overall grade, so please do the reading and come prepared to ask questions and discuss what you are learning with your fellow students.

DIRECTIONS FOR WRITING TAKE HOME TEST AND PAPERS
I. Systems Thinking in Ministry: Take Home Test – due Oct. 6
This take home test is due by class on Monday, October 6. Answer the questions below, using the amount of space indicated. Use headings and question numbers to indicate which question you are on. Type your answers using 12-point font and please double space. Best approach is to download the test questions from SAKAI and type your answers right into that document. Upload the completed document on SAKAI, and give a hard copy to your discussion group leader.

For Question #2 (three Biblical examples) for each section, give the Biblical reference and a one or two sentence explanation of how or why this is a good example of the discipline being addressed. Do not write out the verses.

Grading: 4 points each for questions 1, 2, and 3; 8 points for each question 4.

Personal Mastery
1. Define Personal Mastery in your own words, using 3 – 5 sentences.
2. Give three examples where Personal Mastery is seen (or is talked about) in the Bible. Describe each example in one or two sentences and give the reference.
3. Discuss how Personal Mastery generally is important in urban ministry. (in about a half page)
4. Discuss what “personal mastery” means to you, and specifically how you will implement it in your ministry. (in about a full page)

Mental Models
1. Define Mental Models in your own words, using 3 – 5 sentences.
2. Give three examples where Mental Models are seen (or are talked about) in the Bible. Describe each example in one or two sentences and give the reference.
3. Discuss how the concept of Mental Models is important to understand in urban ministry generally. (in about half a page)
4. Discuss what 2 or 3 specific mental models you have discovered in your life. In addition, state one personal goal and describe a mental model that is associated with it. (in about a full page)

Shared Vision
2. Give three examples where Shared Vision is seen (or is talked about) in the Bible. Describe each example in one or two sentences and give the reference.
3. Discuss how Shared Vision generally is important in urban ministry. (in about half a page)
4. Discuss what “shared vision” means to you, and specifically how you will implement it in your ministry. (in about a full page)

Team Learning
1. Define Team Learning in your own words, using 3 – 5 sentences.
2. Give three examples where Team Learning is seen (or is talked about) in the Bible. Describe each example in one or two sentences and give the reference.
3. Discuss how Team Learning generally is important in urban ministry. (in about half a page)
4. Discuss what “team learning” means to you, and specifically how you will implement it in your ministry. (in about a full page)

Systems Thinking
2. Give three examples where evidence of Systems Thinking is seen (or is talked about) in the Bible. (Not evidence of systems in the Bible. Evidence of systems thinking.) Describe each example in one or two sentences and give the reference.
3. Discuss how Systems Thinking generally is important in urban ministry. (in about half a page)
4. Discuss what “systems thinking” means to you, and specifically how you will implement it in your ministry. (in about a full page)
II. Ministry Model Analysis Assignment

This assignment helps you to reflect on a dream or vision for ministry that you have been considering, that you sense God is calling you to do, or that you are interested in learning more about.

As God is already at work through his people wherever you plan to do your ministry, there are certainly already ministries that work with a similar target group and/or offer similar programs to what you are hoping to develop. This assignment gives you the opportunity to learn from an already existing ministry, to develop your ability to evaluate an organizational system, and to more deeply understand and apply a Living System Ministry approach.

This assignment consists of four components:
1. Model Selection Proposal,
2. Completed System Analysis Template,
3. LSM Ministry Model Analysis Paper,
4. Presentation of your Results in your Learning Group

1. Model Selection Proposal
Write a 1 to 2 page paper with the following three components:
(1) Identify the area and focus of your future ministry. Describe in one or two sentences each:
   a. The people you seek to serve (the target population),
   b. The geographic boundaries of this population,
   c. The key challenges faced by the target population,
   d. The assets the target population already has to address these challenges, and
   e. The programs/activities you envision developing.

(2) Identify an existing organization/ministry which has been operating for at least two years and shares important similarities to what you intend to do (See “Criteria to choose a ministry model” below).
   a. Name of the organization:
   b. In one sentence, what does the organization do?
   c. In what way is it relevant to your ministry idea or interest?
   d. List the names (and/or positions/roles) of the three people you will interview. For each:
      i. Briefly state why you believe each person’s perspective is valuable to understanding your chosen model ministry
      ii. Indicate whether the person has agreed to be interviewed.

(3) Identify any questions or concerns you have about your model that you would like input from your instructor.
Criteria to choose a ministry model:

- An existing organization or ministry that is:
  - Not your own church or ministry;
  - Operating for at least 2 years
- Relevance to the ministry area you want to get involved in, such as similar target population, geographic area, and/or approach to ministry.
- Accessibility to the ministry and their staff. For this assignment, you will visit the site and conduct in-person interviews with at least three people involved in this ministry. By the time you submit your initial proposal, ideally you should have a confirmation that they are willing and able to meet with you in the coming weeks.
- The ministry model has written materials, such as annual reports, information brochures, or a good website for you to learn from.

See resource on Sakai (Mack, et. al.: *Qualitative Research Methods*) for tips for conducting good interviews.

The model selection proposal is due at class 6 (October 20). Your Learning Group leader will approve the selection of your model and give you appropriate feedback. **Please wait for this feedback before you start your interview process.**

2. **System Analysis Template (60% of grade)**

The Living System Ministry Model Analysis paper consists of two parts, a System Analysis Template and an Analysis Paper. You will be graded both on your answers to the Template questions and your analysis in your paper.

The data to analyze the ministry models should be collected primarily through face-to-face interviews with at least three members of the ministry model organization and/or people that they serve. Depending on the organization it might make sense to talk to different staff members, board member or even clients. Moreover, use written material, such as annual reports or the webpage to obtain additional detailed information.

Answer all the questions in the System Analysis Template. Use the electronic Word version of the template, and complete answers under each question. Please use regular black font for clarity for your answers. Be thorough. The completed Template will be about 8 – 12 pages in length. Include the completed Template with your paper. Include references as appropriate.

3. **Analysis Paper (30% of grade)**

The paper should be about 5 pages in length. In your paper, answer the following four questions (using the amount of space suggested for each question):
(1) Describe the ministry model in your own words, being sure to emphasize what you feel is most important about the ministry based on the finding of your analysis. (about 1 page)

(2) Describe how the organization functions as a living system (about 1 page). Focus on one area where you can clearly identify and articulate primary culture or “cat-like” elements and secondary culture or “toaster-like” elements; then, discuss how these elements interact with one another.

(3) Describe one or two strengths or qualities of the ministry model, and describe one or two mistakes or weaknesses of the ministry model? (about 1 page)

(4) How has the analysis of the ministry model informed and enriched your thinking about your ministry idea? What would you want to replicate? What would you want to do differently? What have you learned through this analysis? (about 2 page)

Include a bibliography listing all of your sources and your interviews. Be sure to use the formats in the Style Guide for all your listings.

4. Presentation of your Results in your Learning Group (10% of grade)
   In one of the last two classes, you will be scheduled to orally present your ministry model analysis to your Learning Group. You will have 5 minutes to describe the model and tell us what you learned. This will be followed by 5 - 10 minutes of question and answer with your learning group. Please hand in an outline for your presentation at the beginning of the class that you are scheduled to present.

III. Church Visit Report – due Dec. 1
   Visit a church with a tradition different from your own. Describe your response in a one-page report using the “Church Visit Report Guidelines,” posted on SAKAI. Feel free to adapt them to best communicate your impressions.

Expected Work Quality
   All written work must be of the highest quality in accordance with graduate level standards of Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. Since writing skills are particularly important, it is stressed that you communicate in a clear, complete, concise, and logical manner. You must provide references and due credit to outside sources that can be verified. We will use the Style Guide to evaluate your writing skills.

   All papers must be submitted in class or directly to the professor unless prior permission is given for an alternative submission for the assignment.
Grading Scale

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-91</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Below 60</td>
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**Note:** A final grade of “B” (82-87) is reflective of an average demonstrated level of quality graduate studies. A final grade of “C” (72-77) is reflective of a below average demonstrated quality level for graduate studies.

**A word about plagiarism:**

If you use someone else’s **words** in your writing, those words must be put in quotation marks (or otherwise indicated) and properly referenced. If you use someone else’s **ideas** in your writing, those ideas must be properly referenced. Using someone else’s words or ideas as if they were your own is called plagiarism. Plagiarism is not permitted in this class (or at GCTS generally), and is grounds for failure of the class.

**GCTS Academic Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism**

Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. As such, Gordon-Conwell has a zero tolerance for such behaviors.

Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. (See Duplication of Course Requirements) Plagiarism involves the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Those who violate the seminary’s policy on cheating and plagiarism are subject to one or more of the following penalties: a failing grade on the assignment in question; a failing grade for the course; suspension from the seminary; dismissal from the seminary; or revocation of degree. Individual professors may assign a failing grade to an assignment or course. Other penalties, if any, may be assigned only according to the process described below.

All these and other cases of alleged breaches of academic integrity are to be referred to the Judicial Committee. The relevant faculty member will make a recommendation to the Committee. After studying the facts of the case, the Judicial Committee will make a final decision on a penalty or course of action. The student retains the right of appeal to the Boston Campus Dean, who has authority to uphold or change the committee’s decision. Further appeal may be made to the President if the student disagrees with the decision of the Boston Campus Dean. Matters may also be referred to the Guidance Committee at the discretion of the Judicial Committee.