Course Syllabus: MC670 (revised 2014)
Working with Marginalized Groups and the Urban Poor

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Classroom:    
Office Hours: 

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
The urban church pastor and mission agency leader must possess the knowledge and skills to engage and empower people on an array of social justice issues that threaten people in the church and the community, including conditions of poverty. This course will explore how the church can be an effective witness, instrument of compassion and change agent under pervasive economic and social conditions that cripple urban churches and their communities. The Bible is replete with principles for ethical practices around the marginalized and the poor. Understanding the universal need to survive, helps one to understand how Scriptures illuminate practices for righteous treatment of the widows, orphans, strangers, and fatherless. Community development principles for assessing and interpreting human behavior for the purpose of preaching, worshipping, teaching, service, and discipleship are discussed in light of the marginalize and poor in the urban context. Students learn the necessary concepts and tools to guide their actions and inform their ministry. Models and best practices will be discussed in light of social, cultural, political, and economical urban realities. This course fulfills the degree requirements for students pursuing the Master of Arts in Urban Ministry Leadership and Master of Divinity at the Boston Campus.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
Students will be able to:
• Apply “best practices” for specific target audiences that address social justice issues of marginalization and poverty in the urban church context.
• Demonstrate a holistic understanding of the challenges among diverse urban audiences affected by social and economic conditions within a cultural and urban church context.
• Develop urban church-based strategies as a pastoral, ecclesiological and missiological response toward reducing the effects of adverse social and economic conditions with a specific urban audience.
• Develop a church mobilization plan based upon principles of empowerment and capacity building for social justice and economic development ministry.
• Articulate an integrated theology of ministry for the church seeking to work with marginalized groups and the urban poor.

REQUIRED READINGS:
Price: Amazon $41.16

Price: Amazon $66.23

Price: $10.19 at Amazon.com


RELATED READINGS:
Price: $12.21 at Amazon.com


Price: $8.49 at Amazon.com


Price: $9.59 at Amazon.com


COURSE PAPERS:

Ecological Issues Case Study Analysis Paper – This is a brief research paper that describes the facts of the circumstances surrounding a particular target audience, in a particular context or situation, related to a church seeking to indirectly address adverse social and economic conditions through a church-based ministry intervention that may include community partners. This is a student-group (3-person) assignment to gather facts and examine the impact of the social and economic conditions of at least three groups (e.g., children, youth, families, women, immigrants, seniors, ex-offenders, etc.) in the community. If the number of students only allow for four to team together, a group of four will be approved for the case studies. It must be on a study of a specific church community with a careful examination of the demographic information to ascertain the extent of the issues. You must clearly demonstrate that you understand the challenges of a marginalized group and/or the urban poor. You must demonstrate an understanding of the unique cultural context of the target audience you are studying. You must help the reader to create a mental picture of the situation, and provide a compelling reason for the church to take action in the case study scenario. You must only assess and articulate the issues and challenges that are related to your case study group you are analyzing based on the findings. Utilize reliable online or electronic data sources to build your case such as but not limited to the following:

U.S. Census Bureau (general):
http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html
http://www.2010census.gov/
Labor/Economic-
http://www.bea.gov
http://www.bls.gov/cps
http://www.bls.gov/data/home.htm
Health-
http://www.cdc.gov (home address) or http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nyss.htm

Think about transportation, institutions, educational, and commercialization in these communities. Provide summaries and reference the pertinent sources you used. You need not be exhaustive for the sake of providing data. You need to be persuasive. You must describe key people and or groups that need to be involved to address the issues you identify for your next paper assignment (see below). Consider how will you may be able to get the target group involved based on the particular domain of your analysis (discussed in class). Remember that, theologically, you must use a “strengths-based approach based on a “positive practical theology”. So, you must stick to the facts and issues without casting judgment on the target audience, getting bogged down with blaming the victim, or blaming society. You must identify issues in each life domain (see the tool and framework for poverty) in the analyses. The paper
for each case study audience must be approximately a 5-page paper. In general, an objective case study research should be replicable. This is approximately a 15-page well-written and concise team case study paper (excluding a cover/title page, references, citations, notes, etc.) made of three case studies. Due July 25th.

**Ecclesiological and Missiological Asset-Mapping** – This paper describes and outlines a plan that builds on the church’s strengths and assets in relationship to its ecclesiological and missiological dimensions, as being a “thriving” church. It must address the issues of capacity and empowerment using the biblical model discussed in class. It must be written using concepts, principles and the framework for analysis discussed in the course. You must select a case study audience from the paper above and use what you have learned to develop a church-based ministry prospectus. You will be writing from the point of view as though you were engaged in creating an opportunity for your church to participate, contribute and address the issues you identified in the community concerning a target audience affected by poverty conditions. You must begin your paper with an introductory paragraph followed by a description of the church that sets it apart from others and provides some identity of the church. Your paper will be graded based on how you plan to move the church into a new direction using concepts and principles learned in the course given the particular nature of the church. Time in the course may be provided for you to work in small group discussions to facilitate planning. The paper should be no more than a 10-page, double-spaced, document. Due August 9th.

**Critical Theological Reflection Paper** – Each student will be required to submit a critical theological reflection paper about the course that includes a brief statement about how the course contributed to their theology of ministry. Specifically, the paper must do the following: (1) communicate your experience with working with a group; (2) share how the course may or may not have changed your perceptions; (3) what theological point mattered most to you; and (4) what are the implications for you and your present ministry. This paper should be no more than a 5-page double-space document. Due August 9th.

**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. All papers must be submitted in Sakai with the student name in title indicated in the file name unless prior permission is given for an alternative submission for the assignment. Student papers must have a cover/title page, and properly noted references and citations.

**Course Grading**
The assignments, class participation, and their percentage points are as follows:

- Ecological Issues and Case Study Analysis (group assignments) 30%
- Ecclesiological and Missiological Asset Mapping 40%
- Critical Theological Reflection 20%
- Class Participation 10%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Topic Covered</th>
<th>Readings and Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>What is Community Development?</td>
<td>Green/Haines: Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 12</td>
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<td>Community Development Principles</td>
<td>Rank and Hirschl Article</td>
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<td>Being the Church-in-Community</td>
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<td>3-4</td>
<td>The Church and the Poor</td>
<td>Narayan (Voices of the Poor)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Defining the Poor: Voices of the Poor Data</td>
<td>Definitions: pp. 30 to 64;</td>
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<td>• Cultural Dimensions of Survival Culture</td>
<td>Barriers: pp. 82-109</td>
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<td>• Strategies for working with the Poor</td>
<td>Fragmentation: pp. 218-251</td>
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<td>Conclusion: pp. 264 to 282</td>
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<td>5-6</td>
<td>Bay view Community Development: A Case Study</td>
<td>Lupton: entire book</td>
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<td>Church Mobilization Principles</td>
<td>Creighton: Parts 1, 2 (pp.1-78)</td>
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<td>Ecclesiological and Mission Perspectives</td>
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<td>7-8</td>
<td>Motivation and Participation Principles</td>
<td>Creighton: Parts 3-5 (pp. 85-223)</td>
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<td>Decision Making and Empowerment</td>
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<td>Group Feedback and Discussions</td>
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<td>9-10</td>
<td>Church-Based Community Development Models</td>
<td>Green/Haines: 4, 5, 6, 7</td>
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<td>• Church Partnership Strategies</td>
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<td>• Workforce and Economic Development Strategies</td>
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<td>Group Feedback and Discussions</td>
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**Grading Scale**

- **A**: 95-100
- **A-**: 92-94
- **B+**: 88-91
- **B**: 85-87
- **B-**: 82-84
- **C+**: 78-81
- **C**: 75-77
- **C-**: 72-74
- **D+**: 68-71
- **D**: 65-67
- **D-**: 62-64
- **F**: Below 62

Note: A final grade of “B” (85-87) is reflective of an average demonstrated level of quality graduate studies. A final grade of “C” (75-77) is reflective of a below average demonstrated quality level for graduate studies.