

**Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary**  
**Hispanic Ministries Program**  
**MCSE602 – The Public Ministry of the Church:**  
**Introduction to Congregation-Based Community Organizing**  
**Fall, 2017 (Nov.16-19; Jamaica)**

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**COURSE SYLLABUS**

1. **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. 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 that has its origin and grounding in God's Word.
2. **Course Objectives** – 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.
  - a. Students will develop their understanding of the Biblical and theological basis of the public ministry of the church
  - b. Students will develop their Biblical, theological and social ethical reflection on the mission of the Church and public ministry
  - c. Students will develop an understanding of types of action which the Christian and the Church can take for faithful public ministry
3. **Required Textbooks** –
  - a. Castellanos, Noel. *Where the Cross Meets the Street: What Happens to the Neighborhood...* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015. ISBN – 978-0-8308-3691-8
  - b. Dudley, Carl S. *Community Ministry: New Challenges, Proven Steps to Faith-Based Initiatives.* Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 2002. ISBN: 1-56699-256-7
  - c. Linthicum, Robert. *Transforming Power: Biblical Strategies for Making a Difference in Your Community.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003. ISBN-13: 978-0830832286
  - d. Rivera, Raymond. *Liberty to the Captives: Our Call to Minister in a Captive World.* Grand Rapids, MI: Wm.B.Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995. ISBN: 978-0802869012
  - e. Sider, Ronald J. *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: Moving From Affluence to Generosity.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2005. ISBN-13: 9780849945304
  - f. Villafañe, Eldin. *Beyond Cheap Grace: A Call to Radical Discipleship, Incarnation and Justice.* Grand Rapids, MI: Wm.B.Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6323-2
  - g. Volf, Miroslav. *A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good.* Brazos Press, 2013. ISBN-13: 978-1587433436
4. **Course Requirements** –
  - a. **Attendance Policy & Class Participation** (5%) – attendance at all class sessions is critical to the learning process. Students have one session of unexcused absence without penalty. Lateness to any class session counts as a ¼ day absence. Class participation enhances the learning process by making space for diverse voices of knowledge and experiences of the students to become shared wisdom of the community.
  - b. **Reading Log** (10%) – students should **read *Where the Cross Meets the Street* and *Beyond Cheap Grace*** in their entirety **before the first class meeting**. There will be an open book examination on the first day of class. Please note that class lectures do not summarize or review the readings due. Rather, they assume that the reading has been done and build on it. Failure to read the material will affect the student's comprehension of the lectures and capacity to participate during class sessions. The remaining required texts are to be read by the time that the student submits the final paper. **A reading log indicating the percentage of each book that has been read must be submitted with the final paper.**

- c. **Critical Reflection Papers** (50% = 5x10% each) – provide a two-page analysis of the Dudley, Linthicum, Rivera, Sider, Volf texts. Each paper should include: (1) a one-paragraph synopsis of each book and, (2) at least one key theme/idea in each book that will be helpful to your ministry, explaining why and how you would utilize it. **All Critical Reflection Papers are due six weeks after the last class meeting.**
- d. **Group Presentation** (10%) – the class will be divided into groups that will present on an issue confronting the community where a selected church is located. Peers and the professor will evaluate each student. More information will be provided in class.
- e. **Final Paper** (35%) – students are to prepare and submit a 10-page academic paper based on class lectures, course required readings, bibliographic resources, and your knowledge/experience. **The Final Paper is due six weeks after the last class meeting.** The paper should conform to standard word processing format (12 point font, 1" margins at the top and bottom, and 1.25" at the sides). References (footnotes and bibliography) should be made using the *Turabian* format. The paper must address one of the following themes/issues:
  - i. Religion and Public Life
  - ii. The Biblical Basis for Public Ministry
  - iii. Justice and the Public Ministry of the Church
  - iv. Politics and the Public Witness of the Church
  - v. Community Organizing as Public Ministry
  - vi. Public Education and Public Ministry
  - vii. The Public Ministry of Jesus
  - viii. The Public Ministry of Paul
  - ix. Faith-Based Groups and Public Ministry
  - x. Immigrants, Refugees, and the Public Ministry of the Church
  - xi. The Prison System and the Public Ministry of the Church
  - xii. The Education System and the Public Ministry of the Church
  - xiii. The Living Wage Movement and the Public Ministry of the Church
  - xiv. The Christian Community as a Public Church

5. **PLAGIARISM** – refer to GCTS Student Handbook

6. **GRADING SCALE** –

- A / 100 - 95 %; A- / 94 - 90 %
- B+ / 89 - 87 %; B / 86 - 84 %; B- / 83 - 80 %
- C+ / 79 - 77 %; C / 76 - 74%
- D+ / 69 - 67 %; D / 66 - 64 %
- F / 63 - 0 %

Students can also request to be graded in a "Pass/Fail" grading basis, using the following form: <http://www.gordonconwell.edu/hmp/current/documents/PassFailPetition.pdf>

**OVERVIEW OF CLASS SESSIONS**

- **11116** – Syllabus Review, Defining the Public Ministry of the Church & Community Organizing
- **11117** – The Biblical Models of Community Organizing
- **11118** – The Public Ministry of the Church
  - Contemporary Models of Community Organizing
- **11119** – Challenges in Community Organizing
  - Group Presentations