

## **DM 9352. Contemporary Moral Issues**

Instructor: Gary B. MacDonald, director of Advanced Ministerial Studies  
Course Time: January 7-10; 13-17 – 9 a.m. to Noon

Course Description: A study of selected moral issues. Each issue studies will be examined in relation both to moral-theological questions and to the morally relevant circumstances. The January 2014 offering will focus on the role of religion and faith in politics and public dialogue. The course will examine various theological approaches to the question, responses of various churches to social issues, and explore how church leaders might address the issue.

### **Required Reading**

#### *Texts*

Hauerwas, Stanley. *A Community of Character*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame. 1981.

Hamilton, Adam. *Confronting the Controversies*. Nashville: Abingdon. 2001.

Jung, Patricia Beattie and Jung, L. Shannon. *Moral Issues and Christian Responses*. Minneapolis: Fortress. 2013.

Lovin, Robin W. *Christian Realism and the New Realities*. New York: Cambridge University. 2008.  
Slaughter, Mike et al. *Hijacked: Responding to the Partisan Church Divide*. Nashville: Abingdon. 2012.

Volf, Miroslav. *A Public Faith*. Grand Rapids: Brazos. 2011.

Wogaman, J. Phillip. *Christian Perspectives on Politics*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox. 2000.

#### *Ecclesial Documents*

Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention: Issues.  
<http://erlc.com/issues/> (accessed 2 October 2013)

United Methodist Social Principles (Preface, Preamble, Paragraphs 160 – 166)  
<http://umc-gbcs.org/social-principles/preface-and-preamble-2008-social-principles> (accessed 2 October 2013).

Papal Encyclicals: *Centesimus annus, Humanae Vitae, Mater et Magistra, Pacem in Terris, Quadragesimo Anno, Rerum Novarum*.  
[http://www.vatican.va/offices/papal\\_docs\\_list.html](http://www.vatican.va/offices/papal_docs_list.html) (accessed 2 October 2013)

Documents of the Second Vatican Council: *Dignitatis Humanae, Gaudium et Spes*.  
[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/index.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/index.htm) (accessed 2 October 2013).

Apostolic Letters: *Octogesima Adveniens*.  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_apl\\_19710514\\_octogesima-advienens\\_fr.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_letters/documents/hf_p-vi_apl_19710514_octogesima-advienens_fr.html) (accessed 2 October 2013).

## **Pre-Course Assignments (10%)**

Read the Wogman text, followed by Hauerwas, Lovin and Volf. Write a two-page statement on your theological position about the role of the church in political dialogue and action. This paper will be due at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, January 7.

## **Course Requirements**

Attend and participate in class sessions (20%)

Prepare a five-page review of the Volf, Hauerwas or Lovin text (the particular book will be assigned on the first day of class) and be prepared to present and lead discussion on the text in class. (20%)

Prepare a detailed plan for engaging an issue of ecclesial/political controversy reviewed in the class comprising worship/preaching and Christian education/formation. The paper should be 20-25 pages in length, not including any appendices. The paper will be due by 5 p.m. on January 31. (50%)

All papers should be submitted electronically as an MS Word document to [gmacdona@smu.edu](mailto:gmacdona@smu.edu) with the subject "DMin Moral Issues Assignment." Papers should use 12 pt. Times New Roman font and be double-spaced, using Turabian formatting.

## **Course Outline**

January 7	The Social Function of the Church
January 8	Overview of Perspectives of Church and Politics Discussion of Wogaman
January 9	Discussion of the Common Good Review of Volf
January 10	Neo-orthodox perspective on politics Review of Hauerwas
January 13	Christian Realist perspective on politics Review of Lovin
January 14	The Legacy of Roman Catholic Social Ethics Read Vatican documents
January 15	The State of Protestant Social Ethics Read UM and SBC material, and material from your own tradition
January 16	Resources for Ministry Read Jung
January 17	Teaching and Preaching on Controversial Issues Read Hamilton

## Suggested Other Reading

- Audi, Robert. *Religious Commitment and Secular Reason*. New York: Cambridge. 2000.
- Audi, Robert and Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Religion in the Public Square*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield. 1997.
- Curran, Charles E. and Griffin, Leslie. *The Catholic Church, Morality and Politics*. New York: Paulist. 2001.
- Curran, Charles E., *Catholic Social Teaching, 1891-Present*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown. 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Change in Official Catholic Moral Teaching*. New York: Paulist. 2003.
- Eberle, Christopher J. *Religious Conviction in Liberal Politics*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge. 2002.
- Hauerwas, Stanley. *The Peaceable Kingdom*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame. 1983.
- Hollenbach, David. *The Common Good & Christian Ethics*. New York: Cambridge. 2002.
- Neuhaus, Richard John. *The Naked Public Square*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1984.
- Scholz, Susanne, ed. *God Loves Diversity and Justice*. Lanham, MD: Lexington. 2013.
- Stackhouse, Max. L. and Paris, Peter J. *Religion and the Powers of the Common Life*. Harrisburg: Trinity. 2000.
- Stout, Jeffrey. *Democracy and Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton. 2004.
- Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge: Belknap. 2007.
- Visser 't Hooft, W. A. and Oldham, J. H. *The Church and its Social Function in Society*. London: George Allen & Unwin. 1937.
- Weigel, George and Royal, Robert. *Building the Free Society*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1993.
- Wolfe, Christopher, ed. *The Naked Public Square Reconsidered*. Wilmington: ISI. 2009.

## Course Policies

**ATTENDANCE:** Class attendance is required. Excessive unexplained absences will reduce your final course grade.

**ASSIGNMENTS:** You must complete and turn in all required assignments to receive a passing grade in the course. Late papers are not accepted unless you make prior arrangements with me. **GRADE OF INCOMPLETE (I):** The grade of I (incomplete) indicates the failure to do some major portion of the required work in the course. The grade of I is granted by the Committee on Student Development, only on written request by the student. (For a complete discussion of I grade procedures, consult the Perkins School of Theology Catalog 2011-2013 page 55, Grades.)

**PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY (Consult the Perkins Student Handbook 2012-2013 pg. 59.g Appendix B):** Do not turn in someone else's work as your own. All work must be done by you. Failing to adhere to these guidelines constitutes plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty. Failure to document sources and/or correctly integrate material into your written assignments is also considered plagiarism. Whenever you incorporate material from an outside source, whether electronic or print, you must document the source of this material and you must quote, paraphrase, or summarize the material correctly. Any form of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will result in an automatic "0" for the assignment. At the instructor's discretion, it may also result in an "F" for the final course grade and punishment by the university.

**EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES:** If at any time during the semester personal crises prevent you from performing to the best of your abilities in the course, please notify me as early as possible. Before making exceptions to any of the policies stated in this syllabus, I have the right to request appropriate documentation. This might include letters from physicians, counselors, and/or academic advisors.

**DISABILITIES:** Perkins and SMU are dedicated to giving all students the best educational experience possible. As part of this goal, SMU and Perkins welcome the opportunity to work with all students with disabilities to obtain the resources needed to maximize their learning. Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Dr. Evelyn Parker, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at Perkins (214-768-4334) or [eparker@smu.edu](mailto:eparker@smu.edu) at the start of classes. A helpful resource at SMU is the Services for Students with Disabilities office located in 220 Memorial Health Center, under the direction of Rebecca Marin (214-768-4557 or [rmarin@smu.edu](mailto:rmarin@smu.edu) ). Guidelines for documentation of disability are posted at [http://smu.edu/studentlife/ssd/ossd\\_eligibility.asp](http://smu.edu/studentlife/ssd/ossd_eligibility.asp) and should be completed two weeks prior to the beginning of course work to allow for processing.

**MINORITY CONCERNS AND THE PERKINS CURRICULUM:** In 1975 the Perkins Senate passed resolutions which bear on the relation of the Perkins curriculum to this school's common concern for the status of ethnic minority groups and of women both in education for ministry and in the ministry itself. The following statement summarizes these resolutions with respect to all courses except those in the area of ministry.

1. Instructors and students alike are urged to use inclusive language, images and metaphors that give full and positive value to both the past contributions and the future prospects of ethnic minorities and women in the church and in the society at large.
2. Instructors and students alike are urged to give sensitive consideration to the role of images from a predominately white and male culture in shaping both the language and concepts of Christian theology and the models and methods of Christian ministry that are widely current today.
3. Instructors are urged to make every effort to provide-in the syllabi, assignments and formats of their courses-opportunities (a) for women students and students from ethnic minority groups to pursue their study with special reference to their own status or tradition and (b) for all students to become acquainted with the special problems.