DM 9307. Conflict Transformation in Congregational Life

Course Syllabus
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Description:
This seminar will explore anxiety and conflict in congregational life, assist the participants in developing their own theoretical and theological understanding of conflict, and offer some practical tools to address conflict.

Required Reading: (Most of these are short, easy reads.)

- Gilliam, W. Craig. Where Angels Dare to Dance: Anxiety and Conflict in Congregational and Organizational Life. (Booklet—You can read this on line at the JustPeace website—www.justpeaceumc.org/perkins)
- JustPeace. Engaging Conflict Well. (This is a short booklet from JustPeace and will be distributed the first day of class.)

The following articles are Required Reading. They are found on the JustPeace Center for Mediation and Conflict Transformation website: www.justpeaceumc.org/perkins. If you desire to download any of these articles, use the password, JustPeace.

- Botcharova, Olga. “Justice or Forgiveness? In Search of a Solution”
- Gilliam, W. Craig. “A Pattern of Conflict in Congregations: How do we dehumanize others?
- Gilliam, W. Craig “Half-Fast Walk Through Martin Buber’s Thought.”
• Gilliam, W. Craig. “Levels of Conflict Work in Congregations”
• Gilliam, W. Craig. “I Believe” statements about conflict transformation.
• Hixon, Stephanie. JustPeace. “Holy Communion and the Healing of Relationships.” (Found in the book Conflict and Communion, Ch. 8.)
• Hooker, David. “Grandma’s Supper Is the Lord’s Supper: The Experience of African American Fellowship Meals and Sunday Supper as Communion.” (Found in the book Conflict and Communion, Ch. 9)
• Sacks, Jonathan. “Dignity of Difference.”

(Other articles as requested.)

As part of the required reading, select one book from the list that follows. Read the book and do a two page review using Six Hats Method as above. These books are more around skill sets, techniques and processes.


Book Reviews:
Write a two page review of each of the required books using the 6 hat method. This should be complete before class. An outline for the review is listed below. (Six hats is a decision-making methodology developed by Edward De Bono. To understand this process, you can read Six Thinking Hats, which is a required reading for the course.)
1. Blue Hat—brief overview—statement(s).
2. White Hat—What are the facts? (author, publisher and publication date, etc.)
3. Green Hat—What did you value most about the book? What was most helpful? What do you affirm? (1 to 3)
5. Yellow Hat—Possibilities. What are possibilities that emerge in your mind from the book? Especially as it relates to your context of ministry.
6. Red Hat—Feelings and intuitions. What did you feel or intuit about the book? What feelings/intuitions emerged? What did it evoke for you?
7. Blue hat—Brief conclusion
   (For each of the hats, you do not have to write lengthy, responses. In fact, if each is on two pages, they are to be short. You are to have these with you when summaries with you when you come to class.)

**Class Project**—Depending on the size of the class, the course will offer time and space for each participant to teach a specific method/skill to the class, i.e., to facilitate the group in a Six Hat decision-making process, lead an Open Space, be the guardian/facilitator of a circle process, lead an appreciative inquiry session, role play in a mediation, an exercise from your reading that you found meaningful, etc. . . All are to be connected back to conflict transformation in congregations or your context of ministry. These projects will grow out of the reading and class discussions and we will discuss this in the first days of class.

**Selected Book and Review: From any book listed below.** (6 to 8 pages in length. This review from your selected book will be due on Monday of the second week of class.)

- Conflict and Communion: Reconciliation and Restorative Justice at Christ’s Table. Discipleship Resources, 2006.

**The Little Books of Justice and Peacebuilding (Any 3 from this series counts as one book for review.)**
• *Ron Krayball and Evelyn Wright, Cool Tools for Hot Topics.* 2006.

**Major Paper:**
8 to 12 page paper expressing your theological and theoretical understanding of conflict and how what you learned in this course will impact ways you see, understand and respond to anxiety and conflict in your context of ministry. Also, identify any helpful exercises/practices you discovered through the readings, conversations, class, etc. You are not required but encouraged to use the Six Hats method in writing this last paper. *As an additional page, have a list of your “I believe” statements (core beliefs) about conflict and conflict transformation.* How do your “I believe” statements inform your ministry and way of inviting
and working with conflict transformation? (A sample of my I believe statements are on the www.justpeaceumc.org/perkins.)

Grading:
- Book reviews from required reading list--10%
- In class project—15%
- Longer, selected book review--15%
- Class presence, preparation and participation—20%
- Final paper—40%

VII. 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 (1) for women students and students from ethnic minority groups to pursue their study with special reference to their own status or tradition and (2) for all students to become acquainted with the special problems and conditions that affect women and ethnic minority groups in human society.

VIII. SMU Disability Accommodations:
Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Ms. Rebecca Marin, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities (214-768-4557) to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements. (See University Policy No. 2.4.)