

CMI 222 Poverty & Justice

Sample Syllabus

Professor: Jeanette Banashak

Course Description

This course will equip students for urban ministry in the cities of North America and around the world. Students will develop a Biblical, historical, and socio-cultural foundation for ministry in the city while engaging different strategies for effective relationships and Christian community development.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course the student will

1. Develop a comprehensive Christian worldview that leads the student to identify and describe a theologically grounding for biblically sound and culturally relevant ministry within an urban setting.
2. Determine the challenges faced by impoverished urban dwellers and support their conclusions with modern day examples.
3. Critique issues of poverty as a result of racism.
4. Probe sensitive issues of race and ethnicity in cities by examining the church's historical failures and limited successes, present problems and conditions, and how the body of Christ should respond in the future.
5. Become aware of strategies currently used to foster urban transformation.
6. Develop a deep love for the city and people of different cultures and desire to see their lives enhanced by the love of Christ.

Formal Voices for Our Conversation– Required Texts and Readings

Delpit, Lisa. Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom. (The New Press, 2006).

Lupton, Robert D. Compassion, Justice, and the Christian Life: Rethinking Ministry to the Poor. (Regal, 2007).

Perkins, John M. Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing It Together and Doing It Right. (Baker Books, 1996).

Thurman, Howard. Jesus and the Disinherited. (Beacon Press, 1976).

Reading Handouts and chapters from various books

Course Assignments

Interacting with Thurman– 10%

The goal of the reading assignment is to better understand the message that helped shape the civil rights movement. In order to fulfill the requirements of the reading assignment, please complete the following:

1. Complete the book by the assigned date. As you are reading, imagine you are being discipled by Howard Thurman.
2. Answer the questions at the end of the syllabus.
3. Write four questions you have as the result of "hearing" him through his work. What would you ask him, want more clarity, or want to know more about? Questions must be thoughtful and must relate to the scope of the book.

Interacting with Delpit–10%

The goal of the reading assignment is to better understand the imbalance of power and dynamics of inequality in the classroom. In order to fulfill the requirements of the reading assignment please complete the following:

1. Complete the chapters by the assigned dates.
2. Following the reading of each chapter (you will read 4/9 chapters), write a one page summary and one page interaction and reflection with the author. In the reflection page, include how you could connect Delpit's ideas with your potential future ministries/jobs.

Articles-7%

The goal is to be informed of urban issues from a variety of writers. You will have a selection of articles from which you must choose to read 2. For each article, create a mind map of the information and include your own reflection in the maps.

Interacting with Perkins– 15%

Our goal is to help students be informed of community development and the practical ways to work with at-risk communities to discover a sense of belonging, significance, and security. After completing the book, write a, "Why?" paper (5-8 pages) that asks a "why" question from a minority position perspective. Relevant topics include race, discrimination, inequality, etc. Please tell me your question by the assigned date.

Interacting with Lupton– 8%

Our goal is to offer a fresh perspective on the transformation of low income communities. To assist you in this process, you are to answer questions located at the end of this syllabus.

File card– 5%

The goal is to know what and where are the social services in Grand Rapids. You will create a laminated file card that lists the social services, their phone number, and location.

Weekend Immersion– 20%

The goal is to experience the inner city by spending a weekend going to various locations in Chicago. More details will be explained in class.

Local Outreach– 20%+5%

The goal is to participate *for 10 hours* in an urban ministry in Grand Rapids. Four options will be given in class.

After *each* experience, reflect in a 1 page journal-type paper. Synthesize what we have covered in the course in the reflection.

Class Participation– nothing... but everything

You are an important part of our group learning process. Your voice and thoughts are valued and needed. Therefore, it is assumed that your participation will be expressed in thoughtful, respectful dialogue through sharing and listening. Your commitment to our class benefits your grade, and more importantly, benefits our class's learning. While you will not be "graded" on your participation, it may have sway should you have a borderline final grade.

Our Course Journey

| DATE | FOCAL POINT | ASSIGNMENT DUE |
|-------------|--|--|
| 26 Jan | Welcome, Introductions, Overview | |
| 28 Jan | A Biblical Theology of the City | Read a Biblical Theology of the City and make a mind map of info |
| 02 Feb | Orphans and widows | JATD: 1-36 |
| 04 Feb | Developing a race, class, and gender framework | JATD: 37-88 |
| 09 Feb | Race timeline/racism | JATD:89-112 |
| 11 Feb | Thurman and the ethical field | INTERACTING WITH THURMAN ANSWERS and QUESTIONS DUE |
| 16 Feb | Poverty and race | OPC: 5-47 |
| 18 Feb | Poverty and race | 1 st and 2 nd PAPERS OPC |
| 23 Feb | Poverty and power | OPC: 48-69, 91-104 |
| 25 Feb | Poverty and power | 3 rd and 4 th PAPERS OPC |
| 02 Mar | White privilege | Read 2 articles |
| 04 Mar | White privilege | ARTICLE MIND MAPS DUE |
| 09 Mar | No class – Spring Break | |
| 11 Mar | No class – Spring Break | |
| 16 Mar | Symbolic ethnicity | SOCIAL SERVICES FILE CARD DUE |
| 18 Mar | Language and media | RAC: 9-46 |
| 23 Mar | A framework for understanding poverty | RAC: 47-106 |
| 25 Mar | A framework for understanding poverty | RAC: 107-138 |
| 30 Mar | Indexed! | RAC: 139-180 Why Question Due |
| 01 Apr | Local outreach discussion | RAC: 181-238 |
| 06 Apr | Gentrification and concentrated poverty | |
| 08 Apr | Why? | WHY? PAPER DUE |
| 13 Apr | No class-Chicago | |
| 15 Apr | The invisible knapsack | CJCL: 8-51 |
| 20 Apr | Activity | CJCL: 52-67 |
| 22 Apr | Community development | CJCL: 69-109 |

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|--------------|-----------------------|--|
| 27 Apr | Community development | LOCAL OUTREACH REFLECTION DUE; CJCL: 111-136 |
| 29 Apr | Final matters | |
| 03-06 Finals | Finals | LUPTON QUESTIONS DUE |

Additional Important Things

Grading

Each assignment will be given a letter grade. Remember that an “A” really represents outstanding work. A “B” grade is still above average and a “C” grade represents average work.

Also note that in order to comply with the Privacy Act concerning students’ records; graded papers/exams will not be left in offices or other designated areas for returning to students. Papers will be returned in class.

Attendance

Your attendance and participation is essential to the course objectives. Missing more than three class sessions will result in a lowered final grade. The final grade will be lowered *one percentage point* for each additional class missed.

Late Work

Any work turned in after the due date will not be counted. If you make a reasonable effort to let me know of an extenuating circumstance, there is grace, but excuses the day of or after, are too late and credit will not be given. Use your time wisely and love the class as much as I love it.

Inclusive Language and Writing Expectations

Inclusive language should be used with reference to human communities. “Man,” “men,” “he/his” are to be used when they clearly refer to (solely) male referents, not for mixed or indeterminate referents. Use “person,” “people,” or “he and she”/“his and/or her.” *This refers to classroom dialogue as well as writing.* For further suggestions with regard to gender-sensitive writing, see: Casey Miller and Kat Swift, *The Handbook of Nonsexist Writing*.

Except where noted, all papers should have subheadings within the paper for organization, be typed, size 12 characters, double-spaced, paginated, 1” margins, and error free.

Student Plagiarism

All projects and papers turned in by students must be original work. Students who turn in work that is copied from other students, the Internet, or published materials, without proper notations, will be reported to Student Affairs and subject to failing the class.

Disability Accommodation

The university will make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The purpose of accommodation is to provide equal access to educational opportunities to students affected by disabilities, and the university does not intend that the standards be altered, nor that the essential elements of programs or courses be changed. Students having documented disabilities may apply for accommodations through Student Disability Services (SDS), which is part of the Cornerstone University Learning Center located in Miller Hall on the main campus.

In the event that students have questions regarding whether they are eligible for accommodations, how they might provide appropriate documentation of disabilities, or how they might handle a disagreement with a professor over questions of accommodation, the Director of Academic Support should be contacted immediately at (616) 222-1596 or via email at learningcenter@cornerstone.edu. Further information about applying for and utilizing accommodations is provided in the Student Handbook and on the university’s website.

Jesus and the Disinherited

In your own words, thoughtfully answer the following questions.

Chapter 1

1. What are ways one can respond to oppression? (p.23 and beyond)
2. How does Thurman compare Paul and Jesus?
3. Have you heard (well intending) Christians preach on Paul, but neglect to preach on Jesus? What implications might that have for Christians?

Chapter 2

1. How are violence and fear connected?
2. Why are the 2 questions, “Who am I?” and “What am I?” so important for all of us to answer?
3. What does Thurman mean in his last statement of the chapter: Here are the faith and the awareness that overcome fear and transform it into the power to strive, to achieve, and not to yield?

Chapter 3

1. What does Thurman say about lying vs. truth telling? (p.62)
2. What are the 3 defense mechanisms of the disinherited?
3. What is the significance of, “Instead of relation between the weak and the strong there is merely a relationship between human beings”?

Chapter 4

1. Outline (describe) the diagram of hatred.
2. How does high morality relate to others and self?
3. Where do you find yourself in the chapter?

Chapter 5

1. Who is your neighbor?
2. What are the 3 groups of enemies that Thurman names?
3. Why is it important to recognize fear, deception, and hatred for what it is?

Compassion, Justice, and the Christian Life

Answer the following questions thoughtfully.

1. How does Lupton challenge the University students?
2. Have you ever touched an “undesirable” with hands on care? What was it like for the person? For you?
3. Do you agree with the statement: Little wonder that we, who have come to the city to “save” the poor, find it difficult to enter into true community with those we deem needy”? Why or why not?
4. Specifically, what are ways we can help the poor find their calling?
5. How is hanging out on the front porch different than at Starbucks?

6. Do you agree with Lupton's answer to John's question: What am I supposed to do with all these people who want something from me? Why or why not?
7. Describe the differences in approach and outcomes of *betterment* and *development*.
8. What are ways (that Lupton has described and you know from prior experience) to enable the poor to "know the blessedness of being givers?"
9. What is positive about mixed-income community development?
10. What happens when the Church and community don't work together?
11. What happens when we become *friends* and not just servants?
12. Why must we all "assume full responsibility for [our] own rate of progress or regress"?
13. How does the process of betterment to development encourage *dignity* among humanity?
14. How do we change a "bad neighborhood"?
15. Describe 2 advantages to investing in one's neighborhood.
16. What does Lupton mean by "community-unfriendly?" (p.101)
17. Choose 3 of the 10 questions on pp.108-109. Why are they important questions to ask?
18. What is gentrification with justice?
19. In addition to traditional service-oriented occupations, list several occupations needed to contribute to community development.