This course attempts to connect the theoretical material learned in formal theological education with the lived experiences in the local parish. Specifically, we will be working to apply theological and ethical teachings to congregational life, especially social practices in the student’s own faith community, the parish neighborhood, and the world. During the first several weeks of class, we will investigate ethical theory in the Christian tradition. The remaining weeks will be spent looking at social issues in the local parish, especially through the lens of the theoretical material presented during the early weeks. An additional subject for study will concern how our social actions and practices can retain a spiritual foundation. Students will study specifics of activism and organizing for making a difference in the social issues of the local parish. We will especially focus on issues which face the individual congregations represented in our class. Sessions will consist of lectures over material not in the readings or expanding on the readings, as well as class discussions applying readings to individual congregations. Most class sessions will also include a small group discussion period specifically addressing issues of involving our congregations in ministry at the margins of society, and what that means for followers of Jesus Christ and leaders of Christian communities.

Required texts:
Martin Luther King, Jr., *Stride toward Freedom* (this is out of print; we will figure it out)
Eleanor Scott Meyers, ed., *Envisioning the New City: A Reader on Urban Ministry*
Mary Alice Mulligan and Rufus Burrow, Jr., *Standing in the Margin: How Your Congregation Can Minister with the Poor* (and perhaps recover its soul in the process)
Janet Parachin, *Engaged Spirituality: Ten Lives of Contemplation and Action*
Gregory Pierce, *Activism that Makes Sense: Congregations and Community Organization*

There are also several required articles from books on reserve:
Max Stackhouse, Tim Dearborn, Scott Paeth, ed., *The Local Church in a Global Era: Reflections for a New Century*

**** If you have difficulty affording texts or copies of articles, please see me.

Expectations:
Let’s agree to come to class each week. The instructor will be prepared to lecture. You should have assignments read and be prepared to discuss how they relate to your congregation. If you must miss class, make sure to notify the instructor beforehand. CTS policy states that 3 classes missed will result in a class failure, so keep in touch.
Grades will be based on:

- Class participation, small group discussions, & eight E.S. responses: 25%
- 3 page paper describing your congregation: 25%
- 3 - 4 page paper describing the surrounding community and its needs: 25%
- 4 page paper on organizing Montgomery boycott: 25%
- 10 - 12 page research paper on a social issue which affects your local parish: 25%
- Final exam (last class session): 25%

When you break into your small group, each week, one person should be responsible for keeping the group on task (a leader) and another person should keep some record of what happened (a recorder). These brief notes should be slipped under the professor’s office door (room 233) at the end of the session. The leader and recorder roles should rotate around the group.

Each week, you are required to read one chapter of *Engaged Spirituality*. After reading the entire chapter, choose one of the “Reflect and Act” suggestions to carry out. Jot down your experience with the suggestion to turn in at the beginning of class (about a page should suffice, but make sure it reveals you read the chapter somehow). This is noted in the syllabus as the “E.S. response” each week. ***Note, you are responsible for eight responses out of the ten chapters, although the syllabus notes one due each week. Choose your two “pass” weeks carefully. You may not turn in more than one response per week.

Specific instructions for the content of papers will be given in class. You may deviate from the stated page limitation by one page without penalty. Please use standard size font (Times New Roman) and 1 inch margins.

**January 20**  
**Introduction to Social Issues in the Local Parish; Some Foundations and Presuppositions**

**January 27**  
**Definitions of Terms; Types of Ethics; Begin Small Groups on Margin Ministry, Time of Commitment.**

Assignments for class this day: Have read Ammerman, chapter 3 and p. 196-203 (ends mid-chapter), on reserve. 
**Turn in 3 page paper** describing your local congregation.
Have read chapter 1 of *Standing in the Margin*.

**February 3**  
**Definitions of Social Problems and Social Issues; Theological Groundings; Small Groups, questions from chapter 1.**

Assignments for class this day: **Turn in 3 page paper** describing the neighborhood and community surrounding your local church building;  
Have read chapter 1 of *Engaged Spirituality*. **Turn in** first E.S. response.
February 10  Moving From Theory to Context; Sign-up Social Issue for Research Paper; Small Groups, material from chapter 2.

Assignments for class this day: Have read chapter 2 of Engaged Spirituality. 2nd E.S. response due.
Have read chapter 2 of Standing in the Margin.
Have read Schweiker and Ottley articles in Stackhouse, Local Church (on reserve), p.23-47.
Be preparing to choose one social issue which confronts your congregation.

February 17  The Inter-Related World We Live in; Global Thinking; The Situation in the United States; Moral Formation and Formation of the Self; Small Groups, questions from chapter 2.

Assignments for class this day:
Have read chapter 3 of Engaged Spirituality. 3rd E.S. response due.
Have read chapters 1, 7, 8, & 18 in Meyers, Envisioning.

February 24  The Situation in our Local Churches; Importance of Communal Faith; Small Groups, material from chapter 3.

Assignments for class this day: Have read chapter 4 of Engaged Spirituality. 4th E.S. response due.
Have read chapter 3 of Standing in the Margin.
Be reading chapters in Meyers which relate to your topic.

March 3  What Difference Can We Make?; What Leaders Need to Do; Getting the Congregation on Board; Small Groups, questions from chapter 3.

Assignments for class this day: Have read chapter 5 of Engaged Spirituality. 5th E.S. response due.
Submit bibliography of what you are reading which relates to your topic. These will not be graded. Keep researching your topic. May want to begin Pierce book.

March 10  Models of Congregationally Motivated Social Change; Some Models; First Steps; About Power; Small Groups, material from chapter 4.

Assignments for class this day: Read chapter 6 of Engaged Spirituality. 6th E.S. response due.
Read essays in Meyers text which relate to your topic. Consult additional sources.
Have read chapter 4 of Standing in the Margin.
Have read Pierce book.
March 17  Class Discussion of Research Papers; Using the Research Paper as a Teaching Tool; Small Groups, questions from chapter 4.

Assignment for class this day: **Turn in Research paper on social issue confronting your congregation** (10 pages).

March 24  No class; Holy Week

March 31  Organizing for Change; What Could We Possibly Mean by Success or Failure?; Small Groups, material from chapter 5.

Assignment for class this day: Make sure you have access to *Stride toward Freedom*. You need to have it read by next week.
Have read chapter 7 of *Engaged Spirituality*. 7th E.S. response due.
Have read chapter 5 of *Standing in the Margin*.

April 7  Class Discussion on Pierce and King Material; What Can We Learn from History and Experts?; Avoiding Roadblocks; How to Get a Congregation on Board; Small groups, questions from chapter 5.

Assignment for class this day: Have read *Stride toward Freedom*. Submit **4 page paper** tracing the organizing throughout the boycott.
Have read chapter 8 of *Engaged Spirituality*. 8th E.S. response due. If you have submitted a response each week, this is your final one.

April 14  Social Justice as Spiritual Discipline (*Engaged Spirituality*); part of the time may be devoted to Class Discussion; Small groups, final meeting, questions from chapter 6.

Assignments for class this day: Have read chapter 9 of *Engaged Spirituality*. 9th E.S. response due (if needed).
Have read chapter 6 of *Standing in the Margin*.

April 21  What Next?; Review Questions (in-class hand-out).

Assignments for class this day: Have read chapter 10 of *Engaged Spirituality*. 10th E.S. response due (if needed). Be preparing for Final - **May 5**

April 28  No class; Reading Week

May 5  Final exam in class.