Syllabus

C757
Faith, Wealth, and Community Leadership
Spring Semester, 2000
Tuesdays 7 pm - 9:45 pm

Carol Johnston

Description: This course is an experimental seminar, not a lecture course. The aim is to engage in theological reflection about the ways in which faith, wealth/resources, and community leadership interact as faithful people go about trying make creative and effective use of the gifts God has given them for the common good of their communities and the mission of their faith traditions. We will examine "exemplars" in philanthropy and religious leadership, biblical resources, the situation of the mainline Protestant churches compared to other faith traditions, and creative congregations/parishes as the "stuff" for theological reflection. This will be done through readings, videos, and interviews. The outline below is not set in stone: if we find that we are trying to get through too much, we will adjust the schedule. Auditors are very welcome!

Requirements: Being a seminar geared to engagement with a topic, there will be no final exam and no paper. Instead, there are four requirements that will be graded:

1. Reading and Participation in Discussion, 20%.

2. Leading worship, 20%

   Each week, at the end of the class period, you will take turns leading 10-15 minutes of worship. The worship should be designed to address the themes of the class. It is not necessary to write original material, but it is also not permissible to use a single service taken whole from a worship resource.

3. Two pages a week of writing, 30%.

   Each week of class, starting with the second week, you should turn in two pages of writing: Seven of the papers will be about the class discussions: the first page a description of the highlights of the class discussion, and the second your reflections on it - what you found most important or revelatory for you that you want to remember. Note: more than 2 pages at a time will not be accepted. You can pick 3 weeks in which not to turn in writing, to give you more time for preparation of worship and your oral report (see 4, below). The total number of short papers is 9. The first paper should be a short "money autobiography" (3-4 pages) in which you think back to your relationship with money through your life, including what you learned about giving as a child and how you deal with it now. The last paper should be a "reprise" of your money autobiography, reflecting on how the class has changed your understanding of and feelings about wealth. Both papers will be kept confidential.
4. Oral Report, 30%

Pick one of the following two assignments to research:

Option A: Congregational and community leadership: Pick a religious group (e.g., church, parish, synagogue, temple, mosque) that you think is doing creative work and interview at least three "exemplars" about what they are doing in the way of utilizing their resources on behalf of the common good. Your report should include your theological reflection about what you find.

Option B: Stewardship: Pick a denomination or congregation and find out what they do to foster stewardship. Share with us a description of what they do, including any resources they use (or make available), and your assessment of its quality, including its theological content (or lack thereof). You should interview at least one person about current activities and trends.

The report should be 20-30 minutes.
Schedule: Subject to adjustment to adapt to reality!

Jan. 18 First class: Introductions, Projects, Syllabus

Jan. 25 Philanthropy: Read Carnegie, Gospel of Wealth

Feb. 1 Bible: Wheeler, chapters 3-4

Feb. 8 Bible: Wheeler, chapters 5,6,8

Feb. 15 Tradition: Haughey, chapters 1-8

Feb. 22 Tradition: Haughey, chapters 9-14

Feb. 29 American Culture & Religion: Wuthnow, chapters 1, 6-7

Mar. 7 American Culture & Religion: Wuthnow, chapters 9-11

Mar. 14 Mainline Protestantism: Hoge, intro and chapters 1-4

Mar. 21 Mainline Protestantism: Hoge, chapters 5-8

Week of March 27: Reading Week (no class)

Apr. 4 Creative Community Leadership: Entwistle, chapters 5-7

Apr. 11 Creative Community Leadership: Entwistle, chapters 8-11

Week of March 17: Holy Week (no class)

Apr. 25: Creative Churches: McNamara

May 2 Exam Week: Class if needed to finish reports
Selected Bibliography

Required Reading


Hoge, Dean, Patrick McNamara, Charles Zech, eds. Plain Talk About Churches and Money (Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 1997).

McNamara, Patrick. More Than Money: Portraits of Transformative Stewardship (Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 1999).


General Bibliography: Faith and Money

Books and Articles


Church, Pharcellus. The Philosophy of Benevolence (NY: Leavitt, Lord & Co., 1836).


Dalai Lama, et. al. Imagine All the People: A conversation With the Dalai Lama on Money, Politics, and Life as it Could Be.

Dodge, Mary. Sermons to the Clergy (Boston: Estes and LaRiat, 1877).


Miller, Lynn A. Just in Time: Stories of God's Extravagance.


Videos


"Irwin Miller: Portrait of a Trustee" Produced and directed by James Ault NCCJ, 71 Fifth Ave., Suite 1100, New York, NY 10003, 212-206-0006. 29m or James Ault, 75 Dryads Green, Northampton, MA 01066.

"Soul of the City" celebrating the life and public witness of San Fernando Cathedral, San Antonio, Texas. Produced and Directed by Adán Medrano. 28m JM Communications,713-524-1382, fax 1383,http://www.jmcommunications.com

"The Stewardship of All of Life" Produced by Ted Yaple and distributed by the Presbyterian Publishing House, 1-800-524-2612 and order PREM #710312.