X-516: Peer Learning in Ministry  
Spring 2012

Wed. 1-2 pm  Suzanne Coyle, instructor  
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I. Course Objectives:
The purpose of this course is 1) to teach integrative modes of learning about ministry, vocation, pastoral identity, and communal practice and 2) to reinforce the values of collegiality and of peer learning for future work in ministry.

The focus of integrative study this semester will be the interconnectedness of God’s creation. Through readings and discussion we will examine racism/antiracism, including white power and privilege, poverty, classism, war, and multiculturalism. We will examine these issues from historical, biblical, theological-ethical, and socio-political perspectives, considering the implications for congregational life. But the central objectives are to become an inclusive community and to learn how to create one.

II. Course Policies:
Regular attendance is expected, and you are reminded that CTS has a policy that stipulates missing more than 25% of class time will automatically result in a failing grade. While genuine emergencies and significant illnesses will be treated with compassion, you should make this class a priority throughout the semester. Please contact the instructor as soon as you know that you will be absent in order to make arrangements to make up the work that you miss. Excessive absences will result in a lower, or even failing, grade.

Plagiarism is a serious offense. You are expected to be familiar with and to abide by the seminary’s policy on plagiarism and cheating. If you have any questions about when and how to cite sources, please see the instructor. The front desk of CTS library and your student planner have helpful materials.

Free and open discussion is essential to the educational process. You are expected to treat one another in a respectful manner, especially when you disagree. You are also expected to maintain confidentiality with regard to in-class discussions. If you want to reflect with others who are not members of our class on issues that come up in class, please do so in a way that does not identify specific individuals.

III. Textbooks and Other Resources:

ThoughtfulChristian.com, Anti-Racism Study Pack (selected articles). These and other resources will be placed on reserve in the CTS Library.

IV. Process
This class will be primarily a discussion, reflection, and processing experience. We will critically engage materials about how humans interact in and with God’s good creation as the skeleton on which to flesh out the body of a community. You will be expected to
bring your reflections on your papers and on the readings as your primary contribution to the conversation.

V. Grading
Although ungraded, the 1 page reflection papers are required. They will assist your class discussion. As such, they will count for 25% of the final grade (thus if you have them all as assigned, you earn 25% of an A grade).

Class discussion and participation will count for 50% of the final grade (balanced between being prepared [having read the material], being willing to be self-disclosing and open to new ideas, encouraging the conversation of your peers, and supporting a learning environment.

The class presentations on Sessions 8 and 9 will count for 25% of your final grade.

VI. Course Outline (with reading assignments):

Session 1 (Jan. 18)

Session 2 (Jan. 25)
1. Small group discussion on white privilege. Where do you see it in our society, in our churches, and in the seminary? Clarify – can you identify any theological claims?
   Assignment: Read Peggy McIntosh, “Invisible Knapsack,” “Why Is It So Difficult to Talk about Race?” and “White Privilege” (Anti-Racism Study Pack)

Session 3 (Feb. 1)
1. Share what you wrote about the History of Racism in the US.
   Assignment: Read 4 articles on “A History of Racism in the United States” (Anti-Racism Study Pack). Bring one page of reflections on what in particular caught your attention in these articles—what questions and concerns do they raise for you?

Session 4 (Feb. 8)
1. Thinking about sin and evil. Share ideas from your papers. Group conversation about the church – does it seem a mix of goodness and evil? How so or how not? Consider white privilege in the mix.
   Assignment: Read De La Torre (DLT), p 3-21. Bring approx. 1 page of questions/ideas about goodness and evil.

Session 5 (Feb. 15)
1. Group conversation linking ethical ideas and peer learning. What good are peers?
   Assignment: Read DLT, chapter 2 (22-56) and chapter 3 (57-69)
Session 6 (Feb. 22)
1. Discussion on interconnectedness of creation, global relations, and our congregations. Share information and thoughts from DLT. What about the hermeneutical circle? Before leaving, choose a partner for project: choose one area to present to rest of group in next 3 weeks, from DLT (chapter 9, 11, 13 or 14)
Assignment: DLT, chapter 4 (73-83 [intro to global relations]). Bring 1 page noting what new information or thoughts this chapter stimulated.

Feb. 29—Reading Period—No Class

Session 7 (Mar. 7)
1. Group conversation on interrelatedness of racism, white privilege, poverty, war, and our congregations. Where will you find challenge, support, and companionship in future ministry as you continue to wrestle with these ideas?
Assignment: Read DLT, chapter 5 (84-100 [poverty]) and 6 (101-121 [war]).

Session 8 (Mar. 14)
1. First pair teaches the others about their chapter.
Assignment: Read DLT, pages 143-147 and 203-206 (everyone read); And prepare (with your partner) to present chapter 7, 9, 11, 13 or 14 in DLT to the larger group.

Session 9 (March 21)
1. Second pair teaches others about their chapter.
Assignment: Read chapter in DLT chosen by peers for presentation.

Session 10 (Mar. 28)
1. Share your thoughts about the different topics. Group discussion on implications these ideas have for your ministry. How will you continue to think about ethical ideas with peers? Can you recall a time the light of the Gospel was cast on a situation of racism, white privilege, poverty, war, or ecological abuse in your church? How might you facilitate such an event in the future?
Assignment: Read chapter in DLT chosen by class and write one page of reflections on implications for your ministry.

April 4—Easter Recess—No Class

Session 11 (April 11)
1. Each student: Describe your congregation/denomination. What do we need to know in order to better understand your religious organizational and spiritual life? Discuss and categorize where your congregation is on anti-racism.
2. Group discussion of the new ideas and thoughts about liturgy and white privilege. 
   Assignment: Review “Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist, Multicultural Institution” and apply to your congregation.

Session 12 (April 18)
1. Group Discussion of new ideas and thoughts about liturgy and white privilege.
   Assignment: Read Traci West, *Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women’s Life Matter*, chapter 4, “Liturgy: Church Worship and White Superiority.” Bring 1 page of new thoughts or ideas from this chapter.

Session 13 (May 2)
1. Discussion of future ministries. What concrete ideas have stirred in you? How can you keep connected to your peers for support? Closing meal and/or worship.

Session 14 (May 9): Meeting at group’s discretion for video, meal, field trip, etc.