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CS 652 Ethics of Hospitality and Contemporary Challenges

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CS 652: Ethics of Hospitality and Contemporary Challenges
Asbury Theological Seminary
January 2006

Tuesday-Friday, January 10-13, 8:30am-1:30pm
Tuesday-Friday, January 17-20, 8:30am-1:30pm

Dr. Christine Pohl, Professor
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 Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:00-4:00pm and by appointment

Purpose: To introduce students to the Christian tradition of offering hospitality to strangers and to enable students to use that moral framework in developing a pastoral response to contemporary issues of diversity and inclusion in church and society.

Learning Objectives:

Having successfully completed this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and critically engage with:
 - Biblical texts on hospitality
 - Various historical practices of hospitality in the church
 - Contemporary practices and theoretical discussions of hospitality.
2. Recognize and reflect on the tensions between maintaining a distinctive Christian identity and welcoming strangers.
3. Articulate a theology and practice of hospitality that addresses issues of cultural diversity, race relations, homelessness, refugees, migrant workers, and persons with disabilities.
4. Recognize the difficulties, limitations, and challenges of Christian hospitality.

Texts:

Philip Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*. NY: HarperCollins, 1979, 1994.
 Christine Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*.
 Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999
 Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.
 Reading Packet

Bernard Adeney, *Strange Virtues: Ethics in a Multicultural World*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995.
 Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, NY: Doubleday.
 Brett Webb-Mitchell, *Unexpected Guests at God's Banquet: Welcoming People with Disabilities into the Church*. NY: Crossroad, 1994.

Evaluation:

Paper #1: Letter to main character in <i>Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed</i>	5%
Paper #2: Devotional on Welcoming Strangers	15%
Paper #3: Paper on Theology of Welcome	20%
Paper #4: Immersion and Reflection	15%
Paper #5: Research Paper or Project	35%
Class participation and readings	10%

Grade Range: Work for CS 652 will be evaluated at a graduate/professional school level.

- A = (4.0) Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives
- B = (3.0) Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives
- C = (2.0) Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives
- D = (1.0) Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives
- F = (0) Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

Student Responsibilities: This course is designed as a seminar. It is therefore essential that students come to class having read and reviewed the assigned material carefully and critically. Class attendance and active participation in discussions are expected and are factored into the final grade. Reading Records will be collected on the last day of class.

All written work must be typed with 12-point type, one inch margins on all four sides, and (except for the first assignment) true double-spacing. There will be a penalty for late papers commensurate with the degree of lateness and the adequacy of the excuse. Papers are due in class on assigned date.

All written work must use inclusive language when reference is made to human beings (male and female). This provides for both greater inclusion and greater precision

Note: *Because this is an intensive class, it is essential that students read all of the assigned materials prior to the beginning of the course. Books are available in the bookstore. (The packet of readings may not be available until close to the beginning of class. We will make adjustments if necessary—but please try to read as much of the packet as possible before the start of class)*

Read assigned texts in the following order:

Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed* (entire book)

Pohl, *Making Room* (entire book)

Packet, (Scripture verses through Schaeffer, selection from *What is a Family?*)

Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace* (pages 13-165)

Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, pages (pp. 65-109)

Webb-Mitchell, *Unexpected Guests* (pp. 1-13, 46-49, 71-109, 130-155, 170-184)

Adeney, *Strange Virtues* (pp. 13-141, 163-191)
 Packet (finish the readings)

Written Assignments involve four brief integrative/reflection papers and a research paper or project.

The first two assignments are due on the first day of class:

1. Write a one-page (single-spaced) **letter to one of the main characters in *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed***. Reflect on how the testimony of his or her hospitality and community challenged you morally and spiritually. Be specific in engaging one or two incidents or insights that were particularly important to you.
2. A coalition of churches in your town is thinking about responding to the latest refugee crisis by assisting in the resettlement of several families. There is mixed response within the congregations—some parishioners are very supportive; others remain unconvinced. The pastors in town have asked you to do a **devotional on “Welcoming Strangers.”** Leaning heavily on the biblical and historical materials you have read for the course, write a devotional that would help parishioners understand the biblical and moral importance of offering hospitality to needy strangers (3 pages, double-spaced).
3. Write a three page (double-spaced) paper that articulates a **theology of welcome**. Choose two or three distinct and major insights from Miroslav Volf’s *Exclusion and Embrace* (e.g. the “movement of embrace” would count as one insight) around which to develop your own theological understanding of welcome.

One possible approach would be to use hospitality as a lens through which to reflect on theological points such as: who God is, God’s relation to human beings, the character of sin, and/or the moral implications of God’s character.

It is crucial that you demonstrate an understanding of Volf’s main arguments. Bring his arguments into conversation with at least three other readings from the course to develop your theological statement. **Due in class Tuesday, January 17.**

The last two assignments are due on Monday, January 30.

4. **Immersion and Reflection** – spend 3-5 hours in a place that cares for the needs of strangers. If possible, help out with the tasks. Be careful to observe as much as possible about guest/host relations, power and empowerment, setting, and explicit and implicit messages about welcome and respect. Write a 3 page (double-spaced) paper reflecting on your experience in light of some of the key themes we covered in class.
5. **Final Project** – to be developed in individual consultation with the professor (15 pages, double-spaced). Three general types of papers/projects are possible:

- A. Research paper on ministry with a vulnerable population: homeless people, guest/migrant workers, people with disabilities or terminal illnesses, refugees.

Guidelines for Research Paper:

1. Explain briefly why you have chosen the topic. Identify the concerns and experiences that you bring to the study.
2. Describe the group/problem/issue of your study. Who is affected? What are the consequences for them, for the church, for society?
3. Analyze the issue. Why is this population vulnerable? What are the causal factors for their powerlessness, vulnerability, need?
4. Discuss relevant historical factors and describe the future direction of the problem.
5. Develop a framework for response that incorporates biblical, theological, and moral themes.
6. Map out a strategy to respond to the population and their need at the level of the local church or at another level (not just personal), making use of hospitality practices and commitments.

B. Develop a curriculum for use in the local church, student work, or youth ministries using hospitality as a framework for moral formation. Be specific about objectives for the curriculum and how you expect to accomplish moral formation. Make sure to attend to cognitive, affective, and community-building dimensions.

C. Research paper on the moral implications of hospitality for missions practice and missionaries (*more specific instructions will be provided*).

Class Sessions

Tuesday, Jan. 10: Hospitality and the Moral Life

Images, Themes, Questions, and Introductions
Discussion of the Hospitality of the Community of Le Chambon

Review reading: *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*

Wednesday, Jan. 11: Biblical Sources for the Hospitality Tradition

Review Reading: *Making Room*, 3-35
Packet, Biblical texts, Moucarray, Gowan, Koenig

Thursday, Jan. 12: Overview of the Historic Tradition of Christian Hospitality

Review Reading: *Making Room*, 36-58
Packet, Riddle, Lactantius, Chrysostom, Greer, Benedict, Sumption, Wesley

**Friday, Jan. 13: Hospitality as Recognition and Respect
 Marginality, Power, Possessions, and Places**

Review Reading: *Making Room*, 61-124, 150-169
Packet, A Penny a Copy readings through Christensen
 Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, chapters 4-6

Tuesday, Jan. 17: Community, Boundaries, and Limits in Hospitality

Review Reading: *Making Room*, 127-149
Packet, pages A Penny a Copy, Vanier, Schaeffer

Wednesday, Jan. 18: Developing a Moral Theology of Hospitality

Review Reading: *Exclusion and Embrace*, 13-165

**Thursday, Jan. 19: Application to Particular Groups and Contexts
 Welcoming People with Disabilities
 Hospitality and Cross-cultural or Multiethnic Ministry**

Review Reading: *Unexpected Guests*, pages 1-13, 46-49, 71-109, 130-155, 170-184
Strange Virtues, pages 13-141, 163-191
 Articles by A. Gittins and Riggins Earl in *Packet*

Friday, Jan. 20: Implications for Ministry
Pastoral Ministry in the Local Church
Ministry in the Larger Community
Nurturing a Difficult Practice

Review Reading: *Packet*, Bouman, Mains, Christensen, Hershberger, Dawson,
Chittister

Making Room, 170-187