

MNST 6350
FOUNDATIONS FOR URBAN MINISTRY
North Park Theological Seminary
Soong-Chan Rah
(3 Credit Course)

Course Description:

The complexity of the urban context requires theological depth and the ability to formulate and contextually apply a relevant and robust urban biblical theology. In this course, we will engage in the process of social cultural analysis to understand the nature and context of urban ministry. Through biblical analysis, spiritual reflection, and communal discernment we will move toward a theology of urban ministry that will provide the foundation for impactful engagement with complex urban systems.

Objectives:

At the end of class the student should:

- Have familiarity with methods and practices of social analysis in conjunction with Theological Reflection
- Have a Biblical/Theological Framework for urban ministry
- Have an Ethical Framework for making assessments about the role of the church in issues in the urban context

The student

- will engage in an analysis of the current cultural and social context of the city.
- will explore key biblical themes informing a theological understanding of the role of the Church in the city.
- will develop a biblical, theological and social ethical reflection on the mission of the Church in the urban context.

Texts:

Sider, Ronald J., *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (Thomas Nelson, 2005).

Linthicum, Robert. *City of God, City of Satan* (Zondervan, 1991).

Villafañe, Eldin, *Seek the Peace of the City* (Eerdmans, 1995).

Readings on Moodle as assigned.

Requirements:

- Class attendance and participation (10%)
- In-class presentation (10%)
- Book reflections on selected readings (20%)
- Oral exam on urban theology (20%)
- Final project (40%)

Grading:

Upon completion of this course, you will receive a letter grade reflecting your performance in this course. Letter grades (A – F) will be awarded according to the existing policies of North Park. The final course grade will be computed according to the total number of points earned for all assignments as shown below:

<u>Total Points Earned:</u>	<u>Final Grade:</u>
95-100	A
93-94	A-
91-92	B+
88-90	B
86-87	B-
84-85	C+
80-83	C
78-79	C-
76-77	D+
72-75	D
70-71	D-
69 and below	F

Late work will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day that the assignment is late.

A FINAL GRADE for this course will be computed according to your successful completion of the following assignments:

ASSIGNMENT 1: Class Attendance and Participation 10 points max total
Attendance in all class sessions, mind, body, and soul. Active participation and engagement during the onsite sessions will be expected.

ASSIGNMENT 2: In-class Presentation 10 points max total
Each student will be responsible for an in-class presentation on the biblical theme or urban ministry theme as assigned on the first day of class. The presentation will be no longer than ten minutes and will initiate the class discussion topic for that session.

ASSIGNMENT 3: Reading Reports 20 points max total
Your reading reports for two of the required text books are to be typed in the designated report format below.

Reading Report Format and **Grading Rubric** (2 pages, double-spaced) (10 pts each):

- Note the Author; Title; Publisher; and Date of the book. (1 point)
- List the percentage of the book completed by the due date. (1 point)
- Submit your understanding of the central thesis of the book. (2 points)
- Select an idea or concept from the reading that seemed especially significant and respond in your own words. (6 points)
 - o Identify concept/idea (2 points)
 - o Give a critique/reflection/analysis on the concept (2 points)
 - o Practically apply this concept in a local church setting (2 points)

ASSIGNMENT 4: Oral Exam on Urban Theology 20 points max total
Each student will engage in a twenty minute dialogue with the Professor (time to be arranged). The oral exam will gauge the student's ability to verbally articulate a theological approach to urban ministry that reflects an understanding of one's own complex urban ministry context.

ASSIGNMENT 5: FINAL PROJECT 40 points max total

Write a 10-page (double-spaced) final paper that integrates various learnings from the course including:

- theology of racial reconciliation, justice, and multi-ethnic ministry
- required and recommended readings and original research
- ideas and reflections garnered from discussions, site visits, sessions, etc.
- paper should be practical in nature and applicable in the local church context and integrate research and reflection

Topics Covered:

Topic I:	Defining the City
Topic II:	Social Analysis
Topic III:	Historical Context
Topic IV:	Christ and Culture
Topic V:	The Church and the City
Topic VI:	The Kingdom of God
Topic VII:	The Body of Christ
Topic VIII:	The Liberating Spirit
Topic IX:	Site Visits and Reflection

Bibliography / Recommended Texts:

- Berger, Peter. *The Sacred Canopy* (Anchor, 1967).
- Berger, Peter and Thomas Luckmann. *The Social Construction of Reality* (Anchor, 1966).
- Bevans, Stephen. *Models of Contextual Theology* (Orbis, 1992).
- Boff, Leonardo. *The Lord's Prayer* (Orbis Books, 1989).
- . *Holy Trinity, Perfect Community* (Orbis Books, 1989).
- Boggs, Grace Lee. *Living for Change* (U. of Minnesota Press, 1998).
- Brueggemann, Walter. *Peace* (Chalice Press, 2001).
- Endo, Shusaku. *A Life of Jesus* (Paulist Press, 1973).
- Freire, Paulo. "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" (Continuum, 1999).
- Gornik, Mark. *To Live in Peace* (Eerdmans, 2002).
- Linthicum, Robert. *City of God, City of Satan* (Zondervan, 1991).
- Meeks, Wayne. *The First Urban Christians* (Yale University Press, 1983).
- Meyers, Eleanor Scott (ed.). *Envisioning the New City* (Westminster/John Knox, 1992).
- Mott, Stephen. *Biblical Ethics and Social Change* (Oxford University Press, 1982).
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society* (Eerdmans, 1989).
- Niebuhr, Reinhold. *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932).
- Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. (Harper and Row, 1951).
- Sattler, Gary. *God's Glory, Neighbor's Good* (Covenant Press, 1982).
- Sennett, Richard. *Flesh and Stone*. (W.W. Norton & Company, 1994).
- Stark, Rodney. *The Cities of God* (Harper, 2006).
- Walker, Theodore, Jr. *Empower the People: Social Ethics for the African American Church* (Orbis Books, 1991).
- Ward, Graham. *Cities of God* (Routledge, 2000).
- Wells, Sam. *God's Companions* (Blackwell, 2006).
- Winter, Bruce W. *Seek the Welfare of the City* (Eerdmans, 1994).

Disabilities Accommodations:

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the program's office (773-244-5619). Please do so as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. For further information please review the following website:

<http://www.northpark.edu/ada>

Academic Honesty:

In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion. Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another's work as one's own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another's answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one's answers or work.
4. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.

For further information on this subject you may refer to the Academic Dishonesty section of the University's online catalog.

NOTES

The instructors reserve the right to modify the course syllabus to best accommodate the particular needs of the class.

Updated September 21, 2011