

# The Urban Church: Context, Theology and People

STMM 593-01

## Course Information and Schedule

Summer Quarter

3 credits

Dates: July 10 to July 26, 2006 [Monday, Wednesday and Friday]

Class Location: Hunthausen Hall Room 150 or at a site off campus.

Time: 9:00 am – 12:00 Noon or 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

## Dr. Richard Cunningham, Faculty

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Appointments: Contact directly: e-mail, phone, or voicemail.

Please leave home and or work numbers.

Note: Arrange any changes in the assignments with each other and notify everyone in the class and faculty of those changes. Give each other address/e-mail/ phone as you choose.

## Course Description

This course will explore a variety of images, theories and contrasting visions of the urban church, its role and function in contemporary city life. While this course will meet occasionally on campus, most of the time it will meet off campus. A good pair of walking shoes and a keen sense of exploration will be needed. Students will explore the urban context by meeting with a wide variety of church and community leaders, visiting local agencies, churches, people served and those in the margins. There will be time to reflect theologically and dialogue with leaders and peers.

Students will have the opportunity to:

- stretch their sense of justice and examine trends that perpetuate poverty
- ascertain effective methods of pastoral leadership in the city
- explore scriptural relationship of the church, culture and city
- walk in another's shoes of the marginalized and unseen city dwellers
- express their own theology of the city and the urban church.

## Required Texts:

- Cone, James H. *God of the Oppressed*
  - [Chapters 1, 3, 5 [Black Theology – H. Richard Niebuhr's Christ & Culture],6
- Bakke, Ray. *The Urban Christian: Effective Ministry in Today's Urban World.*
  - [Chapters 2, 3, 4]
- Killen, Patricia O'Connell & Mark Silk. *Religion and Public Life in the Pacific Northwest: The None Zone*
  - [Chapters 1,4, 5, Conclusion]
- Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*
  - [Forward, Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 7 and one other Chapter]

- Meeks, Wayne A. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*
  - Introduction, Chapter 1, 2
- Rauschenbusch, Walter. *A Theology for the Social Gospel*
  - [Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13]

### **Recommended Texts:**

- Locke, Hubert G. Searching for God in Godforsaken Times and Places.
- Conn, Harvie M. and Manuel Ortiz. Urban Ministry
- Diller, Jerry V. Cultural Diversity: A Primer for the Human Services
- Mulligan, Mary Alice and Rufus Burrow, Jr. Standing in the Margin: How Your Congregation Can Minister to the Poor
- Neuhauser, Richard John. The Naked Public Square
- Ortiz, Manuel. One New People: Models for Developing a Multiethnic Church
- Wright, Richard. Native Son

### **Required Reading Note:**

- The nature of this class will prevent review and thorough engagement of these selected readings. However, students will be expected to bring into the classroom conversation perspectives from the reading of these texts. In addition, papers and projects should engage and reference the student's reading.
- Reading regional newspapers. Read one or both of the primary Seattle newspapers or papers from Tacoma, Bellevue or Everett.
- Reading local newspapers: students should during the course read selected articles from other news paper sources such as:
  - Real Change
  - The Seattle Weekly
  - Colors NW
  - The Seattle Medium

### **Maintenance of the Class:**

- Leadership within the class:
  - Opening and Closing Prayer
  - Problem solving
  - Establishing principles of group life

### **Briefings:**

- Each student will be responsible for leading the Briefing – which will include the following elements:
  - Introduce the guest speaker – brief introduction [2 minutes] – use websites, Google, books, or call speaker ahead of time to gather information
  - Introduce the class to the speaker: nature of the class
  - Frame the first question that you want to pursue – see class schedule
  - Watch the time – make closure with the speaker – thank them!

- Write a hand written “Thank-You Note” to the person giving the briefing and any other guest that may appear with the person giving the briefing. This should be done within a week of the briefing.

**Travel and exploration:**

Students will be expected to travel to a variety of locations within the city to meet with key leaders in their office or location.

In addition students will want to safely explore areas of the city and its life – in pairs. Students should not go where they do not feel physically safe.

Class participants will be encouraged to take the bus when possible and arrive on-time to the briefings.

**Presentation / Class Debriefing – July 26, 2006**

Each student will make a 20 minute presentation the last day of class. The presentation will be focused on your **Theology of Urban Ministry – Context, Theology and People.**

- In your presentation identify the following:
  - Your Theology of Urban Ministry –
  - Include a reflection on your Sunday morning worship experiences
  - Which briefing challenged you most?
  - Your learnings
  - Your questions – what next?
  - Where should the church be or what should the church do?
  - Include a brief description of your final paper / project.
- You can do this using Power Point or talking points, visuals, etc.
- This presentation can be used as a testing ground for your final paper or project.

**Final Paper or Project – the paper will be due on Monday August 7, 2006 9:00 am or a due date agreed upon with the instructor.**

- Each student will submit a final paper or project. The paper should be between 18 and 20 pages in length. A creative project [suggestions below] may be substituted for a paper with the approval of the faculty. A project must address the five elements enumerated above
- The paper should engage and make obvious these six elements:
  1. an important aspect of Urban Ministry
  2. the readings
  3. the class briefings
  4. your understanding of the context and / or culture
  5. your theological perspective [theology / Christology
  6. praxis – what action does this lead you to take.
- Examples of Papers and Projects
  - A **position paper** that addresses your theological position for the church to address a topic of your choice [homelessness, worship, mental illness, and etc]. The paper should include
    - a) comments made by community / church leaders who were presenters during the class;
    - b) required / recommended reading.
  - A **response paper** – write a response to theologian, community leader, pastor, who a) gave briefing or presentation to the class; b) wrote one of the texts for the course – e.g., Cone,

Niebuhr etc. Be certain to state clearly the issue to which you are responding and your dilemma, problem, or new insight.

- A **research paper** reporting additional exploration of an issue raised by the class urban ministry. For example you want to explore the root causes of homeless youth; you pursue that issue by meeting with 3 to 5 people [not class presenters] report our interaction and your findings.
- A **project**.
  - a photo essay of urban issues that you would use for a local congregation – adult forum; Or,
  - a project – You want to focus on homeless people, you interview and photograph with permissions] street people; Or,
  - a collection of prose, series of short stories focusing on impressions, interviews, observations.
  - you make a proposal – discuss with instructor – an alternative.

## **Grades:**

### Course Requirements for a “B” grade

- Class participation and regular attendance
- Completion of written work
- Leadership within the class
- Evidence of assigned reading in class conversation and written work
- Initiative, creativity and adaptability

To receive an “A” grade: “...an outstanding achievement in these areas.”