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# CS 652 Ethics of Hospitality and Contemporary Challenges

Christine Pohl

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**CS 652: Ethics of Hospitality and Contemporary Challenges**  
**Asbury Theological Seminary**  
**Fall 2001**  
**Tuesdays, 6:15-9:00pm\*\*\*\*Stanger Hall 408**

Dr. Christine Pohl, Professor  
Office Location: McPheeters Center 308  
Office Phone 858-2284\*\*\*Home Phone 858-8136  
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30-3:00pm 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.

Other readings will be in folders on reserve in the library.

**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 = Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objective
- A- =
- B+ =
- B = Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives
- B- =
- C+ =
- C = Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives
- C- =
- D+ =
- D = Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives
- D- =
- F = 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 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

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

1. Due **September 11:** 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. Due **October 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 we have covered over the past three weeks, write a

devotional that would help parishioners understand the biblical and moral importance of offering hospitality to needy strangers. (3 pages, double-spaced).

3. Due **October 30**: Write a three page (double-spaced) paper that articulates a theology of welcome. Integrate the material from Miroslav Volf's *Exclusion and Embrace* with the other readings and class discussions. (*More specific instructions for this assignment will be provided*)

4. Due **November 27**: 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 have covered in class.

5. Due **December 11**: Final Project – to be developed in individual consultation with the professor (15 pages, double-spaced). Three general types of papers/projects are possible:

1. Research paper on ministry with a vulnerable population: homeless people, migrant workers, people with disabilities or terminal illnesses, refugees. (*More specific instructions will be provided*)

2. 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.

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

## **Class Sessions and Assignments**

### **September 4: Hospitality to Strangers: A Window into the Moral Life**

Images, themes, questions, and introductions

### **September 11: Hospitality as Part of the Moral Life**

Discussion of the hospitality of the community of Le Chambon

**Reading Assignment:** *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*

**Written Assignment #1:** Letter to character in the story

### **September 18: Biblical Sources for the Hospitality Tradition**

**Reading Assignment:** *Making Room, 3-35*

Packet- Biblical Texts and pages 1-34

## **September 25: An Overview of the Ancient Tradition**

**Reading Assignment:** *Making Room*, 36-58  
Packet – pages 35-83

## **October 2: Hospitality as Recognition and Respect**

**Reading Assignment:** *Making Room*, 61-103  
Packet – pages 84-90, 98-119  
**Written Assignment #2:** Devotional on Welcoming Strangers

## **October 9: Marginality, Power, Possessions, and Places**

**Reading Assignment:** *Making Room*, 104-24, 150-69  
Packet - pages 120-182  
Nouwen, *Reaching Out*: chapters 4-6

## **October 16: Hospitality, Community, Boundaries, and Limits**

**Reading Assignment:** *Making Room*, 127-49  
Packet - pages 91-97, 103-109, 161-170

## **October 23: Hospitality, Community, Boundaries, and Limits (continued)**

## **October 30: Developing a Moral Theology of Hospitality**

**Reading Assignment:** *Exclusion and Embrace*, 13-165  
**Written Assignment #3:** Paper on Theology of Welcome

## **November 6: Application: Welcoming People with Disabilities**

**Reading Assignment:** Webb-Mitchell, *Unexpected Guests*, 1-13, 46-49,  
71-109, 130-155, 170-184  
Materials on reserve in library

**November 13: Application: Hospitality and Cross-cultural or Multiethnic Ministry**

**Reading Assignment:** Adeney, *Strange Virtues*, 13-141, 163-191  
Materials on reserve in library  
Review A. Gittins and Riggins Earl in packet

**November 20: Reading Week**

**November 27: Application: Implications for Pastoral Ministry in Local Churches**

**Reading Assignment:** Packet – pages 171-204  
**Written Assignment #4:** Immersion and Reflection Paper

**December 4: Application: Implications for Christian Presence in the World....  
Nurturing a Difficult Practice**

**Reading Assignment:** *Making Room*, 170-187  
Packet - pages 205-216

**December 11: Finals Week**

**Written Assignment #5:** Final Research Project