2012

The Theology and Ethics of Martin Luther King, Jr.
CTM 615

Evangelical Advocacy: A Response to Global Poverty

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The Theology and Ethics of Martin Luther King, Jr. CTM 615  
April 17-21st 2006

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I. Prerequisites  
Systematic Theology I is preferred.  
This course may be taken as a theology or an ethics elective. Students should declare which elective they have selected.

II. Description of the course or seminar  
This class will explore and examine the theological and philosophical foundations of the life, work, and thought of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Attention will be given to King’s understanding of God, Christ, the Church and humanity and how the interplay of these conceptions informed his quest to critique, contest and transform North American civilization and the emerging global order. Students will be asked to probe into King’s identity as a minister of the gospel, explore his role and significance in the history of the Church, and examine his international theology and cultural legacy. In addition, students will be invited to discern the implications of King’s life and thought for contemporary ministry.  
Note: Internationalist perspectives are welcome.

We will examine King in three phases. First, we shall attempt to place King within a particular social context and examine the cultural-historical matrix which shaped King’s theological identity. Second, we will probe the underlying motifs and trajectories of his thought. Third, we will examine his enduring legacy and his all-encompassing social vision for humanity.

Sub-disciplines  
Historical Analysis: This involves accounting for the forces that have contributed to (or shaped) the present problem, issue or debate. Ask the question “Where did that come from?” John 9.

Ethological Analysis: This invites an exegesis of the cultural and social context of the problem. Give a description of the fitting structures of an ethos that sustains and forms its “theatre of values.” H. Richard Niebuhr’s tadpole; Marvin Gaye’s “What’s Going On?”; Luke 3:1-12 “In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberias Caesar.”

Deontology: The work of identifying and elaborating upon the universal principles of right and wrong that govern all contexts is deontology. For example. The Decalogue in the Old Testament; or when a Jesus says, “Thou shall love thy God with all they mind, strength and soul.”

Teleology: This is the clarifying ones ultimate purpose, vision, future or telos. It involves identifying and elaborating upon the good ends, the vision of the just society, and the best means, toward which we should act: “Thy Kingdom Come.”
Note: While these four sub-disciplines are all necessary, and each has its special importance, none is sufficient alone. Each needs theological support; finding support in a Convenantal-Trinitarian Theology of Grace.

III. Desired learning outcomes
The student will be able to:
1. Articulate the major pillars of the theology of Martin Luther King, Jr.
2. Gain experience in using the theological method of engaging and interpreting a particular theologian.
3. Develop tools to analyze and explore the influences of the church in social and cultural events.

IV. Teaching and Learning Strategies
Methods of instruction will integrate lectures, discussions and exercises designed to stimulate interest and to clarify understanding. Evaluation will be based on completion of the class requirements, with special attention given to personal, theological and/or pastoral reflection on the topics at hand, accuracy of content, clarity of expression and style of presentations.

V. Required Texts:
Baldwin, Lewis V., *There is a Balm in Gilead: The Cultural Roots of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Fortress, 1991.

VI. Recommended Texts: Author(s) last name, first name, titles, place of publication, publishers, dates
For each Recommended Text please include a 1 sentence summary of the key aspect of this text as it relates to the course topic


VII. Course Assignments GRID

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-residency Work</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Blackboard Posting</td>
<td>• Before reading texts, deadline for posting 4/8 at midnight</td>
<td>• 5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Single theme – engagement paper</td>
<td>• Arrival to class, 4/17</td>
<td>• 10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Readings: Read the following texts by 4/17/06</td>
<td>• Day 1 of Residency, 4/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Baldwin, “There is a Balm in Gilead: …”</td>
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<td>• Ivory, “Toward a Theology of Radical Involvement”</td>
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<td>• Dyson, “I May not Get There with You…”</td>
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<tr>
<th>During Residency Work</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Participation: Lead the forum/precept/roundtable</td>
<td>During Residency</td>
<td>• 20%</td>
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<th>Post Residency Work</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Book Review</td>
<td>• April 28th</td>
<td>• 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Term Paper</td>
<td>• May 7th</td>
<td>• 40%</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Total 100%</td>
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VIII. Assignment Description

A. Pre-Residency Work:

#1 - Blackboard Posting BEFORE reading the Required texts.
Before doing any Pre-residency reading, create your response to the question, “What do I think has been the impact of Martin Luther King, Jr. on the North American civilization?” The response is to be thoughtful, your perspective and under 250 words. Post it on the Discussion Board, in the Forum titled, “Theology and Ethics of MLK, Jr.: Pre-residency Posting.” You may cut and paste your response into your thread or include your response as an attachment. Your response should be posted before April 8th at Midnight and before you read the texts for the course.

#2 – Single theme interaction paper – Due - at beginning of Residency, 4/17.
Select a theme common to all three authors and critically engage that theme from your perspective. This is a 1 page paper to be submitted at the beginning of the residency.

B. During Residency

Students are required to lead the discussion in one of the following: precept, open forum, or roundtable.
Attendance at all class sessions is required. Each student should contribute to class discussion with a spirit of Christian fellowship (class participation is 20% of the final grade).

Complete all reading assignments.

C. Post-Residency Work

#1 - Book/Work Review: Due no later than April 28, 2006
Selection of your book should occur during the Residency. Discussion about the parameters will occur at the residency.

In your book review please focus on the theological, pastoral or ecclesiological themes being explored by the author. Here are some suggestions to guide your thinking: What is the nature of this text? For instance, is it a historical piece, a book on practical theology, a primer on theological ethics? What are her/his governing assumptions? Is this a text on theory? Is it a how to text? Is her/his argument consistent? Engage the author critically? Do you share her/his views? Why? Why not? How would you apply the author’s thinking or contribution to your own ministerial, theological or pastoral context? What contribution has the author made to the field of study?

Note. Please set out to write a review not a report. What is desired is not a summary of your findings, but creative and critical engagement of the text; not what the author thinks but what you think about what the author thinks.

#2 - Term Paper:
GRADUATING SENIORS MUST TURN IN THIS PAPER NO LATER THAN MAY 7th, 2006.

TERM PAPER- GUIDELINES

1. The paper should be 15-20 (double spaced) pages in length. Please use Chicago Style format and 11-12 point standard font.
2. The paper should reflect responsible research and careful reasoning. A good paper represents an ability to engage in critical dialogue with others. It should reflect critical interaction and regard for what others have said.
3. The paper must be a critical constructive examination of a theme or several related themes of this course. Students may wish to develop Kingian analysis of a specific problem. Those who wish to develop alternative or unique projects must have topics approved by the Professor.
4. Identify, clearly and boldly, what you intend to do in the beginning of your work
5. Students should consult notes, class textbooks and other material (Journal essays and articles, speeches, sermons etc.) in grounding their paper. Also, take hints from comments written in the margins of the smaller papers.
6. Papers should reflect sound biblical interpretation as required.
VIII. Faculty Expectations: guidelines or procedures

Attendance & lateness policy:
If non-required elective (may it be taken for Credit/No Credit)
Penalty for late work: Assignments will be considered late after designated day and time.
For each day late, the grade earned in the paper will be decreased 1 level.
Use of standard editorial symbols of correction (as an Appendix to Syllabus)
Submission & return papers and projects at the end of course:

IX. Seminary Policy & Expectations:
Consult The Palmer Theological Seminary Student Handbook and the current Seminary Catalog for information about the following:
- policy regarding use of Chicago Manual style in all written work
- availability of writing tutors
- policy on plagiarism
- policy on use of inclusive language for human beings
- policy on extensions for late work
- policy regarding computer-generated papers
- grading guidelines
- point value of final grades
X. Class Schedule:

Day 1: April 17

Phase One: King in the Modern Context: Philosophical and Religious Resources

Introduction
Lecture 1: “Here Comes The Dreamer: Martin Luther King, Jr. as Radical Subaltern Modern Christian”
The formation of precept groups
Readings: Baldwin - Balm in Gilead; Introduction, chapters 1-2
           Ivory - A Theology of Radical Involvement; chapter 1
           Dyson - I May Not Get There With You; chapter 6

Lecture 2: “The Anatomy of A Dreamer” or Documentary and Discussion
Precept groups
Readings: Baldwin - Balm in Gilead; chapter 3
           Washington – “Pilgrimage to Nonviolence”

Day 2: April 18, 2006
Lecture 3: “The Theological and Philosophical Resources of King’s Thought. A Critical Synthetic Christian Cosmopolitanism”

Precept group
Documentary
Readings: Ivory - A Theology of Radical Involvement; chapter 2

Documentary
King’s Conception of the “The Divine-Human Relationship”

Lecture 4: “All God’s Children”
Precept group
Documentary
Readings: Washington - Pilgrimage to Nonviolence; Chapters 10, 14-18
           Ivory - A Theology of Radical Involvement; Chapter 3
           Baldwin - Balm in Gilead; Chapter 3

Day 3: April 19, 2006

Phase 2: Sin, Salvation and The Social Gospel

Lecture 5: King’s Christology and Ecclesiology
Precept group
Documentary
Readings: Ivory - A Theology of Radical Involvement, chapter 4;
           Dyson - I May Not Get There With You, Chapter 4
           Washington - “Letter From A Birmingham Jail”
           On Reserve: Readings from Smith and Emerson - Divided By Faith
Lecture 6: “Sin, Self and Social Structures”
Readings: Ivory, chapter 4
Washington, A Testament of Hope. Please read the following:
“Nonviolence and Racial Justice”
“An Experiment in Love”
“The Social Organization of Nonviolence”
“Suffering and Faith”
“Nonviolence the Only Road to Freedom”

Open Forum

Lecture 7: “The Anatomy of Non-Violence”
Readings: Ivory, chapter 5

Day 4: April 20, 2006

Phase Three: The Race, Religion and The Redeemed Community: Reflections on the Beloved Community

Lecture 8: “Niebuhr, Tillich and King on Love, Power and Justice”
Readings: Washington, Testament of Hope. Please read the following
“Facing the Challenge of a New Age” (chapter.24)
“The Rising Tide of Racial Consciousness”(chapter 25)
Dyson, I May Not Get There With You, chapter 4 & 5

Precept
Documentary

Lecture 9: “The Quest For A Beloved Community. King as Global Theologian”
Readings: Washington, (pp.617-633)
Ivory, A Theology of Radical Involvement, chapter 6
Dyson, chapter 12-13 and Epilogue

Day 5: April 21, 2006
Lecture 10: “Where Do We Go From Here? Mestisaje: Towards A Christian Conception of Multi-Cultural Democracy

Roundtable: “How Ought the Church Respond to Postmodernism, Globalization?”