

# Social Context (IPS 532-002)

Fall, 2010

McGuire Hall, Room 360 (Corner of State and Pearson)

Instructor: *Clinton Stockwell, MUPP, PhD*

Mondays, 8:45a.m. – 11:15a.m.

## Course Description:

The Christian story suggests that God cared enough about the human condition that God self dwelt in human flesh and contexts. As such in an attempt to be faithful to living out the gospel and the ministry of the Good News, we have to take into account the times and places that we find ourselves called to minister in and through. We will pay close attention to the material conditions that we find ourselves in and the communities that we are located in to minister. We will develop both theory and skills for understanding the context of ministry in the fullest sense of the word. This will include the political, cultural, economic and religious realms of the world. We cannot be effective if we do not have a better understanding of the context in which we are called to serve. Understanding the context is however not a substitute for action itself, rather it is informed ministry that reflects upon its praxis in the light of the prophetic proclamation of the Good News. As such, we will situate all analysis within the context of practical ministry: How might our analysis serve us in our ministry on behalf of Spirituality and Justice? Our praxis and analysis will be rooted in the Gospel and our work will be informed by theological reflection. It is not just what we understand the world to be, but rather what does our faith tradition say about this world and these conditions? How do we locate our own praxis within the larger project of faith in the world? We will seek to work out these questions through our readings, class discussion, class assignments and the semester long collective project that will put all these skills and theory at work in the real world.

## Course Objectives:

1. *To explore the significance and relationships between overlapping social contexts-* that influence our lives (from Global to Local).
2. *To gain skills and experience in analyzing a local context--* giving particular attention to a local context's history, tradition, demographics, trends, needs, issues and alternative visions.
3. *To develop a working perspective on society*, including an understanding of the world "as it is" (analysis) to the world "as it should be" (vision/imagination).
4. *To develop a Community Plan or Strategy* that an agent (student or community organization) could act upon in some concrete or specific way (s). This plan or strategy would of necessity be relevant to an accurate analysis of the real needs and possible visions of a specific community or neighborhood.

## Assignments:

1. *The Readings* in the course were selected to give us a working vocabulary, key concepts, and perspective with regard to analyzing the multi-layered contexts that overlap our lives (global, national, regional (state, county, metro, city), neighborhood locality). Students will be assigned responsibility for aspects of each reading assignment for discussion purposes.
2. *Written Essay Assignment One- reflection on Gebara, Longing for Running Water*
3. *Research Assignment One- Neighborhood Description* . The goal is that students will practice social analysis of a particular context beginning with a description of the community chosen;
4. *Written Essay Assignment Two: Significance of prophetic spirituality of either Malcolm X, Dietrich Bonhoeffer or Aung Sung Suu Kyi.*
5. *Research Assignment Paper Two:* is a Strategy Paper. Given what we know about a community based on your description of it (history, demographics, trends, built environment, civic culture), what are the critical issue(s) facing the community and its residents, and what strategy might best address that/those critical issue(s)?

## Grading:

Readings and Participation in Discussions, 20%  
Written Reflective Essay Assignments  
    Longing for Running Water 10%  
    Living Faith/ Prophetic Biography 10%  
Research Papers- Description 30%  
Final Paper. Strategy Paper 30%/ total 100%.

## Required Readings:

- 1. Globalizing Civil Society (Open Media Pamphlet Series, 4) (Paperback)** by [David Korten](#). paperback: 78 pages (July 1, 2003). ISBN-10: 1888363592 ISBN-13: 978-1888363593.
- 2. Longing for Running Water (Biblical Reflections on Ministry).**  
Ivone Gebara; Paperback. Fortress Press (January 3, 1999)
- 3. Never a City so Real: A Walk in Chicago.** Hardcover: 160 pages  
Alex Kotlowitz. Crown (July 6, 2004).
- 4. Cracks in the Pavement: Social Change and Resilience in Poor Neighborhoods.**  
Martín Sánchez-Jankowski. (U. of California, 2008).
- 5. Living Faith: How Faith Inspires Social Justice** (Paperback), by [Curtiss Paul DeYoung](#). Publisher: Fortress Press; annotated edition (April 1, 2007). 186 Pages. ISBN-10: 0800638417 ISBN-13: 978-0800638412. ( DeYoung describes the work of three persons noted for their prophetic critique of national contexts, including Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Malcolm X and The Burmese Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi).
- 6. City Comforts: How to Build an Urban Village.**  
City Comforts Inc.; Revised edition (October 3, 2003)

## **Social Context (IPS 532-002)**

### **Itinerary (TBA)**

(A combination of field trips (\*), discussions, and guest presentations)

- August 30. Introductions . The Global Context Video: “Place Matters”  
Korten, *Globalizing Civil Society*. Living World versus Money World.  
Concepts/ discussions, from *Cracks in a Pavement*, by Sanchez, pages 1- 53.
- September 6. No Class. Labor Day.
- \*September 13. Neighborhood Visit – One- Cabrini Green-  
Guest Leader, Cynthia Stewart, Chicago Semester and St. Sabinas Parish  
Read First half of Longing for Living Water, Gebrara
- \*September 20. Neighborhood Visit- Two- Maxwell Street DVD  
Read Second half of book, Longing for Living Water  
Reflection Paper on Longing for Living Water book
- September 27. Neighborhood Visit: Pilsen  
Read, Kotlowitz, Never a City So Real, Pages 1-97
- October 3 Read Kotlowitz, Never a City So Real, Pages 98 to end.
- October 11. Reading Week, No Class.
- October 18. Housing  
Cracks in the Pavement, chapter two and three  
Assignment One: Neighborhood Description Assignment
- October 25. Local Economies  
“Ghetto Economics” essay  
Cracks in the Pavement, chapters four, five, Six and Seven.
- November 1. Gangs in the City  
Guest Speaker, John Hagedorn  
Read, Cracks in the Pavement, chapters eight and nine
- \*November 8. Issue Analysis- Public Education  
Read Cracks in the Pavement, chapters ten and eleven
- November 15. Prophetic Biographies: Malcolm X, Aung Sung Suu Kyi and Malcolm X.
- \*November 22. Community Intervention Strategies  
Read, City Comforts, How to Build and Urban Village
- November 29: No Class, Thanksgiving Holiday Weekend.
- December 6. Final Papers- Your Strategy (strategic vision) for your designated community/issue.

## Bibliography:

### Supplemental Readings:

1. Bess, Phillip. **Till We have Built Jerusalem: Architecture, Urbanism and the Sacred.** Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2006. I really like this book, but it is very "classical" in perspective, with treatments of Aristotle, Thomas, but has great analysis of the New Urbanism as a movement, and urban design, which may be touched on in the class.
2. Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. **The Cost of Discipleship** (1945). A radical exposition of the Sermon on the Mount, and classic statement of meaning of discipleship "in and for the world."
3. Bornstein, David. **How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas.** Oxford, 2004. Hopeful bios and stories from all over the world, mostly about entrepreneurship, justice, ecology and sustainable development.
4. Bouma-Prediger, Steven and Brian J. Walsh. **Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement.** Eerdmans, 2008. Deals with ecological issues, and our disconnection from home (earth). See also Steven Bouma-Prediger, **For the Beauty of the Earth** (1971) for an intelligent approach to ecology and "creation care."
5. Bruno, Robert Anthony. **Justified by Work: Identity and the Meaning of Faith in Chicago's Working-Class Churches.** Ohio State University Press, 2008. About relationship of faith and working class lives among "ordinary" Chicagoans. This looks pretty interesting.
6. Davis, Mike. **Planet of Slums.** Verso, 2007 (informal economy). Davis is main author of the so-called "LA School" of urban politics/sociology. The LA school believes that cities are apocalyptic nightmares, and that doom and disaster is on the horizon (makes a lot of sense in LA).
7. Ferguson, Ronald F. and William T. Dickens. **Urban Problems and Community Development.** Brookings, 1999. A good text on Community development that emphasizes importance of building upon social capital in urban communities.
8. Friedman, Thomas L. **Hot, Flat and Crowded: Why we need a Green Revolution-- and How it can Renew America.** Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2008. (The world is not "flat," but this is Friedman's best book). Books by Richard Stiglitz and Noam Chomsky on globalization do a better job of analysis, see especially Stiglitz, **Making Globalization Work.**
9. Friere, Paulo. **Pedagogy of the Oppressed** (Crossroads, 1971). Though the essays and themes in the assigned book, **Teachers as Cultural Workers**, are more accessible and I believe more germane to the course theme. But, anyone interested in social justice should read *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* some time in their career preparation.
10. Gornik, Mark R. **To Live In Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City.** Eerdmans, 2002. Good urban sociology, biblical theology and viable model for church based community development in Baltimore. I like the notion of "shalom" as an organizing principle and vision.
11. \*Green, Gary Paul and Anna Haines. **Asset Building and Community Development.** Second Edition. Sage, 2007. The ultimate guide to asset based community development.
12. Heinberg, Richard. **Peak Everything: Waking Up to the Century of Declines.** New Society Publishers, 2007. There is a lot of material on "peak oil" from organizations such as the "Post Carbon Institute" and this one may be the most accessible. See also **Post Carbon Cities: Planning for Energy and Climate Uncertainty**, by Daniel Lerch (Post Carbon Press, 2008), and the works of James Howard Kuntsler.

13. Hawken, Paul; Amory Lovins and L. Hunter Lovins. **Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution.** Little, Brown and Company, 1999. Hawken has some other important books on green economy.
14. Jacobsen, Dennis. **Doing Justice: Congregations and Community Organizing.** Augsburg Fortress, 2001. About MICA in Milwaukee.
15. Eric O. Jacobsen, **Sidewalks in the Kingdom: New Urbanism and Christian Faith.** Brazos, 2003. There is a lot that I like about the "New Urbanism," though affordability and inclusiveness in New Urbanist projects has been difficult to achieve.
16. Johnson, Kelly S. **The Fear of Beggars: Stewardship and Poverty in Christian Ethics.** Eerdmans, 2007. Influenced by Peter Maurin of the Catholic Worker movement, Johnson explores the option of building community with beggars and homeless people.
17. \*Jones, Bernie. **Neighborhood Planning: A Guide for Planners and Citizens.** Planners Press, 1990. Very useful, practical guide to the neighborhood planning process.
18. Kyi, Aung San Suu. **Freedom from Fear.** Penguin, 1995. Great resource on democracy and organizing, we will read an essay or two from this collection.
19. Korten, David C. **The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community.** Kumerian Press, 2006. (Note: This is a GREAT book, but since it is rather long, I decided against it, but heartily recommend it. We will discuss and contrast "earth community" and "empire" in the course and will refer to at least one chapter in this book regardless).
20. \*Kretzman, John P; and John L. McKnight, **Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets.** Northwestern University: ABCD Institute, 1993. I can't believe this book is this old, it is the "bible" for Assets Based community development. Susan Rans, **Asset Based Community Development for Congregations,** is another helpful resource.
21. Lerner, Michael. **The Left Hand of God: Taking Back our Country from the Religious Right.** HarperCollins, 2006. Nice progressive social justice theology from a Rabbi.
22. Loeb, Paul Rogat, ed. **The Impossible will Take a Little While: A Citizen's Guide to Hope in a Time of Fear.** Basic, 2004. Great motivational speaker and this is a fine collection of essays on what it means to be an activist citizen.
23. Longworth, Richard C. **Caught in the Middle: America's Heartland in the Age of Globalism.** Bloomsbury, 2008. This may be the ultimate book on the Midwest regional context, arguing that Midwestern states, colleges, and businesses need to link and work together to find a renewed niche to establish a "greener" Midwestern economy.
24. Malcolm X. **Autobiography of Malcolm X (As told to Alex Haley).** Ballentine, 1964. Biography of Malcolm (Little/X) and his penetrating expose of systemic racism in Post WWII America. One should also read some of the other classics in the history of the black community in the US, including Frederick Douglas, WEB Dubois, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Howard Thurman and contemporary authors such as James H. Cone, Henry Louis Gates, Cornel West and Michael Eric Dyson. Dyson was formerly a professor at Chicago Theological Seminary and DePaul University.
25. McFague, Sallie. **A New Climate for Theology: God, the World and Global Warming.** Fortress, 2008. "Process theologian" McFague has several environmental/ecological books out there, and this may be the most hard-hitting.

26. McKibbin, Bill, **Deep Economy**. Henry Holt, 2007. Great book on developing a local economy, good on sustainability questions. See also other books by McKibbin.
27. Palmer, Parker. **The Company of Strangers: Christians and the Renewal of America's Public Life**. New York: Crossroad, 1992. Yes, we should be involved in public issues, great intro book
28. \*Peterman, William E. **Neighborhood Planning and Community-Based Development: The Potential and Limits of Grassroots Action**. Sage, 1999. Good introduction to the subject, with case studies from Chicago.
29. Peters, Ronald E. **Urban Ministry: An Introduction**. Abingdon, 2007. There is a ton of stuff out there on urban ministry, but this one by African American scholar Ron Peters of the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is good recent work on it.
30. \*Porterfield, Gerald and Kenneth Hall. **A Concise Guide to Community Planning**. McGraw Hill, 1994.
31. Putnam, Robert D. **Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community**. Simon and Schuster, 2000. One of the most important sociology books written in the last decade, Putnam explores the real (or perceived) loss of community in the US, and the importance of "social capital."
32. Sklar, Holly. **Streets of Hope: The Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood** (Dudley Street Neighborhood Association, Boston). South End Press, 1994. A great story of a church based community organization in Boston.
33. \*Temali, Mihailo. **Community Economic Development Handbook: Strategies and Tools to Revitalize Your Neighborhood**. Fieldstone, 2002. Great help to analyze neighborhoods, and how to develop pragmatic strategies to improve your community.
34. Wallis, Jim. **The Soul of Politics** (Orbis, 1994); **God's Politics** (Harper, 2005); and **The Great Awakening** (HarperCollins, 2008). Wallis is the founder of "The Post American Magazine," later "Sojourners," and founder of the Sojourners Community in Washington DC. He has been on the prophetic edge of the religious community, calling for peace, an end to urban violence and for urban revitalization in our cities.
35. \*Warren, Rachel B. and Donald I. Warren. **The Neighborhood Organizer's Handbook**. University of Notre Dame, 1980. Good at helping to "diagnosing" and typifying neighborhoods, arguing that each neighborhood is its own context and demands a unique (contextual) strategy for revitalization.
36. Wink, Walter. **The Powers that Be: Theology for the New Millennium**. Doubleday, 1998. See also his trilogy, **Naming; Unmasking;** and **Engaging the Powers** for a brilliant expose of "the powers" from the New Testament times to present day unmasking of "the empire."
37. Wood, Richard L. **Faith in Action: Religion, Race and Democratic Organizing in America**. U. of Chicago, 2002. Good manual on faith based community organizing.