

**RSCE 3048: Church, Power, Justice**  
**Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley**  
**MTh @ 9:40-11am, Mudd 102**  
**Spring 2004**

**Instructors:** Jerome Baggett (510) 549-5060 (w) (510) 261-0686 (h) jbaggett@jstb.edu  
Lynne Gerber, doctoral student and Newhall Award recipient

**Office Hours:** Thursdays @ 1-3pm; if this time slot does not fit your schedule, please feel free call for an appointment since I'm at school most weekdays.

**Course Description:** Reminiscent of the observation Alexis de Tocqueville made 160 years ago that religion in one of America's foremost "political institutions," this course focuses on the extent to which churches function as important loci for public discourse and mass mobilization in efforts to dismantle the power relations that undermines the realization of a truly just and egalitarian society. After introducing students to the central theoretical frameworks for understanding how these forms of social power become reproduced in society, the course will address the manner and extent to which religious institutions have helped provide the ideological and organization resources necessary to challenge these forms of power and, in the process, promote social justice. A combination of theory and practical application, this course is designed to address the concerns of students interested in sociology of religion as well as those preparing for ministry.

**Pedagogy:** Each portion of this course will attend to the following three components:

- Theory: We will introduce students to contemporary theories of power, especially as they pertain to racial and sexual discrimination, class stratification, and gender inequality. Particular attention will be paid to such important theorists as Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu and Steven Lukes.
- Applied Scholarship: We will focus on recent studies of the manner and extent to which religious institutions address the disparities in power that are so rife in American society. See "required texts" below.
- Activism: throughout the semester leaders of various community organizations, nonprofits, social movements and ministries located throughout the Bay Area will visit the class. Here the focus of their presentations (and our subsequent discussions) will be on wedding the insights wrought of theory and applied scholarship with the lived reality of social activism within and/or in conjunction with local churches.

**Required Texts:**

Ram A. Cnaan, *The Invisible Caring Hand: American Congregations and the Provision of Welfare* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

Michele Dillon, *Catholic Identity: Balancing Reason, Faith, and Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Arlene Stein, *The Stranger Next Door: The Story of a Small Community's Battle Over Sex, Faith, and Human Rights* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001).

R. Stephen Warner and Judith G. Wittner, eds., *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).

Richard L. Wood, *Faith in Action: Religion, Race, and Democratic Organizing in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

\*There will also be a reader available for purchase at Copy Central on 2483 Hearst Avenue; selections from this reader are listed in the course schedule and identified with an asterisk.

**Course Structure:** For each week, we intend to present material on Mondays while Thursdays will be principally devoted to guest-led and student-led class discussion.

### **Course Requirements:**

1. Classroom preparation, attendance and participation (10%).
2. Facilitation of one class discussion. This basically involves three things: a. sign up for a week for which the topic or readings are particularly interesting to you; b. write a 2-page critical reflection on part or all of that week's reading (along with a few incisive discussion questions) and make enough copies of it for everyone in the class; c. present your paper to the class on Thursday of that week and facilitate the group discussion of your questions (15%).
3. Three 4-5-page papers. Students will be asked to write one paper on each of the following topics:
  - Theory: a critical analysis of one of the theories of power addressed in this class;
  - Applied Scholarship: a comparative essay attending to one of the books assigned for this class and at least one other scholarly work (which may be selected from among the books assigned for this course);
  - Activism: a critical evaluation of any one of the organizations, nonprofits, social movements or ministries with which the visitors to our class are affiliated.NB: further instructions will be provided for each of these papers at the appropriate time during the course (60%).
4. Take-home final exam. Students will be given a list of five exam questions and asked to respond to any two of these within a time interval of no more than three hours for each (15%).

## **Course Schedule:**

### **I. How Power Works and Why It Matters**

Week 1 (February 2 & 5): Weber, “Class, Status, Party”

Week 2 (February 9 & 12): Essays by such folks as Simmel, Parsons, Lenski, Fraser, Bourdieu, etc.

Week 3 (February 19): Foucault, “Two Lectures on Power”

Week 4 (February 23 & 26): Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1

### **II. Church, Community and Class**

Week 5 (March 1 & 4): Cnaan (on welfare – big picture)

Week 6 ( March 8 & 11): Cnaan (on welfare – case studies and conclusion)

\*Reading(s) on community organizing (to compare with what Cnaan sees congregations currently doing)

Week 7 (March 15 & 18): Wood (on social movement theory)

\*Essay unpacking social movement theory – perhaps McAdam

Week 8: Reading Week

Week 9 (March 29 & April 1): Wood (on the power of culture in social movements)

\*Smith, “Correcting a Curious Neglect, or Bringing Religion Back In” in *Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social Movement Activism* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

### **III. Church, Gender and Sexuality**

Week 10 (April 5 & 8): Dillon (on cultural production)

Week 11 (April 12 & 15): Dillon (on pro-change Catholics)

Week 12 (April 19 & 22): Stein (on religion and gay rights)

Week 13 (April 26 & 29): Stein (cont.)

### **IV. Church, Race and the New Immigrants**

Week 14 (May 3 & 6): Emerson and Smith (on religion and racial distinctions)

Week 15 (May 10 & 13): Warner and Wittner on New Immigrants

Week 16 (May 17 & 20): Warner and Wittner on New Immigrants

**Jerome P. Baggett**  
**JSTB**  
**RSCE 3048: Church, Power, Justice**  
**Enrollment: about 25**  
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**Spring 2004**

**NB: All of these texts are required.**

Ram A. Cnaan, *The Invisible Caring Hand: American Congregations and the Provision of Welfare* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).  
ISBN: 0-8147-1618-0

Michele Dillon, *Catholic Identity: Balancing Reason, Faith, and Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).  
ISBN: 0-521-63959-X

Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).  
ISBN: 0-19-514707-3

Arlene Stein, *The Stranger Next Door: The Story of a Small Community's Battle Over Sex, Faith, and Human Rights* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001).  
ISBN: 0-8070-7953-7

R. Stephen Warner and Judith G. Wittner, eds., *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).  
ISBN: 1-56639-614-X

Richard L. Wood, *Faith in Action: Religion, Race, and Democratic Organizing in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).  
ISBN: 0-226-90596-9