

**E/T/CS 2272 – Contemporary Issues in Christian Social Ethics: Ethics of Vocation and
Work in Church and Society**
Thursdays, 7:00pm – 9:00pm

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Course Description: Working Syllabus

This course is intended for students who want to explore the relationship of work and labor to the ministry of the church, contemporary issues in society (including globalization), and the meaning of Christian vocation. Together with resources and views from other disciplines, the lens for this exploration is the “person-in-the-social,” Bible, theology, and ethics. Note: Students are expected to grapple with issues of anti-racism, multiculturalism, class, gender, and sexuality in the context of this course as part of the EDS’ educational commitment and mission.

Goals:

1. To deepen one’s awareness between the experience of and attitude toward “vocation” and “work” in the self and toward others;
2. To develop a critical analysis of some of the social, political, and economic justice and injustice issues that accompany issues of vocation and work;
3. To gain fresh insights into biblical, theological, and ethical resources about vocation and work; and
4. To articulate for oneself a constructive theo-ethic of vocation and work for use in the church’s ministry within faith communities and justice witness in society.

Requirements:

1. Have consistent attendance, timely preparation of reading assignments, in-class group participation, and conscientious efforts at relating the course material to one’s experience, justice work, and congregational ministry (20% of grade);
2. Write a 4-5 page analytical narrative of one’s own “My Notions of Work and Vocation through My Family, Religious, & Economic, and Socio-Cultural Location” (to be handed in) and write a 1-2 page summary outline of the narrative to use in small group discussion (20% of grade, due on October 7);
3. Write a 3-page, reflective summary of an interview with three out of four of the following persons regarding the work that they do to earn a living and whether they have a sense of vocation (transcendent purpose) in and/or through their work:
 - a one “white-collar” person in business or in one of the professions,
 - a blue-collar worker in one of “the trades,”
 - a “pink-collar” worker in the service or retail sector, and
 - a male or female whose primary daily work is parenting (total, 9 pages, 30% of grade, due on December 2); and
4. Write a 15 page final paper (before endnotes and bibliography) on your own ‘constructive,’ theo-ethic of work that is analytical and reflective, and which draws on the insights from
 - your own work narrative.
 - the interviews,
 - course readings, and

- other resources of your choice (30% of grade, due no later than January 20, 2005 – No extensions will be given).

Written Work Format: All work is to be submitted in hardcopy, formatted in double-spaced lines, 12 point font, 1-in. margins, and with *no additional line spacing between paragraphs*.

Note: For all course work, please see the Statement on ‘Student Original Work and Plagiarism’ in the EDS Academic Handbook.

D.Min. Students: Course work for all Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) students must demonstrate an advanced understanding of the nature and purposes of ministry, enhanced competencies in pastoral analysis and ministerial skills, and the integration of these dimensions into the theologically reflective practice of ministry. D.Min. students are encouraged to focus their course work on a particular subject germane to their thesis project.

Pass/Fail: Those who are taking this course Pass/Fail need to inform the professor before the mid-term (exam) of the semester (October 22) is submitted. The Pass/Fail grading system is now: Pass (B or better), Marginal Pass (B-) or Fail (lower than a B-).

Mini-Course Credit is one-half credit and taken with the Pass/Fail grade system. For students electing this option, attendance at all class sessions is a requirement, along with completion of the following: Requirement #2, and requirement #4.

Required Texts:

- E2271 Course Packet – Ethics of Vocation and Work in Church & Society, Fall 2004.
- Andolsen, Barbara. *The New Job Contract*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1988.
- Ehreneich, Barbara. *Nicked and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. Owl Books, 2002 paperback edition.
- Hardy, Lee. *The Fabric of This World: Inquiries into Calling, Career Choice and the Design of Human Work*. Eerdmans, 1990.
- Martin, Joan M. *More Than Chains and Toil: A Christian Work Ethic of Enslaved Women*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2000.
- Nash, Laura and Scot McLennan. *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday*. New York: Jossey-Bass, 2001.

Date:

Class Schedule

Sept. 23

Introduction to the Course

- Overview of the course syllabus
- Overview of Course Themes and Issues

Background Reading in Course Packet (CP) for those who have never read Karl Marx, “Economic & Philosophical Manuscripts,” pp. 279-309; 323-334.

Sept. 30

Historical, Cultural, and Theo-Ethical Experience of Work: A Case Study

Required Reading: Martin, J. *Moral Than Chains and Toil*, Introduction-Chpt. 2 (partial), pp. 1-54; 77-152.

Assignment Handout: “My Notions of Work and Vocation through My Family, Religious, & Economic, and Socio-Cultural Location.”

- Oct. 7 Our Work, Human Work, and God’s Work
 Required Reading: Hardy, L. *The Fabric of This World*. Introduction, Part I (Chpts. 1-2) and Part III (Chpt. 3 only), pp. xiv-123.
 Due: “My Notions of Work and Vocation through My Family, Religious, & Economic, and Socio-Cultural Location.”
- Oct. 14 Theo-Ethical & Marx’s Models for Understanding Vocation & Work
 Required Reading (Course Packet [CP]):
- Volf, M. “Human Work, Divine Spirit, and New Creation,”;
 - Moltmann, J. “The Right to Meaningful Work”;
 - Meeks, D. “God and Work”;
 - Marx, K. “Economic & Philosophical Manuscripts,” (Org, pps. 279-309; 323-334; pp. 309-323 *in passim*).
- Additional Handout(s): To be announced.
 Assignment Handout: Interviewing ‘Working’ People.”
- Oct. 21 Examining The Socio-Moral Notions of Work in American Culture
 Required Reading (CP): Wuthnow, R. from *Poor Richard’s Principle*
- Chapter One: “Having It All – And Wanting More: The Social Symptoms of Cultural Distress,” pp. 17-36;
 - Chapter Three: “Moral Tradition: The Lost Ambivalence in American Culture,” pp. 59-82;
 - Chapter Five: “Accounts: The Changing Meanings of White Collar Work,” pp. 105-137; Chapter Eight: “The Working Class: Changing Conditions and Converging Perspectives,” pp. 206-237;
 - Endnotes: pp. 377-380; pp. 382-384; pp. 387-395; pp. 404-410.
- Oct. 28 Christian Vocation, The Church, Business & The Workplace – Part 1
 Required Reading: Course Packet:
- Beckett, J. “Leadership & Legacy,” *Faith in Leadership*, ed. by Banks & Powell;
 - Tewell, T.K. “Ministering to the Business Community,” and
 - Roels, S. “The Christian Calling to Business Life,” *Theology Today*, 60 (2003)
- Nash, L. & S. McLennan, *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday*, Introduction – Part 1 (Chpts. 1-4), pp. xxi-117;
- Nov. 4 Christian Vocation, The Church, Business & The Workplace – Part 2
 Required Reading: Nash & McLennan, *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday*, Part 2, (Chpts. 5-7), pp. 121-210.
- Nov. 11 Christian Vocation, The Church, Business, & The Workplace – Part 3
 Required Reading: Nash & McLennan, *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday*, Part 3 (Chpts. 8-9), pp. 213-274.
 Assignment Due: Interviewing ‘Working’ People in the Church.”

- Nov. 18 The New Economy & Work: Ethical Challenges for the Church—Part 1
 Required Reading: Andolsen, B. H., *The New Job Contract*, Introduction – Chpt. 3, pp. 1-63; Erenreich, B. *Nickle & Dimed*, Introduction – Chpt. 2, pp. 1-49.
- Nov. 25 Thanksgiving Recess – No Classes
- Dec. 2 The New Economy & Work: Ethical Challenges for the Church—Part 2
 Required Reading: Andolsen, B.K. *The New Job Contract*, Chpts. 4-6, pp. 64-142; Erenreich, B. *Nickle & Dimed*, Chpt. 3, pp. 51-119.
- Dec. 9 The Church, Organized Labor and ‘Workers’
 Required Reading: Erenreich, B. *Nickle & Dimed*, Chpt. 3-Evaluation, pp. 121-221; Course Packet –
- “Historical Highlights of the Religion-Labor Movement”;
 - Boint, S., “The Blue Collar Worker and the Church”;
 - Bloomquist, K. “The Disparities of Class as an Ethical Challenge”;
 - Sample. T. “Doing Ministry with Working Class White”;
- Recommended: “History of the Nat’l Interfaith Committee on Worker Justice; and “Unions Matter,” NICWJ
- Dec. 16 The Church, Organized Labor/Workers, and Globalization – One World
 Required Reading – Course Packet:
- Haines, P. & G. Klein, “Citizens and Unions Respond,”;
 - Gillet, Richard, “Religion and Labor: Renewing the Alliance in Los Angeles,”;
 - Holt, A.O., “Making Home: Culture, Ethnicity, and Religion among Farmworkers,”;
 - Greider, Wm., “Gleiche Arbeit, gleicher Lohn” from *One World, Ready or Not*, William Greider.
 - Reprise: Andolsen, B.H., *The New Job Contract*, Chpt. 6.
- Christmas and New Year’s Recess
- Jan. 20 – 4:30pm Final Paper Due: “My Constructive Theo-ethical Perspective on Vocation and Work in Church and Society.” No late work and no course extensions.