

ST. MARY'S ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE
Fall 2018

Saturdays: 9/15, 9/29, 10/6, 10/20, 10/27, 11/17, 12/1

9:00 am – 2:00 pm

PT631/MT631 Violence & the City

Rev. Dr. Chris Dreisbach & Rev. Dr. C. Anthony Hunt

Course Description: From Cain (Gen. 4) to Freddie Gray (2015) and beyond, violence is regularly associated with the city. Christians committed to truth and peace with justice must question that perception and resist that reality. By focusing on Baltimore, this course will analyze and engage the dynamics of violence and the city. The course will use empirical, theoretical, and theological frames to evaluate how and why violence is perceived and represented as an urban phenomenon. By synthesizing wisdom from the Christian moral tradition with the insights of social science, the course will develop a comprehensive definition of violence (in all its dimensions of violence—physical, emotional, economic, spiritual, etc.). The class will then analyze examples of different levels (e.g., personal interpersonal, social, institutional) and types (e.g., crime, human trafficking, gentrification...) of violence in Baltimore. The course will culminate in evaluating and/or creating best practices for addressing violence within the context of Baltimore and every city.

Course Requirements:

- **Reading:** Students should expect to read *at most* 800 pages of required reading.
- **Writing:** Students should expect to write *at most* 22 double-spaced pages. These will be comprised of the following:
 - **First Assignment (20% of final grade):** This will be a personal reflection paper, and is to be 4-5 pages (not to exceed 1250 words) in length. The paper should offer insights on the student's personal observations and experience with violence and the city. Students should be prepared to discuss their paper in class. Some issues that should be addressed include:
 - What do you see as the nature of the city today?
 - What do you view as the key theological issues facing the city, violence, and religious communities?
 - What do you see as some of the challenges facing people and ministries in urban contexts?
 - What do you see as the future of the city and nonviolence?
 - **Second Assignment (20% of final grade):** This will be a reflection paper, and is to be 4-5 pages (not to exceed 1250 words) in length. The paper should be in a "letter" form based on the model of *Between the World and Me* (Coates) and focus on your impressions the importance of matters related to the city, violence, and the prospects of peace, with a focus on best practices and various models of urban ministry and faith-based service delivery, community building, community development corporations, and community organizing. How have you seen these

at work in the city, church, and ministry in general? Based on the model(s) that you identify, what do you see as important qualitative and quantitative (numeric) measures of success and effectiveness of these models?

- **Third (Final) Assignment (35% of final grade):** This will be an integrative theological reflection paper, and is to be 10-12 pages (not to exceed 3000 words) in length. Based upon the class readings and discussions, you are to prepare a paper that offers theological reflection, analysis, and critique of class material. The paper may be of a topical or general nature as it pertains to violence and the city. In addition to course readings and materials that should be used, outside references may be used at your discretion as a means of supporting and strengthening your work.
- **Other activities contributing to final grade:**
 - **Class Attendance/Discussion (15%)**
 - **Site Visits (10%)**

Required Texts:

1. Breuggemann, Walter. *Peace: Understanding Biblical Themes*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2001. (ISBN: 0-8272-3828-2)
2. Coates, Ta-Nehisi, *Between the World and Me*. New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2015 (ISBN: 978-0-8129-9354-7)
3. Francis, Leah Gunning. *Ferguson and Faith: Sparking Leadership and Awakening Community*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2015. (ISBN: 978-0-827211-05-6)
4. Hauerwas, Stanley, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983. (ISBN: 13-978-0-268-01554-1)
5. Williams, Chad, Kidada Williams, Keisha Blain, eds. *Charleston Syllabus: Readings on Race, Racism and Racial Violence*. Athens, GA: The University Georgia Press, 2016. (ISBN: 978-0-8203-4957-2)

Supplemental Readings:

Several supplemental texts will be assigned by the instructors that will be considered required reading.

Recommended:

Watch season one of “The Wire” (12 episodes), which can be viewed on the internet HBOGO.com or may be purchased at www.amazon.com. DVDs might also be borrowed from certain public libraries.