CS 652: Ethics of Hospitality and Contemporary Challenges Asbury Theological Seminary Fall 2009 Tuesdays, 6:15-9:00pm

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Purpose: To introduce students to the Christian tradition of offering hospitality to strangers and to enable students to use that moral framework in developing a pastoral response to contemporary issues of diversity and inclusion in church and society.

Learning Objectives:

Having successfully completed this course, students will be able to:

- 1. Identify and critically engage with:
 - Biblical texts on hospitality
 - Various historical practices of hospitality in the church
 - Contemporary practices and theoretical discussions of hospitality.
- 2. Recognize and reflect on the tensions between maintaining a distinctive Christian identity and welcoming strangers.
- 3. Articulate a theology and practice of hospitality that addresses issues of cultural diversity, race relations, homelessness, refugees, migrant workers, and persons with disabilities.
- 4. Recognize the difficulties, limitations, and challenges of Christian hospitality.

Texts:

Philip Hallie, Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed. NY: HarperCollins, 1979, 1994.

Amy Oden, And You Welcomed Me. Nashville: Abingdon, 2001.

Christine Pohl, Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition.

Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999

Miroslav Volf, Exclusion and Embrace. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.

Readings on electronic reserve, and accessed through info commons and internet

Bernard Adeney, Strange Virtues: Ethics in a Multicultural World. Downers Grove:

InterVarsity Press, 1995.

Henri Nouwen, Reaching Out, NY: Doubleday.

Evaluation: The course is designed as a three credit course, but students may choose to take it for two credits. For students taking the course for three credits, the assignments are weighted as follows:

5%	Paper #1:	Letter to main character in Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed
15%	Paper #2:	Devotional on Welcoming Strangers
25%	Paper #3:	Paper on Theology of Welcome
20%	Paper #4:	Immersion and Reflection
35%	Paper #5:	Research Paper or Project
Debit	for inadequate	e class participation and/or late or incomplete readings

For students taking the course for two credits, there is no paper #5, but all other expectations are the same (readings, class attendance and participation, and the first four papers). The assignments are weighted as follows:

5%	Paper #1:	Letter to main character in Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed
25%	Paper #2:	Devotional on Welcoming Strangers
40%	Paper #3:	Paper on Theology of Welcome
30%	Paper #4:	Immersion and Reflection
Debit	for inadequate	class participation and/or late or incomplete readings

Grade Range: Work for CS 652 will be evaluated at a graduate/professional school level.

- A = (4.0) Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives
- B = (3.0) Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives
- C = (2.0) Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives
- D = (1.0) Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives
- F = (0) Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

Student Responsibilities: This course is designed as a seminar. It is therefore essential that students come to class having read the assigned material carefully and critically. Class attendance and active participation in discussions are expected. Reading Records will be collected on the last day of class. The deduction for low participation and/or late or incomplete reading of assigned material will be up to 10% against the final grade (a full letter grade reduction).

All written work must be typed with 12-point type, one inch margins on all four sides, and (except for the first assignment) true double-spacing. There will be a penalty for late papers commensurate with the degree of lateness and the adequacy of the excuse. Papers are due in class on assigned date.

All written work must use inclusive language when reference is made to human beings (male and female). This provides for both greater inclusion and greater precision.

Written assignments for all students involve four integrative/reflection papers. Students taking the course for three credits are also responsible for a research paper or project.

- 1. Due **September 15:** Write a one-page (single-spaced) letter to one of the main characters in *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*. Reflect on how the testimony of his or her hospitality and community challenged you morally and spiritually. Be specific in engaging one or two incidents or insights that were particularly important to you.
- 2. Due **October 6:** A coalition of churches in your town is thinking about responding to the latest refugee crisis by assisting in the resettlement of several families. There is mixed response within the congregations—some parishioners are very supportive; others remain unconvinced. The pastors in town have asked you to do a devotional on "Welcoming Strangers." Leaning heavily on the biblical and historical materials we have covered over the past four weeks, write a devotional that would help parishioners understand the biblical and moral importance of offering hospitality to needy strangers. (3 pages, double-spaced).
- 3. Due **November 3:** Write a four page (double-spaced) paper that articulates a theology of welcome. Choose two or three distinct and major insights from Miroslav Volf's *Exclusion and Embrace* (e.g. the "movement of embrace" would count as one insight) around which to develop your own theological understanding of welcome.

One possible approach would be to use hospitality as a lens through which to reflect on theological points such as: who God is, God's relation to human beings, the character of sin, and/or the moral implications of God's character.

It is crucial that you demonstrate an understanding of Volf's main arguments. Bring his arguments into conversation with at least three other readings from the course to develop your theological statement.

- 4. Due **December 8**: Immersion and Reflection spend 3-5 hours in a place that cares for the needs of strangers. If possible, help out with the tasks. Be careful to observe as much as possible about guest/host relations, power and empowerment, setting, and explicit and implicit messages about welcome and respect. Write a 3 page (double-spaced) paper reflecting on your experience in light of some of the key themes we have covered in class.
- 5. Due **December 15**: **Final Project** (for students taking course for 3 credits)— to be developed in individual consultation with the professor (15 pages, double-spaced). Three general types of papers/projects are possible:

A. **Research paper** on ministry with a vulnerable population: homeless people, guest/migrant workers, people with disabilities or terminal illnesses, refugees.

Guidelines for Research Paper:

- 1. Explain briefly why you have chosen the topic. Identify the concerns and experiences that you bring to the study.
- 2. Describe the group/problem/issue of your study. Who is affected? What are the consequences for them, for the church, for society?
- 3. Analyze the issue. Why is this population vulnerable? What are the causal factors for their powerlessness, vulnerability, need?
- 4. Discuss relevant historical factors and describe the future direction of the problem.
- 5. Develop a framework for response that incorporates biblical, theological, and moral themes.
- 6. Map out a strategy to respond to the population and their need at the level of the local church or at another level (not just personal), making use of hospitality practices and commitments.
- B. **Curriculum** for use in the local church, student work, retreats, or youth ministries using hospitality as a framework for moral formation.

Guidelines for developing a curriculum:

- 1. Keep in mind that this is an ethics course, and part of your task is to use hospitality as a framework for *moral* formation.
- 2. Be specific about your objectives for the study/curriculum and about how you expect to accomplish moral formation.
- 3. Be sure that you are attentive to the cognitive, affective, and community-building dimensions of formation.
- 4. A good project:
 - a. is appropriate to the targeted group
 - b. shows substantive engagement with key themes of the course
 - c. demonstrates creativity in teaching methods and student learning opportunities
 - d. identifies resources for further study
 - e. has a strong bibliography
- C. **Research paper** on the moral implications of hospitality for **missions practice and missionaries.**

Guidelines for research paper in missions:

a. Describe briefly the social, cultural and religious context in which you expect to be involved in the practice of mission.

- b. Describe and analyze relevant cultural values and practices in your home culture and in your missions context upon which you could *build* a Christian practice of hospitality.
- c. Describe and analyze several cultural practices and/or moral assumptions in the missions context that would be *challenged* by a Christian understanding of hospitality.
- d. Explain why a commitment to hospitality would be important for missions work.
- e. Critique and/or reflect upon missions theory and practice using themes from the course readings.
- f. Develop a theology of mission using biblical, theological and moral themes implicit in hospitality.
- g. Describe a posture and approach of an individual missionary and his or her sending agency that would be sensitive to concerns about power and empowerment, character of guest/host relations, cultural differences and Christian values and commitments.
- h. Be sure to use resources substantially beyond assigned course readings. Also note: All eight requirements should be addressed in your paper, though you are free to organize the paper in whatever way works best for your particular topic.

Class Sessions and Assignments

September 8: Hospitality to Strangers: A Window into the Moral Life Images, themes, questions, and introductions

September 15: Hospitality as Part of the Moral Life

Discussion of the hospitality of the community of Le Chambon

Reading Assignment: Hallie, Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed

Written Assignment #1: Letter to character in the story

September 22: Biblical Sources for the Hospitality Tradition

Reading Assignment: *Making Room, 3-35*

Biblical Texts (handout)

Donald E. Gowan, "Wealth and Poverty in the Old Testament," *Interpretation*, Vol. 41 (October 1987). (Go to Info Commons, ATLA data base, put in author and

title, click on: view full text in PDF format)

Electronic Reserve: articles by Moucarry, "The Alien," and Koenig, "Welcoming One Another"

September 29: An Overview of the Ancient Tradition

Reading Assignment: Making Room, 36-58

> Oden, And You Welcomed Me, 56-70, 77, 86-96, 100-106, 114-117,137, 156-163, 186-187, 200-201, 208, 215-225, 236-238, 242-250, 255-257, 264-267,

280-282, 284-291.

Electronic Reserve: article by Riddle, "Early

Christian Hospitality"

John Wesley, "On Visiting the Sick." Go to

http://gbgm-

umc.org/UMhistory/wesley/sermons/serm-098.stm

October 6: Hospitality as Recognition and Respect

Reading Assignment: Making Room, 61-103

> Electronic Reserve: articles by Cogley (2), Day, Kirwan, in "A Penny a Copy," and Vanier,

"Community and Growth"

Oden: review readings on recognition and respect Keith Wasserman, "Why Would Someone Choose to be Homeless?" and "Three Days in November." Go to: www.good-works.net Scroll down left side to "Keith's Homeless Stories" and click. Read "Why Would Someone Choose to be Homeless?" Then toward the top of that article, click on "Lexington, Kentucky, for the article "Three Days in

November."

Written Assignment #2: Devotional on Welcoming Strangers

October 13: Marginality, Power, Possessions, and Places

Reading Assignment: Making Room, 104-24, 150-69

Nouwen, Reaching Out: chapters 4-6

Electronic Reserve: articles by Earl, "Under Their Own Vine," Mowry, "Do Good Fences...," Mains, "The Hospice," and Christensen, "Practicing

Hospitality."

October 20: Hospitality, Community, Boundaries, and Limits

Reading Assignment: *Making Room*, 127-49

Electronic Reserve: articles by Meyer, Brodhead,

and Kirwan in "A Penny a Copy."

Stephen Paul Bouman, "The Kindness of

Strangers," *Currents in Theology and Mission*, Vol. 15 (June 1988) (Go to: Info Commons, ATLA database,

put in author and title)

October 27: Hospitality, Community, Boundaries, and Limits (continued)

November 3: Developing a Moral Theology of Hospitality

Reading Assignment: Volf, Exclusion and Embrace, 13-165

Written Assignment #3: Paper on Theology of Welcome

November 10: Application: Welcoming People with Disabilities

Reading Assignment: PCUSA, "Living into the Body of Christ: Towards

Full Inclusion of People with Disabilities," pages 1-

23 of the document, using pagination in the

document. Go to:

http://www.pcusa.org/phewa/resources/living-into-the-body-of-christ.pdf

November 17: Application: Hospitality and Cross-cultural or Multiethnic Ministry

Reading Assignment: Adeney, Strange Virtues, 13-141, 163-191

Anthony J. Gittins, "Beyond Hospitality? The

Missionary Status and Role Revisited,"

International Review of Mission, Vol. 93, No. 220 (July 1994) (go to Info Commons, ATLA database, put in author and title, then choose the second listing of the article

for the full text)

Electronic Reserve: review article by Riggins Earl,

"Under Their Own Vine..."

November 23-27: Reading Week

December 1: Application: Implications for Pastoral Ministry/Nurturing a Difficult Practice

Reading Assignment: *Making Room*, 170-187

Electronic Reserve: articles by Hershberger, "Hospitality as Worship," and Chittister, "The

Unboundaried Heart."

December 8: Conclusions

Reading Assignment: To be announced

Written Assignment #4: Immersion and Reflection Paper

December 14-18: Finals Week

Written Assignment #5: Final Research Project due Dec. 15.