



MNST6400 Mobilizing for Justice: Methods and Practices of Justice
North Park Theological Seminary
Stateville Correctional Center
Fall 2023 Tuesdays, 10:30am–1:15pm (3 Semester Hours)
Instructor: Rev. Sandra Maria Van Opstal

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will explore a variety of approaches and methodologies to justice ministry. We will explore the relationship of ethics and theology to community building and transformation. Practical ministry skills, how teaching on justice ministry can be part of the liturgical work of the church, and the role of preaching in that formation is emphasized (from catalog). There is particular attention to social analysis as a tool of understanding the nature and context of ministry, and faith-based community development and community organizing as approaches to social transformation towards justice.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Examine the nature/purposes of ministries that seek justice.
- Develop familiarity with social analysis in conjunction with theological reflection in context.
- Identify roots and impact of social problems and find ways to address them.
- Articulate a biblical & theological account/framework for justice ministries.
- Identify and discuss various methods of integral/holistic justice ministries

REQUIRED TEXTS

Brooks, Jonathan. *Church Forsaken: Practicing Presence in Neglected Neighborhoods*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2018

Charles, Mark and Soong-Chan Rah. *Unsettling Truths*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2019

Fileta, Jason. *Live Justly*. Tear Fund Tearfund USA, 2021

Cimperman, Maria. *Social Analysis for the 21st Century*. Orbis Books, 2015.

Van Opstal, Sandra. *The Mission of Worship, Glorifying God in a Diverse World*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012

Van Opstal, Sandra. *The Next Worship, Glorifying God in a Diverse World*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2022

ASSESSMENTS AND GRADING SCALE

Assessment

1. Case study: (20%) write case study of 1000 words to present in class (TBD)
2. Reading Report (10%): Students need to report the percentage of required course material they have read. The reported percentage, based on honor code, will be the grade in this assignment item.



3. Book Review (20%). Write a 1,300-word summary review of Church Forsaken: Practicing Presence in Neglected Neighborhoods and Unsettling Truths.
4. Midterm Exam (20%) This exam will be taken in class.
5. Integration paper (30%). 2,200- 2,500 words. Students will write a paper providing a socio-cultural understanding of a neighborhood or community within a city based on their own and/or chosen context.

Expectations and Assignments

1. Attendance and participation in all class sessions
2. Personal integration and reflection of the reading, lecture, discussion material
3. Reflection papers on the required texts (**DUE: October 10**)
4. Case study of 1000 words (**DUE: Oct 24**); present in class (**TBD**)
5. Reading log of required readings (**DUE with your final paper**)
6. Final Paper (**DUE: Nov 28**)

Grading Scale

1000 – 901 points	A
900 - 801 points	B
800 –701 points	C
700- 601 points	D
600 – below	F

ADDITIONAL COURSE GUIDELINES

ATTENDANCE

Students may miss up to two class sessions without penalty to their grade. If attendance is not possible (because student is in Healthcare Unit or (non-disciplinary) segregation), two sessions may be made up through correspondence, with approval of instructor. To request permission, students must contact instructor through internal mail and will be expected to submit alternate work via internal mail.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating will receive a failing grade on the assignment and are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion. Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another’s work as one’s own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another’s answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one’s answers or work.
4. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.



For additional information, see the Seminary Academic Catalog (located in the Resource Room), pp. 25–26.

LATE SUBMISSIONS

Assignments will not be accepted late unless the student was absent due to sickness or institutional reasons. If a student discusses an amended due date with the professor it must be documented in advance.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Your experience in this class is important to me. North Park is committed to creating inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have already established your accommodations, please share your accommodation letter with me so we can discuss how your accommodations will be implemented in this course. If you have not yet established services and have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations, please email the Disability Access Specialist or contact by phone (773-244-5737). Student Engagement facilitates the interactive process that establishes reasonable accommodations.

TITLE IX

Students who believe they may have experienced sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking should contact Emily Wagner, Director of Student Life and Formation, or review the full Title IX policy available in the Resource Room to more about reporting options, resources, and support services.

As members of the North Park faculty, we are concerned about the well-being and development of our students and are available to discuss any concerns. Faculty members are private resources meaning we are legally obligated to share information about the behavior reported above with the University's Title IX coordinator. If you are unsure whether you want your concerns disclosed to the Title IX Coordinator, we encourage you to contact Emily Wagner directly through a sealed envelope.

Please refer to North Park's policy, available in the Resource Room, for reporting, contact information, and further details.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

If, due to extenuating circumstances (specifically, illness, personal and family issues), a student anticipates they will be unable to complete course work within the allotted time, that student may request a grade of incomplete from the course instructor before the last week of class clearly stating the reason(s) for this request. Overscheduling and/or lack of self-discipline are not considered extenuating circumstances. If the request is timely and meets the criteria, student and instructor will submit the incomplete grade form and the grade for that class will be listed as "I" until the last day of the following semester. If coursework is not submitted by the last day of the following semester the listing of "I" will automatically be changed to "F." For the full policy, see page 15 of the Seminary Academic Catalog (located in Resource Room).

COURSE SCHEDULE

August 29	Overview and Introduction to Reading: Syllabus
September 5	Sinful Social Structures and Mediating Narratives Reading Due: Cimperman
September 12	Spiritual Formation and Theology of Justice Reading Due: Van Opstal (MOW), Van Opstal (TNW), Ch 1-3
September 19	Theology of the Justice Reading Due: Fileta, Sessions 1-2, 4
September 26	Strategies of Justice Reading Due: Fileta, Sessions 3, 5-8
October 3	Components of Biblical Justice (<i>Guest</i>) Reading Due: Fileta, Sessions 3, 5-8
October 10	Community Development and Transformation (<i>Guest Jonathan Brooks</i>) Reading Due: Church Forsaken
October 17	<i>No Class</i> Reading Due: Charles & Rah, Unsettling Truths
October 24	Historical Context of Christianity Reading Due: Charles & Rah, Unsettling Truths
October 31	Changing Context of Christianity Reading Due: Rah, Return to Justice (excerpt)
November 7	Practical Theology, Social Analysis of Systems Reading Due:
November 14	Community Development/Organizing Reading Due:



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November 21

No Class

November 28

Soul Care and Mental Health in the work of Justice

Reading Due: Healing Racial Trauma (excerpts)

December 5

Soul Care and Mental Health in the work of Justice

Reading Due: Healing Racial Trauma (excerpts)

December 12

Reflections

ASSIGNMENTS NOTES:

ASSIGNMENT I: Attendance, Reading and Participation 10 maximum points

Presence and participation are crucial to course outcomes. Come to class having done the reading and prepared to discuss material. Plan to take notes with paper/pencil or pen – no electronics at Stateville. Participation is based on the following: how you speak, how you listen, how you show up, how you read, and how you grow in the course in your listening and discussion skills. Demonstrate intellectual curiosity! We will periodically ask you to evaluate your participation and how much of the reading you have done.

ASSIGNMENT II: Case Study 20 maximum points (approximately 1000 words)

1. Present a **Clarification** of the context or scenario of ministry
2. Offer key theological concepts (**Conceptualization**) applicable to the case
3. Consider potential methods of **Confrontation**

ASSIGNMENT III: Reading Reflections 20 max points (10 pts each) (approximately 500 words)

1. Note the Author, Title, Publisher, and Date of the book. (1 pt)
2. List the percentage of the book completed by the due date. (1 pt)
3. Submit your understanding of the central thesis of the book. (2 pts)
4. Select a single idea/concept from the reading and respond.
 - a. Identify concept/idea. author's major arguments, the main themes, and the primary conclusions of the book. This summary must be merely descriptive. (2 pts)
 - b. Give a critique/reflection/analysis on the concept. An evaluation of the book, highlighting the strengths and contributions, weaknesses, or limitations. (2 pts)
 - c. Apply the concept to your ministry context (2 pts)

ASSIGNMENT IV: FINAL PROJECT INTEGRATION PAPER 30 maximum points

Write a 2000-2500 word final research paper with a focus of developing a justice ministry program for a specific context and scenario. The paper should integrate various learnings from the course and show:

- Relevant social/historical analysis of the context
- Theology of justice ministry appropriate to the context
- A plan of implementation for the development of justice ministry o Integrates class lectures, discussions, and reading
- Shows original thought and creativity
- Paper is well-written and structured