

SOCIAL ANALYSIS FOR INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP

Capstone S.A.I.L. Project for the Master of Arts in Social Transformation

[COURSE #]: Spring 2016
Pacific School of Religion

Instructor(s): PSR Faculty

❖ Overview

This course provides a framework for collaborative engagement in completing the capstone project for the Master of Arts in Social Transformation degree. Students may choose one of the following two broad project parameters for their work:

- A research *thesis project* of no fewer than fifty (50) pages that integrates socio-political analysis with constructive theological and ethical proposals for a particular sector of social changemaking.
- A summative *portfolio project* that collects and evaluates materials for analyzing a particular case of how theology and ethics contribute to constructive social change, including proposals for how the student's own leadership can/will contribute to that work.

Regardless of the form it takes, the S.A.I.L. project should draw on the student's internship or immersive learning experiences and demonstrate the overall goals and learning outcomes of the degree program, which prepares graduates to:

- Engage in cultural and political analysis both theologically and ethically, especially for insights into structural inequality, systemic injustice, and institutionalized oppressions;
- Assess, evaluate, and help to prepare faith communities to engage in collaborative partnerships with programs and organizations devoted to systemic social change for the common good;
- Articulate the unique contributions theological and ethical traditions can make to the work of social changemaking in specific sectors, such as economic justice and development, and ecological sustainability;
- Evaluate and appropriate diverse, interdisciplinary strategies for changemaking drawn from the worlds of social innovation, non-profit organizations, and grass-roots community organizing; and
- Build and foster communities marked by cross-cultural humility and devoted to collaborative problem solving for transforming social systems of oppressive power.

❖ Assignments/Expectations

A successful completion of the S.A.I.L. project requires: attendance and participation in each of the four plenary meetings; three individual progress assessment meetings with the instructor; an oral presentation of the project; submitting the thesis or portfolio.

☞ Plenary Sessions

Plenary classroom sessions will be devoted to seminar-style discussion of key texts for social analysis and theological/ethical reflection. Some of these texts will be shared by all students and each student will also consider texts particularly relevant for the student's project.

☞ Individual Progress Assessments

Each student will schedule a meeting with one of the instructors three times over the semester (ideally once after each of the first three Saturday plenary sessions). Prior to these meetings, students should send the instructor the latest draft materials for the project for discussion and assessment.

☞ The Oral Presentation

The fourth and final Saturday plenary session will be devoted to oral presentations of the penultimate versions of the student projects. Each student will present the project and solicit from the group suggestions for refinement and revision of specific areas. Online distance learners will be invited to engage with each other's work through Moodle forums.

☞ Submitting the S.A.I.L. Project: Due by May 14

The final version of the project should be submitted online to the Moodle site devoted to this course no later than May 14.

❖ Schedule of Meetings and Topics

We will meet as a group (whether in person or via Skype) on four Saturdays over the course of the semester (from 9:00am to 12:30pm). These sessions will be an opportunity for collaborative engagement on the S.A.I.L. projects, reviewing resources for social analysis and constructive proposals, and presenting the penultimate version of the project to the group for refinement before submitting the project. Students will check in with the instructor, one-on-one (either in person or via Skype) three times during the semester to assess progress toward completing the project.

Saturday, February 6: Overview and Resource Assessment

Students will begin or continue to articulate their own vocational trajectory in social transformation and select one of the options to pursue for the S.A.I.L. project (thesis or portfolio). The group will then engage in shared assessment of the resources needed to complete each of the projects.

Saturday, March 19: Frameworks for Social Analysis: Race, Economics, and Gender

The group will consider and/or review a variety of resources for social analysis for transformation, especially related to issues of race, economics, and gender (including the intersections of all three). Students will be expected to discuss texts they are using for their own projects in those areas. Students should be prepared to discuss these texts in relation to actual social transformation efforts underway in a particular sector. In addition to particular texts related to a student's chosen project area, all class members will read selections from the following for this session:

- Ben Agger, *Critical Social Theories: An Introduction* (second edition)

- Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*
- Laurel Schneider, “What Race is Your Sex?”
- Alfred J. Jopez, ed., *Postcolonial Whiteness: A Critical Reader on Race and Empire*
- Margaret Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins, eds., *Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology*

Saturday, April 9: Frameworks for Constructive Proposals: Theology, Ethics, Leadership

We’ll consider and/or review in this session some key texts on theological and ethical reflection for leadership in social transformation. Students will be expected to discuss texts they are using for their own projects in those areas. Students should be prepared to discuss these texts in relation to actual social transformation efforts underway in a particular sector. In addition to particular texts related to a student’s chosen project area, all class members will read selections from the following for this session:

- Kelly Brown Douglas, *What’s Faith Got to Do With It? Black Bodies, Christian Souls*
- William T. Cavanaugh, *Migrations of the Holy: God, State, and the Political Meaning of the Church*
- Daniel C. Maguire, *A Moral Creed for All Christians*
- Kwok Pui-Lan, Don H. Compier, and Joerg Rieger, eds., *Empire and the Christian Tradition: New Readings of Classical Theologians*
- Rebecca Todd Peters and Elizabeth Hinson Hasty, *To Do Justice: A Guide for Progressive Christians*

Saturday, May 7: Oral Presentations and Collective Refinements

Students will present their projects to the class and solicit suggestions for refining this penultimate version in preparation for submitting the final version by May 14.

❖ Policies and Procedures

Formatting and Submitting Projects

The final version of the project should be word processed (preferably with MS Word) and uploaded to the project assignment box on the Moodle site for this course. Projects should cite sources accurately and according to standard academic practice; plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will result in a failing grade for an assignment. (A Turabian Quick Guide is available on the Moodle site for this course to help guide students in the proper method of citation.) If you have any questions about adequate citation or how to avoid plagiarism, don’t hesitate to speak to the instructor *before* submitting a paper. Students are strongly encouraged to be familiar with the PSR plagiarism policy found online at www.psr.edu/plagiarism-policy.

Late Work, Documented Disability, and ESL

- Late projects will not be accepted and the instructor will not grant an “incomplete” for this course unless arrangements are made with the instructor prior to the project’s due date.

- If students anticipate any trouble in completing the assigned work in this course due to documented disability, this should be discussed with the instructor at the beginning of the semester.
- Students for whom English is a second language should likewise speak with the instructor early on in the semester concerning any challenges anticipated in meeting the course requirements in a timely manner.