

HCH 110P

Religious History and Public Leadership

Fall, 2009
Dr. Jon Pahl
Saturday, 9A-12P
Brossman 209

Course Description: What does the history of religions teach about leadership in public life? Through a close study of pivotal religious founders (e.g., Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad), pivotal texts, turning points, and crises (e.g., The Bhagavad Gita, Reformation, Fall of Apartheid), and through examining the historical roots of contemporary religious problems (e.g., violence, war and terrorism, gender and sexuality, consumerism and poverty, and environmental degradation and global development), this course will provide perspective on critical issues requiring public leadership, and provide skills for innovative articulations and practices, drawing on the wells of deep traditions and communities.

Course Texts (in order of use):

Thich Nhat Hanh, *Peace is Every Step* (NY: Bantam, 1991) ISBN: 0553351397

Walter Wink, *Jesus and Nonviolence: A Third Way* (Augsburg Fortress, 2003)
ISBN: 0800636090

Juan Mascaró, tr., *The Bhagavad Gita* (Penguin Classics) ISBN: 0140449183

M. Fethullah Gülen, *Toward a Global Civilization of Love and Tolerance* (The Light, 2006).
ISBN: 1932099689

Martin Luther, *Three Treatises* (Augsburg Fortress, 1990) ISBN: 0800616391

Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House* (Signet Classics) ISBN: 0451527399

Jimmy Carter, *Living Faith* (Random House, 1996) 0812927362

Wangari Maathai, *The Challenge for Africa* (Pantheon, 2009) ISBN: 0307377407

Course Objectives

Participants shall:

- Gain a basic familiarity with the historical development of selected religious traditions. *Related to General Objective 1 for the MAPL: Develop and demonstrate deep grounding in the central symbols of the Christian faith, articulated in light of religious diversity and the challenges of secular societies. Students will gain abilities to critically evaluate and constructively articulate scriptural, theological, historical, and ethical content and analytical processes in continuity with historic tradition(s) and in ways accessible to public audiences ;*
- Gain a basic ability to distinguish text and context, or the relationship between individuals, language, and public setting as they intertwine in historical examples of leadership. *Related to General Objective 3 for the MAPL: Develop personal and professional integrity, including the integration of faith and theological exploration with secular skills, using historical, textual, and cultural methods as appropriate in practical, professional leadership;*

- Gain a working "toolbox" of key practices of leadership drawn from (or in contrast to) historical examples in religious traditions. *Related to General Objective 4 for the MAPL: Develop critical and self-critical engagement with society in the service of peace and justice, as public leaders who can equip others for leadership.*
- Gain practice in oral and written communication skills, and in solving a practical problem, that apply the deep practices of historic religious traditions to leadership, or that develop a critique of such practices. *Related to General Objective 2 for the MAPL: Develop awareness of, sensitivity to, and demonstrate best professional practices working within diverse public contexts for religious agents. Students will gain abilities to identify, and apply, best professional practices in the design, implementation, and assessment of a specialized area of professional practice, social ministry, or public leadership.*

Course Requirements

- Complete 10/10 "Reading Response/Discussion Starter Papers" posted to the course Blackboard site. Papers can be anywhere from 1-5 pages, should use at least three quotes from the course readings (cite page numbers--for texts, or paragraph numbers--for webpages) and should be posted by Friday at 8AM prior to the class session in which the reading is assigned. In your paper, demonstrate familiarity with the central themes of the reading(s), and begin to build your "toolbox" of leadership practices. In each, address the specific question on the syllabus, but also feel free to apply the text(s) to your particular vocational goals and to explore questions of public significance to you. These papers form the basis for our in-class discussions, and are crucial to the successful accomplishment of the learning objectives.

NOTE ON THE READINGS: In each session, there are two kinds of "texts" assigned. The first one or two readings are general historical overviews. I recommend particular examples--usually Wikipedia. Some scholars are suspicious of Wikipedia, but I find the articles generally very accurate and useful. The "open source" method of editing has proven itself far more accurate, balanced, and fair at producing "consensus" interpretations than the traditional encyclopedia process, where the bias of an individual author or publisher can determine content. The second kind of "text" is an individual application or classic text, representing the particular historical stream under investigation, or applying the tradition to (a) problem(s) in public leadership. Generally, a class session will spend the first half discussing the first text(s), and the second discussing the second.

- Complete a 10-25 page Final Paper in which you explore one of the following topics:
 - The life of a religious leader, with applied significance to your vocational interests. What made this person a successful (or failed!) "leader," and how does the person's life apply in the 21st century, to a context or problem of your choosing?
 - Your own "historical toolbox" of religious practices for leadership. What are the historical practices (discourses, rituals, communal organization, institutional structures, etc) that most appeal to you and your vocational concerns? How do these practices originate in a particular context AND cross contexts? What translation(s), if any, are required to apply these practices today--in a 'secular' setting?

- Solve a public crisis in leadership--using (an) example(s) drawn from (a) historic religious tradition(s). Take a prominent public crisis--economic, social, political, and show how you can solve it with practical steps drawn from the historic teachings and practices of (a) religious tradition(s). For instance--what do historic religious traditions and their teachings and practices of leadership have to say about the mortgage crisis? About teen pregnancy? About democratic stability in South Africa?

COURSE SCHEDULE

9/12 **INTRODUCTION**

What is "leadership?" Who is "the public?" And why "religion?"

UNIT ONE: FOUNDING RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN PUBLIC LIFE

9/19 Buddha, the History of Buddhism, and Leadership

Read: "The Life of the Buddha" and "Early Buddhism" from Buddha101.Com, via http://www.buddha101.com/buddhism_history.htm
AND

Read: at least three links regarding "Buddhist Practice," at http://www.buddha101.com/buddhism_practice1.htm

Hint: Check out the "Philosophy" links, too!

Read: Thich Nhat Hanh, *Peace is Every Step*

Question for Discussion (Reading Response Paper):

What practices does the life of Buddha, and history of Buddhism, especially as articulated by Thich Nhat Hanh, suggest as crucial for "public leaders?"

9/26 NO CLASS--Lazareth Lecture; William Allen Day at LTSP Make-up 12/12

10/3 Jesus, the History of Christianity, and Leadership

Read: Wikipedia on the "History of Christianity," at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Christianity

Read: Walter Wink, *Jesus and Nonviolence*

Question for Discussion (Reading Response Paper):

What practices does the history of Christianity and life of Jesus, as articulated by Walter Wink, suggest as crucial for "public leaders?"

10/10 The Bhagavad Gita, the History of Hinduism, and Leadership

Read: Wikipedia on "History of Hinduism," at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Hinduism

Read: Wikipedia on Gandhi, at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Hinduism

Read: Juan Mascaro, tr. *The Bhagavad Gita*

Question for Discussion (Reading Response Paper): What practices does the history of Hinduism and life of Gandhi, especially as articulated in *The Bhagavad Gita*, suggest as crucial for "public leaders?"

10/17 Muhammad, the History of Islam, and Leadership

Read: Wikipedia on "Muhammad," at
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad>

Read: "Islam," from The Encyclopedia of Religion and Politics, at
http://www.cqpress.com/context/articles/epr_islam.html

Read: M. Fethullah Gülen, *Toward a Global Civilization of Love and Tolerance*
(selections--pp. 1-132; 193-262)

Question for Discussion (Reading Response Paper):

What practices does the history of Islam and Life of Muhammad, especially as articulated by M. Fethullah Gulen, suggest as crucial for "public leaders?"

UNIT TWO: RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP AT PUBLIC TURNING POINTS

10/24 NO CLASS--Reading Week

10/31 The Reformation

Read: Article on History of Reformation (read all 6 "pages"), at
<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?groupid=227&HistoryID=ad03>rack=pthc>

Read: Martin Luther, *Three Reformation Treatises* (1520)

NOTE: Several of the essays are also available, free, at "Internet Modern History Sourcebook," online at
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook02.html>

We will divide up Luther's essays, with "teams" of 2 or 3 (or individuals) responsible to "report out" on each.

Question for Discussion (Reading Response Paper):

How did Luther (in the essay you are responsible for) address his context(s)?

How did Luther's context(s) shape his argument and ability to lead?

11/7 NO CLASS--JP in Montreal for American Academy of Religion
Makeup 12/19

11/14 Feminism, Suffrage, and Social Work

Read: brief article "Social Work: History," by Paul Boyer, at
<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O119-SocialWork.html>

For a much fuller (and fascinating) history, see

Dan Huff, "Progress and Reform: A Cyberhistory of Social Work's Formative Years," at
<http://www.boisestate.edu/socwork/dhuff/history/central/book.htm>

Note how this history coincides with the history of women's suffrage, at
<http://www.rochester.edu/sba/suffragetimeline.html>

Read: Nobel Peace Prize Biography of Jane Addams, at:
http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1931/addams-bio.html

Read: Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House*

Question for Discussion (Reading Response Paper):

How did Jane Addams address her context(s)? How did Addams context(s) shape her argument and ability to lead?

11/21 Apartheid

Read: "Religious Faith and Anti-Apartheid Activism," at

<http://overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/sidebar.php?id=8&page=1>

Note: There are multiple fascinating links at this site. Feel free to explore!

Read: *The Kairos Document*, online at

<http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/library-resources/official%20docs/kairos-document.htm>

For background, check out the Wikipedia article, at

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kairos_Document

Read: Tutu's Nobel Prize Biography, at:

http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1984/tutu-bio.html

Question for Discussion (Reading Response Paper):

How did the Kairos theologians address their context(s)? How did their context(s) shape their argument and ability to lead?

11/28 NO CLASS--Thanksgiving

UNIT THREE: RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP AND CRITICAL PUBLIC ISSUES

12/5 NO CLASS--JP in New England

Make up session to be held at JP's house in Media, week of 12/5, date/time TBA

Reading: ELCA Social Statements as Public Leadership

"The Church in Society," at

<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements/Church-in-Society.aspx>

and

"For Peace in God's World," at

<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements/Peace.aspx>

and

"Sexuality: Gift and Trust," <http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements-in-Process/JTF-Human-Sexuality.aspx>

Question for Discussion (Reading Response Paper):

What are the "tools" (sources of authority--key discourses, practices, community organizing principles, institutional structures), appealed to by ELCA leaders in these documents? Identify at least three, across the documents, and discuss their effectiveness (or lack thereof) for leadership.

12/12 American Challenges, American Opportunities

Read: Jimmy Carter, *Living Faith*

Read: Carter's Nobel Prize Biography, at

http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2002/carter-bio.html

Also visit the webpage of The Carter Center, at:

<http://www.cartercenter.org/homepage.html>

Question for Discussion (Reading Response Paper):

What are the "tools" (sources of authority--key discourses, practices, community organizing principles, institutional structures), appealed to by Jimmy Carter? Identify at least three, and discuss their effectiveness (or lack thereof) for leadership.

12/19 Globalization and Poverty

Read: Maathai's Nobel Prize Biography, at

http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2004/maathai-bio.html

And visit The Green Belt Movement webpage, at

<http://www.greenbeltmovement.org/>

Read: Wangari Maathai, *The Challenge for Africa*

Film Viewing: *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* (Liberia)

Question for Discussion (Reading Response Paper):

What are the "tools" (sources of authority--key discourses, practices, community organizing principles, institutional structures), appealed to by Wangari Maathai? Identify at least three, and discuss their effectiveness (or lack thereof) for leadership, and evidence (or lack thereof) in *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*.

Final Paper due by Date TBA, posted online to Blackboard