EMT 3967  Common Good, Social Justice –
Public Vocation of Christian Ethics*

Course Description
This course examines both the importance and challenges of "common good" and of "public vocation" of Christian ethics as integral to being church. Students will clarify their moral stances through close readings of structural injustice, develop skills to discern and evaluate various policies and activities and attend to implications for social ministry and the public vocation of Christian ethics. Seminar discussion, engaged reflection papers, and final integrating project.

Learning Outcomes
1. Demonstrate knowledge of the theological foundations for social witness and barriers to common good of social, political and economic power.
2. Develop skills to analyze “common good” and “community” and “social justice” as contested terms and how these terms are used in theological, ethical, and institutional statements, e.g., programmes, public policies and mission statements of organizations for common good.
3. Relate strategies and tools for equipping moral agents of faith and transformation with reference to particular activities geared towards justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

Required Texts – On Reserve Shelf at Emmanuel College

Mary Jo Leddy, The Other Face of God: When the Stranger Calls Us Home
Ellen Ott Marshall, Christians in the Public Square: Faith that Transforms Politics
Parker Palmer, The Company of Strangers
Rebecca Todd Peters, Solidarity Ethics

Course Outline
Part 1  Introduction

Part 2  Contextual Work

Part 3  Necessary Considerations

Part 4  Student Proposals: Towards justice and common good: A Christian social ethics
Course Overview

PART I  Introductions
1. September 15 – Getting Started

PART II  Contextual Work
2. September 22 – Why common good, public vocation?
   ➤ Due: Assessing Your Praxis Questionnaire (10%)

3. September 29 – Christian Ethics and Public Policy

4. October 6 – Barriers and Responses to Common Good
   ➤ Due: Short Paper: Barriers to Common Good and Social Justice (25%)

PART III  Necessary Considerations

5. October 13 – Teaching the Public Vocation of Christian Ethics

6. October 20 – Christian Ethics and Ministry for Common Good

October 27: READING WEEK = NO CLASS

7. November 3 – Communities with Public Vocation
   ➤ Due: Community Assessment Paper (1500 - 1750 words) (25%)

8. November 10 – Public Vocation of Churches in a Globalized World

PART IV  Student Presentations

   Presenter A) ______________  Presenter B) ______________  Presenter C) ______________
   Book: ______________  ______________  ______________

    Presenter A) ______________  Presenter B) ______________  Presenter C) ______________
    Book: ______________  ______________  ______________

11. December 1 – Proposals for Christian Ethics of Social Justice + Common Good
    Presenter A) ______________  Presenter B) ______________
    Book: ______________

12. December 8 – Sustaining Christian Common Good Social Ethics: Towards Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

   Evaluation and Closure

➤ Due 15 December 2015 (40%) “What should we teach and do for a faith-based, just common good ethics?”
### Class Assignments

1. **Assessing your Praxis and Learning Goals Questionnaire** (10%) ➔ **Due September 22, 2014**

2. **Paper: Barriers to Common Good and Christian Ethics** (30%) ➔ **Due Oct 6** (7-8 pgs, 1750 - 2000 words)

   First, read all the assigned texts for **September 22, 29, Oct 6**. Then, by answering the questions below, create a dialogue on the topic of “Barriers to Common Good” with 2 – 3 of the authors assigned. Include reflection on one or two ideas that you have encountered thus far in this class that have particularly challenged and/or influenced your understanding and practice of the public vocation of Christian ethics (e.g., in terms of discipleship, ministry, fostering community for public good, struggling for justice and why etc…). **Write about barriers to Christian ethics for a just community/common good:**

   a) What key theological assumptions operate in your current thinking about commitment to community and common good? Why? What are some named by 2 or more authors?
   b) What are some barriers to civil society and common good named by 2 or more authors? Why are these barriers of concern for a Christian social ethics? What action is proposed to address them? What moral vision guides them?
   c) Name 1 or 2 implications or elements for a Christian common good ethics.

3. **Modest Assessment of a Public Vocation** (25%) ➔ **Due Nov 3** (5 -7 pgs, 1250 – 1750 words)

   a) Choose and then visit some organized group with a public vocation, i.e. one that works for common good. (Romero House, Stop Community Food Centre, one in your area of interest etc). Assess it using “Exploration Questions re: Community (handout provided in class).” Remember this is a very modest undertaking! You may do this in teams or as a class but individually write up your reflections as per handout and the instructions in b).
   b) Write a **Short Reflection Paper** (5 -7 pages, 1250 – 1750 words) on your visit and research into the community identified in a) above. Plan to visit it – if possible arrange at least one interview with a community member or seek out one to engage to amplify your inventory data for the questionnaire. We will discuss significant elements of your visit and potential meaning for community and ethics on **March**

4. **Major Project in Two Parts** (20% X 2 = 40%) ➔ **Due Dec. 8** (2000 – 2500 words, 8 – 10 pages)

   In the fourth and final stage of the course, you will do a project/paper that makes a practical proposal for faith-based common good ethics. You will choose a “mentor” (a proposal by an author for a Christian engaged justice-seeking ethics) from the list on page 5 of the syllabus.

   Present the author’s proposal in class (see below). Your mentor's work **must be evaluated** as part of your project. Make some connections with your community visit experience, relevant readings from the course and practices applicable to your context and communities.

**PART 1. Presentation** of a mentor's work as a preliminary “work in progress” for discussion and response.

**Overview:** You will act as a “dialogue partner” to present and clarify one mentor’s work; then, assess the author’s proposal, what is at stake in each and some strengths and limits you note in them. About 20 minutes per proposal. (FYI: 100 words can take 1 minute or more to speak.)

**Preparing to present your mentor in class:**

A. How does your author

   a) name the problem of community and common good/public life?
   b) assess barriers to community and common good?
   c) address concrete others’ material needs and show where they connect with the community visit and several assigned readings?
   d) discuss responsibility and resources for a social ethic in terms of what specific loyalties + groups?
B. Write about where you stand and why in dialogue with key claims and reasons of your mentor – e.g., because of the way theology and social justice are related; because their biblical hermeneutics makes sense and why; because of what you are encouraged to be and do -- and with whom (as a human being, as a member of a particular group etc)? What theological and ethical reasons and metaphors/vision guide and ground your stance?

Part II: Integrating Paper: “What should people of faith teach and do for a faith-based, justice-seeking, common good ethics?”

➔ DUE: December 15 (10 – 12 pages, 2000 – 3000 words)

You will now have a range of ideas addressing “the problem of community/common good” in theological and ethical terms. Your task is to synthesize the fruits of your labour in this course in response to this question: What should we teach and do about Christian ethics and participation (i.e., the role of Christians, churches and its purpose/mission) in a complex, pluralist and globalized world for common good? Discuss salient features of your mentor’s work, at least 2 other readings, and one ecclesial statement/policy related to eco-social good. What is appropriate responsibility to others in today’s globalized world? And why, on what theological and ethical grounds? In dialogue with your mentor, develop your own stance/position/proposal on the question.

Ethos and Policies

■ Class Rhythm
Please bring your responses to the readings to class in the form of a key quote or question to generate our agenda at the start of each class. If you need more background in ethics, read and refer to a text such as Christian Gudorf, Comparative Religious Ethics, Charles Kammer, Ethics and Liberation or Bruce Birch and Larry Rasmussen, Bible and Ethics in The Christian Life for a basic framework and definitions of key terms for doing ethics: virtues, values, obligation/responsibility, and moral vision. Discussion of key terms/themes/challenges and your participation will shape an interesting creative and productive class!

These policies govern our life and work at Emmanuel College:

■ Inclusivity Policy: “Emmanuel College is intentionally inclusive, welcoming people regardless of ethnic or racial origin, faith expression, gender, age, or sexual orientation. The current community of faculty, staff and students is composed of a variety of people who come together for the common purpose of theological study in the Torontonian, Canadian, North American and global contexts.”

Emmanuel College Basic Degree Handbook

■ Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters

■ Attendance Policy found in the Policies and Guidelines section of the EM BD Student Handbook
http://www.emmanuel.utoronto.ca/students/handbooks.htm

■ Accessibility Disclosure Statement http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/Faculty-and-Staff.htm (See section about In Class, statement on Disclosure)

On other matters consult the Emmanuel College and TST Basic Degree Handbooks
EMT 3967 Select Bibliography

* = Mentor/Final Project options

*Gloria Albrecht, The Character of Our Communities
Anne Bishop, Becoming an Ally: Breaking the Cycle of Oppression in People (latest edition)
Anne Bishop, Beyond Token Change: Breaking the Cycle of Oppression in Institutions
* Elizabeth Bounds, Coming Together, Coming Apart: Religion, Community and Modernity
* Pamela Brubaker, Globalization at What Price: Economic Change and Daily Life.
Pamela Couture, “Social Policy” in Practical Theology and Methods (pdf)
Charles Curran, Catholic Social Teaching, 1891-Present
Gary Dorrien, Constructing the Common Good: Theology and the Social Order
Charles Fensham, Emerging From the Dark Age Ahead: The Future of the North American Church
* Duncan Forrester, Christian Justice and Public Policy
Diane Goodman, Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People from Privileged Groups
Daniel Groody, Globalization, Spirituality and Social Justice=
*Eleanor Haney, The Great Commandment: A Theology of Resistance and Transformation
Mary Hobgood, Dismantling Privilege: An Ethics of Accountability (latest edition)
* David Hollenbach, The Common Good and Christian Ethics
* Chris Howsam, A Just Church: 21st Century Liberation Theology in Action
Mary Jo Leddy, The Other Face of God: When the Stranger Calls us Home;
____________, At the Border Called Hope: Where Refugees are Neighbours
Barbara Lloyd, Open to the Spirit: Five Traits of Lively Congregations (UCRD = resource distribution)
* Ellen Ott Marshall, Though the Fig Tree Does Not Blossom: Toward a Responsible Theology of Christian Hope
* Ellen Ott Marshall, Christians in the Public Square: Faith that Transforms Politics
* Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, Resisting Structural Evil: Love as Ecological-Economic Vocation
Sheila Neysmith, et al.Telling Tales: Living the Effects of Public Policy
Thomas Ogletree, The World is Calling: The Church’s Witness in Politics and Society
* Rebecca Todd Peters, In Search of the Good Life: The Ethics of Globalization
* Rebecca Todd Peters, Solidarity Ethics: Transformation Ethics in a Globalized World
Rebecca Todd Peters et al, To Do Justice: A Guide for Progressive Christians
*Emilie Townes, In a Blaze of Glory: Womanist Spirituality as Social Witness
Christine Pohl, Living Into Community: Cultivating Practices that Sustain Us
Larry Rasmussen, Moral Fragments and Moral Community: A proposal for church in society
*Larry Rasmussen, Earth-honoring Faith: Religious Ethics in a New Key
*Richard T. Snyder, Once You Were No People: The Church and the Transformation of Society
Richard T. Snyder, Divided We Fall: Moving from Suspicion to Solidarity
Faye Wakeling et al, Hope is the Struggle. See pages 1 – 223 (double-spaced) @ http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk2/ftp02/NQ39780.pdf
*Sharon D. Welch, Sweet Dreams in America: Making Ethics and Spirituality Work
____________, After Empire: The Art and Ethos of Enduring Peace
*Traci West, Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women’s Lives Matter
Iris Marion Young, Justice and the Politics of Difference
Iris Marion Young, Responsibility for Justice
EMT 3967  Course Syllabus

PART I  Introduction

1. September 15.  Getting Started

Introductions, expectations and learning goals

Experiences with church and other groups seeking common good:
   How do you understand the connection between faith, church/religion, social change and public life?
   Identify one concern that relates you to community and justice seeking.

TOPIC: “Public Vocation of Christian Ethics for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation”

- Bill Blaikie, “Canada and the Social Gospel” and models of Charity, Service, and Justice
- Ellen Ott Marshall, *Christians in the Public Square*, Introduction, xi - 1
- Christian Statements for Common Good – UCC, WARC, WCC, Encyclical … find one on line
- Discuss Frank Grave interview with Michael Valpy on Canada’s social cohesion @ http://www.thestar.com/news/atkinsonseries.html

⇒ Looking Ahead to Next Week: Handout and review of Assessing Your Praxis questionnaire

PART II  Contextual Work

2. September 22.  Whose justice? Why community, why common good now?

⇒ Due:  Assessing Your Praxis Questionnaire

Key Terms:  e.g., Christendom, civil society/new commons, community, context, crisis, ethics, difference, globalization, justice, reflexive practices; power of interpretation/narratives for moral agency; Romero House; social cohesion; structural injustice

Prepare:  Do the readings below with the Assessing Your Praxis questionnaire at hand, keeping in mind notions of context and limits as thresholds of grace …

Read:  Moe-Lobeda, “Moral Crisis, Context, Call” in Resisting Structural Evil, 23 – 47*
    Leddy, *At the Border Called Hope: Where Refugees are Neighbours*, 3 – 8*
    Palmer, *The Company of Strangers*, Foreword and ch. 1, 9 - 33
    Leddy, *The Other Face of God: When the Stranger Calls us Home*, ch. 1, 1-18
    Ellen Ott Marshall, *Christians in the Public Square*, “Love,” 1-34

Recommended:
- Eleanor Haney, *The Great Commandment*, pp. 1 – 17 (on reserve)
- Thomas Ogletree, “Constructing a Christian Social Witness” in *The World is Calling: The Church’s Witness in Politics and Society*, 1-10 (on reserve)

⇒ Looking Ahead to Next Week
3. September 29. Christian Ethics, Common Good and Effects of Public Policy

Class Prep: Do the assigned readings with your Praxis Questionnaire in mind; note any key terms and definitions; write down your questions to raise in class.

Read: Palmer, *The Company of Strangers*, chs. 2 and 3, 34 – 70
Peters, *Solidarity Ethics*, intro and “A theo-ethics of Solidarity, 1 – 16; 49-68
Bounds et al, “Welfare Reform: A War against the Poor” 1 – 22
Leddy, *The Other Face of God*, ch.2, 19 – 33 + ch. 5, 95 – 107
Pamela Couture, “Social Policy” in Practical Theology and Methods (pdf)


⇒ Discuss community visit
⇒ Review mentors from Syllabus page 2 marked *-- peruse options then confer with Legge.
⇒ Looking Ahead to Next Week

PART III NECESSARY CONSIDERATIONS

4. October 6. Barriers and Responses to Seeking Justice and Common Good

Reading: Beverly Harrison, “The Power of Anger in the Work of Love”*  
Leddy, *The Other Face of God*, chs. 2 – 4, 34 - 94  
Palmer, *The Company of Strangers*, ch.4, 71 - 89  
Ada Maria Isasi Diaz, “Un Poquito Justica: A Little Bit of Justice”*  
Virginia Held, “The Meshing of Care and Justice”*

Recommended:
KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives @

⇒ Discuss your papers on today’s topic
⇒ Looking Ahead to Next Week

5. October 13. Teaching the Public Vocation of Christian Ethics

Bring your responses to and questions of assigned readings and topics; note key terms + definitions

Reading: Ellen Ott Marshall, *Christians in the Public Square*, “Moral Ambiguity” 35 - 72  
Palmer, *The Company of Strangers*, chs. 5 + 6, 90 – 117  
John Asling, “Moving from Charity Towards Justice”*

Haney, *The Great Commandment*, ch. 2 pp. 37 – 52, plus notes

⇒ Looking Ahead to Next Week

Read: Palmer, *The Company of Strangers*, chs. 7 + 8, 118 – 152
Nancy Ammerman, *Congregation and Community*, 346 – 370*
⇒ Debrief your papers in conjunction with these assigned readings and topic

| OCT 27 = READING WEEK -- no class but visit selected community |

7. November 3. Christians in the Public Square

Your questions of assigned readings and topics.

Ellen Ott Marshall, *Christians in the Public Square*, “Theological Humility” 73- 105

Recommended:
“Ethics of Creation and New Creation” 72 – 105 plus notes
Barbara Lloyd, *Open to the Spirit-- 5 Traits of Lively Congregations*

⇒ Due: “Assessment of Public Vocation” paper (1500 - 1750 words) (20%)


Read: Leddy, *The Other Face of God*, chs. 6 + 7, 108 – 140
Christopher Lind, “Challenging the Ethics of Globalization”
Peters et al, *To Do Justice*, ix – xi*
Rebecca Todd Peters, “A Theo-Ethics of Solidarity,” *Solidarity Ethics*, 49-68
Legge, “Building Inclusive Communities of Life”*

Recommended: Pamela Brubaker, “What Does Faith Have to Do with Globalization”
Christopher Lind, *Something’s Wrong Somewhere and Rumours of a Moral Economy*
______________, *Rumours of a Moral Economy*

Choose ONE church statements on wealth, poverty, ecology
The Canadian Interfaith Partnership Statement on addressing poverty, care for the earth and investing in peace (2010)
KAIROS Call for a Moral Response to the Economic Crisis (2009)
A major Roman Catholic Social Teaching (TBA)
United Church of Canada
“Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire”
“To Seek Justice and Resist Evil”
World Alliance of Reformed Churches
“Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth” (Accra, Ghana 2004)
World Council of Churches
“Economy of Life, Justice and Peace for All: A Call to Action” (2012)
World Council of Churches news@wcc-coe.org
PART IV  Common Good, Social Justice –
Public Vocation of Christian Ethics

9. November 17. Proposals for Christian ethics of common good, social justice

Presenter A) ______________  Presenter B) ______________  Presenter C) ______________

Book ____________________                     ___________________                     _______________

10. November 24. Proposals for Christian ethics of common good, social justice

Presenter A) ______________  Presenter B) ______________  Presenter C) ______________

Book: ____________________                     ____________________                     _______________

11. December 1. Proposals for Christian ethics of common good, social justice

Presenter A) ______________  Presenter B) ______________  Presenter C) ______________

Book: ____________________                     ____________________                     _______________

12. December 8. LAST CLASS: Sustaining Commitment for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in the Making

Read: Palmer, “Hope for the Public” The Company of Strangers, 153-165
Ellen Ott Marshall, Christians in the Public Square, “Faith That Transforms Politics”107-113
Joe Mihevc, “Spirituality in the City”*  

Focus: What are key sources of suffering, signs of hope and criteria for Christian public vocations of a just common good ethics?

Evaluation and Closure

FINAL PAPER DUE
Tuesday 15 December in the Main Office, Emmanuel College and email Legge

✓ If you want your paper returned by post, please put it in a stamped, self-addressed envelope.