Boston College
School of Theology and Ministry

TM7090: Ministry in a Diverse Church
Summer 2015
Session 2 - July 6 to 17
8:45 - 11:45 AM
STM Building – 9 Lake St. Brighton, MA
Room TBD

Syllabus
[As of March 1, 2015]

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Course Description
Diversity is not an option. It is the condition that shapes who we are in the everyday of our lives. At the beginning of the twenty-first century Catholic ministers, educators, and theologians are uniquely called to envision creative approaches to ministry that address diversity as an opportunity—not a problem. This course is designed to advance such conversation in constructive ways by paying particular attention to cultural realities. However, the course also introduces important conversations related to diversity beyond the lens of culture. Students will develop core cultural competencies for effective ministry and theological reflection in culturally diverse contexts. We formulate our questions and reflections within the matrix of the U.S. Catholic experience. About 50% of all Catholics in the country are Euro-American, 40% Hispanic, 5% Asian-American, and 3.7% African-American and African, among others. Because of the fast-growing presence of Hispanics in the Church in the United States, the course uses cases studies from this particular community for class discussions while addressing core issues in ministry that affect everyone in the Church in this country. Ecumenical and international comparisons will be made on a regular basis. Students who have lived and ministered in culturally diverse contexts beyond the United States are welcomed.

Required Books and Resources
7. USCCB, Secretariat for Cultural Diversity in the Church, *Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers*. Washington, DC. USCCB, 2012 (to be purchased at bookstore or directly from book retailer).

All other articles and essays will be available to students via Canvas – Instructions to access the readings will be given on the first day of classes.

**Goals**

This course invites and prepares students to…

1. systematically integrate insights gained from their study of theology, ministry, and the social sciences as well as personal experience into their own pastoral practice.
2. become acquainted with current questions and conversations about cultural diversity in the Church in the United States, with particular attention to the U.S. Latino Catholic experience
3. develop necessary cultural competencies that lead to more effective ministry and theological reflection in culturally diverse contexts like the Church in the United States
4. creatively propose, through pastoral planning, models of ministry that lead to healthy awareness about cultural diversity in the Church
5. follow specific issues related to cultural diversity in the Church through various sources of literature and research

**Requirements and Assessment**

30% Active participation in class and clear evidence that you read the materials for each meeting

35% Analytical Paper 1 [see appendix #1]

35% Analytical Paper 2 [see appendix #2]

**Course Policies**

1. **Language of Written Work.** Students for whom Spanish is a second language are welcomed (though not required) to submit at least one analytical paper in that language. Students for whom Spanish is their first language will be expected to write one of the two analytical papers in this language. Feel free to use resources in English, Spanish and Portuguese for your papers throughout this course. Requirements, style guidelines and grading rubrics will apply to all work submitted in Spanish.

2. **Class Attendance.** The success of your learning experience largely depends on your commitment to being in class every day. Students are expected to be on time for class. Papers must build on the insights gained in each class and the readings. If for some reason you are unable to attend class, please leave a message in my voice mail or communicate with me via E-mail.

3. **Academic Integrity Policy.** Plagiarism is the act of taking the words, ideas, data, illustrations, or statements of another person or source, and presenting them as one’s own. Penalties at Boston College range from a grade penalty to dismissal from the University. To avoid plagiarism, any use of another’s words or ideas must be fully cited. If in the original wording, quotation marks or blocked, indented quotations must be used. For more information regarding plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity, please consult the STM website at http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/stm/acadprog/stmserv/acadpol.html.
4. For Students with Disabilities. If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Kathy Duggan (Kathleen.duggan@bc.edu) Associate Director, Academic Support Services, the Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities and ADHD) or Paulette Durrett (paulette.durrett@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for Students with Disabilities (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.

5. Communications. In case that I need to communicate with students outside of class, I will do so via E-mail. Please make sure to check your BC E-mail (or any other E-mail address that you suggest at the beginning of the course) at least once a day.

6. Openness and Respect. This class is a privileged space to share your own ideas, pastoral experience, and your own scholarship as well as to learn from others and from the materials studied. Because all questions and contributions are important, they will help us to achieve a greater understanding of the topics in discussion. Should you happen to disagree with any aspect of the class or have a different perception in some respect, please remain open and respectful at all times. This is the climate where the great majority of ideas destined to change history are born.

My Philosophy of Teaching

The convergence of the calls to teach and theologize in one and the same soul is perhaps one of the most exciting conditions for human fulfillment that a person can enjoy. This double-call sets the theologian/educator in a privileged position to reflect on the mystery of God by means of one’s scholarship while empowering others in the community to do likewise through one’s teaching. On the one hand, I understand my professional call as that of a theologian/educator who constantly strives to make the discourse about God accessible to his audience using the best pedagogical resources available. On the other hand, I see myself as an educator/theologian searching for transcendence through the practice of his scholarship and teaching. For me both dimensions are inseparable.

The experience of teaching theology and religion to different groups in different settings and in various languages has exposed me to the challenge of being attentive to how people of all ages and ways of life continuously search for meaning. The modes of searching, the questions they formulate, the depth of their concerns, and the reasons that ultimately lead to the question of God may all vary from group to group, from person to person. Yet, I believe that those questions reflect a spiritual restlessness in people’s hearts that shapes every dimension of their existence. Consequently, one of my pedagogical convictions as a theologian/educator is that education takes place within context of a person’s search for meaning, both individually and communally. I believe that teaching theology is about facilitating a systematic reflection on the possibility of one’s encounter with God in history and how this encounter transforms who one is and what one does. As a Catholic educator, I offer my students the challenge of engaging the richness of the Judeo-Christian tradition, lived and shaped in the Church for centuries, in conversation with their own experiences, their communities, their culture, other religious traditions, and other fields of human knowledge.

When entering the classroom, I see myself joining a concrete learning community. I believe that the students and I gather in class to explore the wisdom handed on to us in light of our present experience. My role as a professor is primarily to share the roadmap for discussion and to indicate the signposts that will guide our learning journey. I usually indicate the objectives of the class, make an introduction to the subject, provide definitions to key notions, review the materials that served as preparation for the class, and facilitate participation in a conversation that brings all these elements together. I privilege a dialogical methodology in my classes and strive to empower students to critically engage with the course materials, their professor, their classmates, the wider community (on-campus and off-campus), and themselves. It is by empowering my students that I enhance my own learning. The assessment strategies in each class vary according to the nature of the course. In general, I invite students to bring the best of their own scholarship and experience into their written work. Students should be aware that the ideal for every class project is that they can eventually
implement these exercises of reflection in their own lives and/or careers. As an educator, I greatly value class participation and creativity.

In today’s globalized world people and societies redefine their identities and perspectives at a faster pace than ever before. As a result, Christians and other believers must learn to be truly conversant about their faith convictions in the midst of diversity. I believe that one of the central challenges to teaching theology today is to provide the appropriate conditions for students to encounter God in history while embracing the richness of diversity in culture. We are children of our own cultural environment and look at life through the lens of specific cultural criteria. Both my scholarship and teaching aim at raising awareness about those dimensions in order to enable students and readers to actively participate in the vibrant conversation between faith and culture. I believe that joining this conversation truly empowers all participants and leads them to the search for truth in all its manifestations as well as to the discovery of paths of liberation from structures in our society that prevent us from reaching the fullness of our human potential. Thus, teaching theology is not only about right belief (orthodoxy), but also right action and commitment (orthopraxis).

Being a theologian/educator is both a vocation and a responsibility. I constantly seek to balance my commitment to serious scholarship with a love for teaching and service to the Church. Being attentive to both dimensions of this vocation brings fulfillment to my own life and can potentially open new horizons for those whom I engage in the classroom, the academia, and the Christian community.

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**Your Philosophy of Ministry and/or Academic Commitment**

Please write a one-page reflection (single-spaced) describing your own philosophy of ministry and/or academic commitment. For that purpose respond to the following three questions:

1. **What motivates you to do ministry in the Church?**
2. **Why is it important for you to have a solid academic education in theology and ministry?**
3. **What challenges does cultural diversity offer to your life and ministry?**

*Submit this page no later on Tuesday, July 7th – Via E-mail*

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**Day 1 – Monday, July 6**

**Ministry in a Changing Church: Introduction**


**Day 2 – Tuesday, July 7**

**U.S. Hispanic Catholicism: Overview**


**Recommended reading:**

Day 3 – Wednesday, July 8
African-American Catholicism: Overview


Day 4 – Thursday, July 9
Asian-American Catholicism: Overview


Day 5 – Friday, July 10
Euro-American Catholicism: Overview

Day 6 – Monday, July 13
Building Communities of Faith in a Culturally Diverse Church


Recommended reading:

Day 7 – Tuesday, July 14
Worship in a Culturally Diverse Church

Recommended reading:

**Day 8– Wednesday, July 15**

**Social Justice in a Culturally Diverse Church**


Recommended reading:

**Day 9– Wednesday, July 16**

**Diversity Beyond Culture**

1. **Ministry with Lesbian and Gay Catholics**

2. **Ministry with Catholics with Mental Disabilities**

**Day 10 – Friday, July 17**

**Intercultural Competencies for Ministry in a Diverse Church**


Recommended reading:
Appendix #1

Analytical Paper 1

Option A: Contemporary Experience Option
Select one ethnic group (including Euro-Americans) whose numbers are significantly representative in the Church in the United States today. Address the followings two questions:

• What does it mean to be a U.S. Catholic in light of the particular experience of this group? (challenges and possibilities)
• What does this group contribute (or not) to the experience of being a Christian in a diverse Church?

You may illustrate your argument with a case study. All arguments must be supported with research.

Option B: Past Experience Option
Select any (ethnic) group of Catholics that migrated into the United States during or before the early twentieth century. Address the following two questions:

• How did this group organize in the Church upon arrival and what major challenges did they face? Illustrate your observations with specific examples
• What lessons and insights does their experience offer to us today as we reflect about cultural diversity in the Church?

You can choose a particular community (e.g., parish; mission) in any geographical area of the country to focus your analysis (e.g., Catholic Germans in Texas).

Note 1: If your experience is not that of the Church in the United States, write your paper addressing your own historic-cultural location

Note 2: If your experience is other than Catholicism, write your paper addressing your own ecclesial tradition

Specific Directions

• Five pages (strict limit)
• Double space
• Font size no larger than 12 (Times New Roman)
• Conventional margins
• Good grammar and syntax (please proofread your essay before submitting it)
• Clear ideas (do not develop too many arguments)
• Bibliographical references
  o Use footnotes. Cite your sources using The Chicago Manual of Style
  o Use at least three bibliographical resources different from those used in class
  o Use journals and books (BC has a access to a great collection of electronic resources)
  o Explore resources beyond the fields of ministry and theology as appropriate (e.g., sociology, political science, history, anthropology, etc)

Due date: Saturday, July 11th, 2015 (via E-mail)
Appendix #2

Analytical Paper 2

What are the challenges and possibilities of ministering in a culturally diverse Church?

Answer this question in any direction you feel comfortable. Incorporate the materials read and discussed in class and add your own research.

In case that you have difficulties focusing the essay, contact Prof. Ospino no later than Tuesday, July 14th.

Students in the Hispanic Ministry Track or Hispanic Ministry Certificate must focus their essay on the U.S. Hispanic Catholic Experience

Specific Directions

• Seven pages (strict limit)
• Double space
• Font size no larger than 12 (Times New Roman)
• Conventional margins
• Good grammar and syntax (please proofread your essay before submitting it)
• Clear ideas (do not develop too many arguments)
• Bibliographical references
  o Use footnotes. Cite your sources using *The Chicago Manual of Style*
  o Engage at least four bibliographical resources different from those used in class
  o Use journals and books (BC has a access to a great collection of electronic resources)
  o Explore resources beyond the fields of ministry and theology as appropriate (e.g., sociology, political science, history, anthropology, etc)
  o Check resources available in the media, recent research studies, scholarly works (articles and essays), and ministerial resources (e.g., diocesan papers, faith formation programs, national initiatives led by bishops or ministerial organizations, etc.). Preferably use research done in the last five years or less.
  o Statistics about contemporary issues should not be older than four years

Due date: Preferably on Friday, July 17th, yet no later than Saturday, July 18th, via E-mail.