

PL/TH89.07
M. Mullane

PULSE: Person and Social Responsibility

Spring 08
T-TH 10:30

PURPOSE OF COURSE: this two-semester, 12-credit course fulfills the University core requirements in philosophy and theology. Its contents include your activities in field projects as well as readings, classroom discussions and writing projects.

The classroom and field projects are intended to complement each other in leading students to reflect upon the meaning of their lives and the society in which they live. In your field placements, you will undoubtedly encounter people, places and situations that will cause you to wonder about much that you had previously taken for granted about our social world. In the class readings, we engage the writings of men and women who have also wondered about their social world and its problems. The plan of the PULSE program is to help you reflect on your experiences in the placements and in readings and to raise further questions about what constitutes human fulfillment, genuine happiness, true human meaning, worthwhile service, authentic contributions to social justice and peace.

In this second semester, we will focus more on the capacities and limitations of our economic, political, educational and social institutions for meeting the challenges of our day as we together raise the question of what it means to assume responsibility for social problems and social justice.

Texts Required (All required and recommended texts are on reserve in O'Neill Library)

Delblanco, Andrew, The Real American Dream
Ignatief, Michael, The Needs of Strangers
Himes, Michael, Living in the Truth
Johnson, Allan, Privilege, Power, and Difference
Johnson, Elizabeth, Consider Jesus
MacDonald, Michael, All Souls
Melchin, Kenneth, Living with Other People
Rousseau, J-J., Discourse on the Origin of Inequality
Shore, Bill, The Cathedral Within
Taylor, Charles, The Ethics of Authenticity
Wink, Walter, The Powers That Be
Wright, N.T., Evil and the Justice of God

(Hand-outs of other required reading will be made available at cost by the instructor or posted on WebCT site for the course.)

Required Films

A Simple Plan
Guns, Germs, and Steel (in discussion)
King Lear or Ran
The Mission

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: An evaluation of your fieldwork by your field supervisor will count for 40% of your grade. The remaining 60% will be based:

1. **Quizzes on the readings for the week, usually on Tuesdays at beginning of class, (20%)**
 2. **Mid-Term Exam, Feb 28 (20%),**
 3. **Final Exam, May TBA (10%)**
 4. **PULSE journal, class and discussion participation (20%)**
 5. **Institutional Analysis, due April 24. No extensions, no electronic submissions (30%)**
- See separate sheet for details.**

Please note the Pulse regulation is that a grade of F (failure) in either class or field placement constitutes a failure in the course

JOURNAL: Journal entries must be written and turned in to the instructor 4 times during the semester (**due dates: Thursdays: Jan 31, Feb 21, March 27, April 17. The journals are due in class on these dates.**)

Entries for the journals will draw upon class readings, lectures and/or discussions to illuminate and criticize the concrete occurrences described in your detailed descriptions of your placements, people, situations, deeds, thoughts, feelings which arise in connection with your placement. However, your journal topics need not be limited to these areas and may range to touch upon any subject you desire. The instructor may also require the students to respond to specific questions or solicit pointed comments about the readings or class discussion in the journal.

As a rule of thumb students should make entries to their PULSE journals at least twice times a week, each entry roughly 250 words, double spaced, 12 point, Times font (much preferred if available to you). Please date each entry and submit the journal pages collated, stapled, and placed in a pocket folder on the dates assigned with your name clearly visible on the outside of the pocket folder. It will be helpful to you to preserve both an electronic and a 'hard' copy of your Journal.

Journal grades will be based on the student's ability to explore and draw relevant connections between classroom work (readings, lectures, discussion) and the field service placement experience. As Prof. Copeland has noted, the field placement is situated and understood in the context of a cultural matrix, i.e. specific meanings and values that shape the way we in the US organize our social order – technology, economy, politics, our whole social and culture life. In PULSE we are attempting to understand ourselves and our responsibility to that cultural matrix-the very meanings and values that shape our lives. Since the course matter is as broad and as deep as our examination of life, the journals may touch on the total range of topics that interest you.

As for the grading of journals, I borrow Prof. Goizueta's schema for evaluating journals. Each time the journal is turned in, it will be assigned a grade of '0', "1", "2", or "3" from lowest to highest. At the end of the semester, the points will be totaled and a final journal grade assigned: 1-2=F, 3=D, 4=C, 5=B-, 6-7=B, 8-9=B+, 10-11=A-, 12=A.

CLASS PARTICIPATION AND DISCUSSION GROUPS: In making up your class and placement schedules, please remember to budget time for discussion group that will meet **on Mondays at 10:00 and 11:00**. Our first discussion groups will begin on **Monday, Jan. 29**. In making up your schedules for your placement, make sure that you keep one of these discussion group times open. The discussion groups will focus on your placement experiences, questions and reflections pertaining to the readings and larger issues of social justice.

Participation is an important element in the PULSE course. Students are expected to complete assigned readings before each class meeting. Please be prepared to contribute to each class meeting by posing questions and making relevant comments, referring to specific passages in the reading, or making connections between readings and ideas discussed. Students will be called by name and are expected to answer/comment to the best of their ability in class and in discussion groups. Evidence of consistent lack of preparation for class and discussion group will result in reduction of final grade at the professor's discretion.

Students are also required to meet with their PULSE Council member once during the semester. The precise date and time of these meetings is TBA but you will be notified in due course. These meetings are mandatory, attendance will be taken and professors notified of absences

Please note: The focus of the Pulse Program is to learn to integrate the serious study of significant theological and philosophical readings with a demanding social service experience. The classroom lectures, class discussion and group discussions are critical to developing a serious conversation and a genuine community of interest about our shared learning experience. To bolster our developing sense of purpose and mutual support, the instructor wishes to make clear that attendance at regular classes and weekly discussion group is required. Absences from either lectures or discussion group weaken the solidarity of the class and lower the probabilities of the occurrence of intelligent questions and insights. Consequently, unexcused absences will adversely affect final course grade. (e. g., missing three or more classes will reduce a B to a B-, missing one discussion group will reduce an A- to B+, etc).

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to uphold the standards and guidelines set forth in Boston College's 'Policy on Academic Integrity'. Cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of your work or person, and failure to cite properly other scholar's ideas or work are common violations of academic integrity. For the complete statement of the University's policy consult on the web at: <http://www.bc.edu/integrity>

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Jan 15 Introduction to Part II

Readings: Institutional Analysis handout
J. Heiler, "The History of Religions"

Jan. 17 Needs of Body and Soul

Readings: Himes, M., Doing the Truth in Love, Chapter 1
Ignatief, M., The Needs of Strangers, Chapter 2

Jan 18 Belief in the Context of Unbelief

Readings: Himes, Chapters 2, 3.
F. Dostoevsky, "A Lady of Little Faith"

Jan 24 The Gift, the Gifted and Service

Readings: Himes, Chapter 4.

Jan 28 First Discussion Group**Jan 29 Modern Philosophy, the Good Life, and the Good Society**

Readings: Rousseau, J-J, Second Treatise on Government, Preface, Part I
Documentary: Guns, Germs, and Steel

Jan 31 Journals due in class**Jan 31 Justice: natural and social**

Readings: Ignatief, Chapter 1
King Lear (or "Ran" Japanese with subtitles, view on your own)

Feb 5 Freedom for Slavery?

Readings: Rousseau, Part II
Ignatief, Chapter 3

Feb 7 The Modern Story: Freedom, Inequality and the Just Society

Readings: Ignatief, Chapter 4
Movie: The Mission (view on your own)

Feb 12-14 "Modern Philosophic Times" come to America – Dream or Nightmare?

Reading: Delblanco, Andrew, The Real American Dream

Feb 21 2nd Journal due in Class**Feb. 19-26 Seeds of Hope in Philosophy**

Readings: Taylor, Charles, The Ethics of Authenticity

Feb 28_ Mid-Term exam in class

March Semester Break 3-7 – No Class

Mach 10 No Discussion Group

March 11-13 Appearance and Social Reality: Reading the Signs

Readings: MacDonald, M., All Souls

Mar. 27 3rd Journal due in class

Mar. 18-27 Theology and Social Transformation

Readings: Johnson, Elizabeth, Consider Jesus
Movie, Romero, (view on your own)

March 20 No Class

Mar. 24 No Discussion group - Easter Break

April 1-3 Ethics, Social Identity, and Social Living

Readings: Melchin, K., Living with Other People
Movie, A Simple Plan (view on your own)

April 8-10 The Difference Difference Makes

Readings: Johnson, Allan, Privilege, Power, and Difference

April 17 Last Journal Due in Class

April 15-17 What then shall we do?

Readings: Shore, Bill, The Cathedral Within

April 21 No discussion group – Patriot’s Day

April 24 Institution Analysis Due in Class – No extensions

April 22-24 Overcoming Social Evil

Readings: Wright, N.T., Evil and The Justice of God

April 29 The Best Hope

Readings: Wink, Walter, The Powers That Be

May 3 Review and Conclusion

Final Exam TBA