

**PL/TH 088.07      PULSE: Person and Social Responsibility**  
**M. Mullane**

**Fall 09**  
**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)

Bible (any authorized version, The Catholic Study version is ordered)

The Boston Globe (cf. Field Assignment below)

Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics

Borg, Marcus, The Meaning of Jesus

Coles, Robert, The Call of Service

Kozol, Jonathan, Rachel and Her Children

Phillips, Christopher, Six Questions of Socrates

Plato, Plato, Five Speeches of Plato,

Gorgias.

Shipler, David, The Working Poor

Sutherland, Arthur, I Was a Stranger

Walzer, Michael, Exodus and Revolution

(The instructor will make other required reading available Blackboard Vista.)

**Texts Recommended**

Coles, Robert, The Call of Stories

Hyde, Lewis, The Gift

Pieper, Josef, Abuse of Language, Abuse of Power

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

**1. Mid-Term Exam, Oct 29 in class (30%),**

**2. Final Exam, Dec. 17 @ 9:00am (30%)**

**3. PULSE journal, class and discussion participation (10%)**

**4. Field Assignment paper (30%)\***

Please note the Pulse regulation is that a grade of F (failure) in either class or field placement constitutes a failure in the course. The instructor reserves the right to require further readings and film viewings at his discretion.

### **Topic Statement Due Nov. 10**

#### **\*Paper Due Nov 24, (no extensions)**

This is a paper of 12-15 pages based on newspaper coverage. September 15 through Nov 19 of topics relevant to your Field Placement. Your topic must: 1) relate, narrowly or broadly, to your placement. 2) receive regular (not daily, but frequent) coverage in The Boston Globe. You design your topic all through the semester by clipping relevant news articles. By November 10, you will submit a brief description of the paper topic you have developed by reading the newspaper. You may use other newspaper and magazine articles but your chief source is the Globe.

The Boston Globe – You must acquire and read the Globe on a daily basis Monday-Friday. If you cannot secure a subscription, you must acquire a copy of the paper from the free copies made available on campus or purchase at local store. Saturday or Sunday editions are optional but it is noted that often these editions have extended coverage of local issues and editorials/opinion pieces that are very helpful for the assignment. Internet citation of the Globe is also acceptable but the actual physical clippings from the newspaper are much preferred. A key feature of this paper is evidence of consistent clipping from The Boston Globe related in some way to your placement, its mission and/or its historical, social, political, economic context. Clippings should begin by September 15th. You should have at least two clippings per week for the semester.

At the end of the semester, you must submit a paper on the topic you have chosen, together with all newspaper clippings collected on the topic. At the beginning of the clippings, you include a typed list of the clippings, giving the date and a couple of words from the headline. Clippings are submitted in chronological order. The date needs to be visible on each clipping. Use your aesthetic sense to arrange clippings in a secure binder, or folder.

(Note for Campus School Placements: You will need other sources than the newspaper. See Prof. Mullane.)

**JOURNAL:** Journal entries must be written and turned in to the instructor 4 times during the semester (**due dates: Sept 24, Oct 22, Nov 12, Dec 3. 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. (The Journal and the Field Assignment will become your primary sources for your final writing project in the second semester.)

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, 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, September 14**. In making up your schedules for your placement, make sure that you keep one of these discussion group times open for both semesters. You should plan on keeping the same time for discussion in the second semester.

The discussion groups will focus on your placement experiences, questions and reflections pertaining to the readings and larger issues of social justice. At the end of add/drop period, students will submit their class schedules to the instructor so he can finalize the discussion group assignments.

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.

**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 class sessions 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).

**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. The meetings will be with the council member and the PULSE students from a particular placement and will afford the opportunity to discuss experiences and difficulties common to all the students at the placement. The hope is to establish and use more readily the lines of communication among the students, council members, and the staff at the placements. These meeting are mandatory, attendance will be taken and professors notified of absences.

### **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.be.edu/integrity>. Infractions against university policy will result in F for the course.

**Classroom etiquette:** Please be on time for class, turn off all cellular phones and personal electronic devices (turned off not simply silenced), and bury them deep in your backpacks. Do **not** use computers in the classroom.

**Instructor:** Matthew P. Mullane, Theology Department  
Director, Faith, Peace, and Justice Program  
**Office:** Faith, Peace and Justice Office, 21 Campanella Way #362  
**Email:** <mullanmd@bc.edu>  
**Telephone:** 552-3886 (office)  
**Office Hours:** Monday, 9-10, 1-4:00, Tues, 1:30-4:30, Thurs. 1:30-3:00  
And by appointment.

*If you want something really important to be done, you must not merely satisfy the reason, you must move the heart also. The appeal to reason is more to the head but the penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens the inner understanding in man.*

*Gandhi*

### **Course Schedule and Readings – Fall 09**

#### **Sept 8 Introduction to Course: Philosophy, Theology and the PULSE Experience**

#### **Sept 10-15 Stories from the “Other America” and how we are a story**

**Reading:** Kozol, Rachel and Her Children  
Coles, The Call of Stories, Chap 1, “Stories and Theories”, (handout)  
Moyers, “Hunger in America”, cf. [www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/archives/archives.php](http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/archives/archives.php),  
July 3, 2009

#### **September 16 PULSE Town Meeting ( absolutely mandatory attendance)**

#### **Sept 16-18 Philosophy: What’s the *real* Story?**

**Reading:** Plato: Apology, Crito  
Phillips, “What is Virtue?”

#### **Sept 24 – Journal#1 due in Class**

#### **Sept 24-Oct 1 Philosophy or Power: The One Thing Necessary for the Good Life?**

**Readings:** Plato, Gorgias (reading assignments given in class)  
Phillips, Six Questions of Socrates  
Pieper, Abuse of Language, Abuse of Power, Chap. 1 (highly recommended)

**Sept 24** Gorgias, Part I, 447a-460e  
Phillips, “What is Moderation?”

**Sept 29** Gorgias, Part II, 461a-481b  
Phillips, “What is Courage?”  
O’Brien, “If I Die in a Combant Zone”, cf. BbV

**Oct 1** Gorgias, Part III, 481c - 527e  
Phillips, "What is Justice?"

**Oct 5** PULSE Placement work begins

**Oct 6- Interlude: Reflection on PULSE Experience**

**Readings:** Coles, The Call of Service, "Method", "Doing and Learning"

**Oct 8- 20 Philosophy, Friendship, and the Good Life**

**Readings:** Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics,

**Oct 8** Ethics, BK I, BK 10. 6-8

**Oct 13** Ethics, BK II, BK III, 1-5

**Oct 15** Ethics, BK VI, BK VII, 1-10

**Oct 20** Ethics, BK VIII, 1-14, BK IX, 4, 8-9

**Oct 22 – Journal #2 due in Class**

**Oct 22 Voices at the Edge of the Dream**

**Readings:** Shipler, The Working Poor, Chapter 1-3

**Oct 27 "Voices" continued**

**Readings:** Shipler, The Working Poor, Chapter 4-6

View: Fr. Greg Boyle's lecture at Creighton University (on line)

**Oct 29 Midterm Exam in Class**

**Nov 3-12 Exodus: The Saving Story and the Making of a People**

**Nov 3 Introduction to Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament)**

**Reading:** Bible. Genesis 1-11, 12-37

Myers, "Stories We Live By", cf. BbV

Brueggemann, "The Impossible Possibility", cf. BbV.

**Nov 5 Exodus and the Making of a Prophet and a People**

**Readings:** Exodus, 1-17, 19-20, 32-34

Brueggemann, "The Alternative Community of Moses", cf. BbV.

**Nov 10 Topic statement for Field Assignment due**

**Nov 10 Exodus and Revolution**

**Readings,** Walzer, Parts 1 & 2

**Nov. 12 Journal #3 due in class**

**Nov 12 Religion and Politics**

**Readings:** Walzer, Parts 3,4 & Conclusion

**Nov 17-Dec 3 The Story of Jesus, Discipleship, and the Good Life**

**Nov 17 Intro to New Testament**

**Readings:** Gospel of Mark (read at one sitting)

Borg, Meaning of Jesus, Ch 1

**Nov 19 Reading:** Gospel of Luke, Ch 1-9, Borg, Meaning of Jesus, Ch 2.

**Nov 24 Field Assignment Due (no extensions)**

**Nov 24 Reading:** Gospel of Luke, Ch 9-19:27, Borg, Ch. 3, 4.

**Nov 26 Thanksgiving Break – no class**

**Dec 1 Reading:** Gospel of Luke, Ch 9:28-24:53, Borg, Ch 5-8

**Dec 3 Journal #4 Due in Class**

**Dec 3-8 “If these things are true, what then shall we do?”**

**Readings:** Borg, Ch 15-16

Sutherland, I Was a Stranger

**Dec 10 Gift and Service**

**Readings:** The Call of Service, “Young Idealism”

**Dec 17@ 9am Final Exam**

*At the bottom of the heart of every human being there is something that goes on indomitably expecting, in the teeth of all experience of crimes committed, suffered, and witnessed, that good and not evil will be done to her. It is this above all that is sacred in every human being.*

*Simon Weil*