

Community Organizing for Missional Living
June 13-17, 2011
Seabury-Western Theological Seminary

Faculty

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Community organizing is all about relationship building. This course will assist congregational leaders in getting to know the wider community context in which the local church is situated. It will help participants develop their leadership for bringing people together to work for change and increase their abilities in power analysis and effective strategizing. Community organizing is a powerful approach to living out one's faith in the world.

Goals and Objectives

This course will:

- Strengthen participants' identity as leaders for the missional church
- Increase participants' ability to recognize inequality, exclusion, racism and other forms of oppression as well as institutional, governmental and social structures contributing to these conditions
- Engage participants in theological reflection around community organizing as potential for responsible life in faith
- Provide an opportunity to reclaim power as a positive concept
- Assist participants in getting in touch with the deep values, passions, and feelings that motivate them
- Train participants for one-on-one's or relational meetings.
- Challenge participants to "Go Public" with their faith values

Requirements

1. Write a public autobiography of 5 pages maximum (1000 to 1250 words) covering some of the following questions: What were the first times in your life where you engaged in public life and public action? Where else have you been publicly engaged since then? How has this engagement affected you? What questions or concerns do you have as a result? Do you consider yourself a leader? If so, why? If not, why not? What are your hopes and expectations for this community organizing training? **Bring this assignment to the first class session on June 13th. Email a copy to both instructors.**
2. Attend all training sessions and the Public Action on Thursday, June 16th.
3. Read the Required Texts and write a 5-8 page (1250 to 2000 words) reflection paper where you answer the following questions: What were the most significant insights you gained from reading each of the texts about the nature of the world in which we organize? What were the most important implications you gained from

the readings about power, self-interest, relational meetings (one-on-one), leadership and/or public action that the church should use in its ministry today?
Email to both instructors by July 8, 2011.

4. Conduct relational meetings with at least 10 people (hopefully members of your vestry, governing board, or congregational/organizational leaders as well as town or city officials and heads of non-profit organizations in your neighborhood. If you are away on summer vacation following the intensive class sessions, please schedule these one-on-ones for as soon as you return.) Write a 5-8 page (1250-2000 words) paper reflecting on these relational meetings. What values, passions, and experiences motivate each person to do what they do? What concerns, issues, or frustrations did they share? What hopes, dreams? What surfaced as to the value of the church in each person's life? How might a congregation-based community organization benefit your community? **Email to both instructors by August 1, 2011.** (Email the instructors if your summer vacation interferes with this assignment, but please try to complete this assignment as soon as you can).

Required Reading

Michael Gecan, *Going Public* (Anchor Books, 2006) ISBN: 978-1400076499

_____, *Effective Organizing for Congregational Renewal* (Skokie, IL: ACTA Publications, 2008) ISBN: 978-0-87946-384-7

Gregory F. Pierce, *The World as It Should Be: Living Authentically in the Here-and-Now Kingdom of God* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 2011) ISBN: 978-0829429093

Jeffrey Krehbiel, *Reflecting with Scripture on Community Organizing* (Skokie, IL: ACTA Publications, 2010) ISBN: 978-0879464486

Samuel G. Freedman, *Upon This Rock: The Miracles of a Black Church* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1994) ISBN 978-0060924591

(Many of these books can be ordered directly from ACTA Publications, <http://actapublications.com>).

Criteria for Evaluation:

- a.) Full participation in the training exercises and discussions;
- b.) Evidence of having read course texts;
- c.) Originality, clarity and strength of writing;
- d.) Creativity, critical judgment, constructive engagement and imagination;
- e.) Evidence of assimilation of course insights;
- f.) Ability to draw connections between course topics, readings, and class discussions to one's own ministry; and
- g.) Completion of assignments