

## **Prison Ministry Practicum Syllabus (Work in Progress)**

ET 341, PT 341 Spring 2017

3 Course Credits

### **Professor: Michael Battle**

Office: Seabury 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

Office Hours: 1:30pm –2:30pm pm (Mon. Thurs)

Phone: (626) 993-5384

### **Course Description:**

This course will focus on the practice and reflection model of ministering to incarcerated persons and the family systems involved. This is the second part of the Prison Ministry Course (ET 41, PT 41) of bearing others' burdens as a necessary part of prison ministry and the reconciliation process. This practicum requires students to make seven visits into a prison setting utilizing a Bible study or worship service. In addition, students will have five classroom reflection seminars with Prof. Battle and other teachers and leaders in prison ministry. This practicum course follows up on the premise that prison ministry does not happen in the classroom only, but that grace is taught and learned by the active practice of reconciliation. Such a practice of reconciliation always involves bearing others' burdens in some respect.

Lastly, this practicum will live into the meaning of a praxis oriented course by inviting leaders in the field of prison ministry to join us in our reflection seminars. These will be leaders who have spent a significant part of their lives entering the suffering of others and bearing others' burdens.

### **Learning Outcomes,**

- Deepen individual skills to minister to offenders and victims in the processes of incarceration (including recidivism and restoration of victims).
- Do ministry in a jail, prison or juvenile correction institution.
- Demonstrate an ability to continue prison ministry beyond seminary.

*Why this course for Pastoral Leadership?* In many examples, biblical leadership and pastoral leadership form in a prison setting. To be a well-rounded clergy person today, prison ministry is essential to address systemic, societal ills and conflicts. In addition, the church needs leaders equipped to facilitate lay leaders to exercise their skills in reconciling perpetual conflicts in the world. Such spiritual leadership is vital in the cause and effect of helping others move toward restoration of self, other and world.

### **Practice**

- The practical aspects of this study will involve class members working in teams to prepare and present a class on reconciliation to prisoners in a local

Detention Center or another correctional setting. Winette Saunders (Deputy Commissioner, New York City Department of Correction) will help us to administer these visits.

- At the end of the course a portfolio will be due from each class member, which will include a 2-3 page reflection paper on the aspects of reconciliation work to which you sense a call, and other items, such as sermons, essays (already written or new), newspaper articles, poetry, artwork, or anything else which has helped form your beliefs and your sense of call with regard to reconciliation during the course.
- Each class member is asked to keep a notebook or journal reflecting upon each prison visit. These notebooks and journals will be turned into Prof. Battle
- The reconciliation work (e.g., Bible study, worship service, listening sessions) to be presented in the prison setting should first be approved by Prof. Battle.

### **Grading**

The grade will be based on class participation (60%), quality of verbal and written reflections (40%).

### **Texts and Further Reflection**

Michelle Alexander's book, The New Jim Crow is the only required text. The amount of reading required for each class is at enough of a minimum that you should be able to read and reflect on it before class sessions. The primary context for reflection, however, will be your experience volunteering in prison. For such reflections, please consider the following questions.

- 1) What burdens of others have you experienced;
- 2) What societal barriers exist in your prison work;
- 3) How do the incarcerated persons you serve, including the opposition they face, remind you of any passages of scripture (realizing that this may not happen in every case).

Before each class, please write two or three sentences in response to each of the questions above. These reflections should be merged with your notebook or journal. In addition, please bring news or opinion articles, poetry or anything else that reflects events in everyday life which are relevant to the work of reconciliation and bearing others' burdens to class.

### **Schedule and Readings:**

**(Week 1) 1/30**

\*Seminar Class

**(Week 2) 2/6**

Orientation to Ryker's Prison

**(Week 3) 2/13**

\*Seminar Class (Turn in proposed Bible studies, liturgies, etc to be used in prison visits)

**(Week 4) 2/20**

Prison Visits

**(Week 5) 2/27**

Prison Visits

**(Week 6) 3/6**

\*Seminar Class

**(Week 7) 3/13**

Spring Break

**(Week 8) 3/20**

Prison Visits

**(Week 9) 3/27**

Prison Visits

**(Week 10) 4/03**

\*Seminar Class

**(Week 11) 4/10**

Holy Week

**(Week 12) 4/17**

Prison Visits

**(Week 13) 4/24**

Prison Visits

**(Week 14) 5/1**

Prison Visits

**(Week 15) 5/8**

\*Seminar Class

**Required Texts**

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*