

REED 70023/80023 – Preparing to Do Justice:  
Religious Education for Advocacy and Social Action  
(3 Semester Hours)  
Spring 2022

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Prerequisites: None

Description of Content: Students will reflect on social justice issues and develop strategies designed to motivate, educate, train, and sustain groups in their congregations or community groups for charity, social action and advocacy. Students will prepare a lesson designed to inspire and call people to ministries of social action and advocacy, participate in an activity of action or advocacy and reflect upon it using practical theology resources, and prepare and teach lessons designed to educate, train and support ministry teams. Students will lead at least two in-class lessons. This is a religious education course. The focus of this course is on preparing people for effective social justice ministry rather than on creating and administrating the ministries themselves. Students will have the opportunity to focus their assignments on justice-related issues that are particularly important to them and that are relevant to their own contexts.

Class Procedures: Lecture, discussion, in-class teaching by students, outside of class advocacy and action activities, field trip to a mission center

Requirements:

Attendance and informed, prepared participation in class are required. Failure to complete all four assignments will result in failure of the course. More detailed assignment instructions will be distributed in class and on the class website for each of these assignments.

1. Call to Action Paper and Lesson: Students will research and write a 7-9 page-paper in preparation for a lesson plan or presentation that inspires and calls people to get involved in a social action or advocacy cause, and present it to the rest of the class.
2. Action or Advocacy Engagement and Reflection Paper: During the semester (or in the fall or winter preceding the semester), students will find and participate in an act of social action or advocacy (attending a city council meeting with a group, volunteering at a homeless shelter, standing vigil during a state execution, etc.) with a group or on your own. Students will write a 6-8-page paper reflecting on your experiences and placing them in dialogue with theology and practical theology resources, citing text, reflect on what might have helped you and other participants better prepare for the activity, and then describe a 20-minute lesson that prepares volunteers to participate in that activity.
3. Lesson plan and in-class teaching: Students will design a lesson plan that prepares people to take part in an act of advocacy or social action, submit it to the professor for feedback at least a week before they are scheduled to teach, and then teach their lesson to the rest of the class. Students should draw upon the concepts, models, and methods discussed in class and course readings.
4. Education for Advocacy and Action Plan Paper: Design a series of education/training/support sessions for a church group or community group that is preparing for or is already actively involved in a ministry of advocacy and action. What models of teaching would you use? Include at least one session outline on the potential

harm that ministry might do and how you will work to do no harm. Outline several sessions, and provide a detailed lesson plan for at least one of the sessions

Additional requirement for students taking the course at the 80023 level:

5. Students taking the course at the 80023 level will teach an additional lesson to the rest of the class to be chosen in consultation with the professor. For 80023 students, each of the five assignments will account for 20% of their final grade.

Required Texts:

Chris Howson, *A Just Church: 21<sup>st</sup> century liberation theology in action* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011). ISBN: 978-1-4411-9992-8. Retail \$22.95.

Kevin Blue, *Practical Justice: Living Off-Center in a Self-Centered World*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006. ISBN 0-8308-3368-9 Retail Price: \$15.00

Elizabeth Mae Magill, *Five Loaves, Two Fish, Twelve Volunteers: Growing a Relational Food Ministry* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2019). ISBN 978-0-8358-1915-2. Retail \$13.99.

Rebecca Todd Peters and Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty, eds., *To Do Justice: A Guide for Progressive Christians*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008. ISBN 978-0-644-23282-5. Retail: \$20.00.

Charles Fredrickson, Violetta Lien, et al, *Faith-Based Organizing* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2021). ISBN 978-1-5064-7015-3. Retail \$19.99.

Clayton Childers and Neal Christie, *Church and Society: Advocate and Witness for Peace and Justice*. Cokesbury, 2016. ISBN 978-1-5018-30273. This free 21-page pdf will be provided to the class.

Other required chapters and articles will be assigned and posted on the course website, including chapters from Nucci and Ilten-Gee, *Moral Education for Social Action*, Marlin-Warfield, *Radical Charity*, Lupton, *Toxic Charity*, Craigo-Snell & Doucot, *No Innocent Bystanders*, and more.

\*\*Note: Students will also need to research and consult other texts related to the specific social issues they choose to address in their assignments.

Recommended Texts:

Shannon Craigo-Snell & Christopher J. Doucot, *No Innocent Bystanders: Becoming an Ally in the Struggle for Justice* (Louisville: WJK, 2017). ISBN 9780664262624. Retail \$17.00.

Mary Alice Mulligan and Rufus Burrow, Jr., *Standing in the Margin: How Your Congregation Can Minister with the Poor*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2004. ISBN: 0-8298-1544-9 Retail price: \$16.00.

Ginger Gaines-Cirelli, *Sacred Resistance* (Abingdon, 2018) ISBN 1501856855. Retail \$14.99.

Grading Procedures:

Call to Action Paper and Lesson: 25%

Action or Advocacy Engagement and Reflection Paper: 25%

Lesson plan and in-class teaching: 25%

Education for Advocacy and Action Plan Paper: 25%

Attendance and active class participation are required. Positive consideration is given for prepared and informed attendance and participation. All four assignments must be completed with a passing grade in order to receive credit for the course.

Note: This is a tentative course plan. Some details of this course design may be changed depending upon the number of students in the course and other factors.