

WORKING THROUGH WORK ISSUES

RSHS-4084
3 Units
Starr King School for the Ministry
January 2016 Term

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

Name: Patricia M. Malarkey, MASC, Hilda Mason Fellow
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Phone Number: (703) 254-8145
Availability: 30 minutes before and after class

MEETING DATES AND TIMES: January 4-8, 2016, 9:00am - 5:00pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

We begin with history of the American Dream, and then step out of that framework to consider the American work experience through the lenses of race, ethnicity, gender identity, ability income and class.

Issues affecting the American workplace also influence our congregations and ministerial constituencies, so we will delve into corporatist systems issues including layoffs, bullying, wage theft and discrimination.

Growing income inequality is likewise a concern to our ministries and we will consider the history of income inequality in the United States and compare and contrast that history with the current reality.

In this class we will also take a close look at the 2008 mortgage crisis with special attention to those most affected by it.

Students will engage in class discussion, complete short writing assignments, student discussion and reporting on key questions in the readings. Students will complete a final project that will focus on a particular work issue and possible remedies from a ministerial perspective.

Our readings will touch on these themes:

- The American Dream
- The Mortgage Crisis
- The history of the Labor Movement in America
- Income Inequality
- Issues workers face in the current environment
- Things we can do – both small and big

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Have an understanding of the complexity of the American Dream.
2. Explain issues faced by workers in the early 21st century American business environment and current solutions offered for them.
3. Evaluate the present-day American Labor Movement in light of its history.
4. Identify and synthesize individual remedies proposed for labor challenges by various schools of thought including career coaching and support groups.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the conclusion of the course, students will:

1. Have a deeper understanding of the American Workplace and of the issues their future parishioners may bring to them from the American Workplace.
2. Develop a deeper appreciation of one's own identity with work.

COURSE POLICIES:

Students with disabilities, health concerns, etc. who so desire may make special arrangements with the instructor at or immediately following the first session. This is a justice and sustainability issue and will allow the student to be in the course in a way which is sustainable for them.

As the instructor, I reserve the right to move the class forward in order to cover the material in the allotted time.

A class covenant will be developed on the first day we meet. Here are some examples of other agreements we might make. Please feel free to bring others to the table.

- Should cell phones be silenced?
- Will we have a dispute procedure?
- What goes on in the class stays in the class?
- Will we allow snacking during class? Are there any allergies we need to honor?
- Should we allow surfing only during designated times?
- How will we respect each other and be civil with each other?
- Other?

GRADING:

Successful completion of the course will be based upon several criteria:

1. Attendance and active participation in class, and in-class writing assignments. **(20%)**
2. Small-Group engagement with Playsheets and discussion **(30%)**.
3. Small-Group presentation on case study. **(20%)**
4. Final project **(30%)** - The final project will be selected by the student in conversation with the instructor. See "FINAL PROJECT" for some ideas.

FINAL PROJECT:

Here are some ideas for the final project. Please feel free to discuss these and other ideas with the instructor during breaks or after class the first day. We will have a short brainstorming session on the final day for people share ideas and generate discussion.

- A community action project and / or interview
- A comparison of an historical moment vs. current place in time
- A video exploring issues or themes of interest from this class
- A storytelling of your and / or your family's relationship with work
- Your vision for the American Dream and how that informs your practice

WORKING THROUGH WORK ISSUES

Day	Topics Covered
Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Brief History of The American Dream <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Puritan Enterprise ○ The Declaration of Independence ○ Upward Mobility ○ The Dream of Home Ownership ○ The Coast • The Mortgage Crisis Explained <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Political Environment ○ Economic Environment
Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Brief History of the American Labor Movement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Colonial Era ○ The American Revolution ○ The New Republic ○ The Civil War ○ The Gilded Age ○ The Turn of the 20th Century ○ The 1920's and the Great Depression ○ The Second World War ○ The Cold War ○ The 1960's ○ The Decline of Organized Labor ○ Going Forward
Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace Maladies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Systemic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Income Inequality ▪ Layoffs ▪ Wage and Time Theft
Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace Maladies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Individualistic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workplace Bullying ▪ Harassment and Discrimination ▪ Work-Life Balance • Success Stories • Presentation of Ideas for Final Project
Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Work • Group Case Study Presentations

REQUIRED TEXTS:

I have made an effort to include books that are available in eBook format and readings that are available online. Both hardcopy and eBook prices listed are rounded. Hardcopy prices are for new books, unless otherwise stated. Prices are as of October 17, 2015.

Cullen, Jim. *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea*. New York: Oxford UP, 2003.

ISBN-13: 978-0195173253

ISBN-10: 0195173252

Hardcover: \$28.00

Paperback: \$11.50

Kindle: \$11.50

<http://www.amazon.com/The-American-Dream-History-Shaped/dp/0195173252>

This book will be covered on Monday.

Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Nickel and Dimed: On (not) Getting by in America*. New York: Metropolitan, 2001.

ISBN-10: 0805088385

ISBN-13: 978-0805088380

Hardcover: \$10.80

Paperback: \$9.90

Kindle: \$10.00

<http://www.amazon.com/Nickel-Dimed-Not-Getting-America/dp/0312626681>

This book will be covered on Thursday.

Fox, Matthew. *The Reinvention of Work: A New Vision of Livelihood for Our Time*. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1994. Print. (Written from a Christian perspective, but includes examples from other faith traditions)

ISBN-10: 0060630620

ISBN-13: 978-0060630621

Hardcover: N/A

Paperback: \$15.30

Kindle: N/A

<http://www.amazon.com/The-Reinvention-Work-Vision-Livelihood/dp/0060630620>

This book will be covered Tuesday through Friday.

Murolo, Priscilla, and A. B. Chitty. *From the Folks Who Brought You the Weekend: A Short, Illustrated History of Labor in the United States*. New York: New Press, 2001. (Available on Kindle)

ISBN-10: 1565847768

ISBN-13: 978-1565847767

Hardcover: \$40.00

Paperback: \$11.30

Kindle: \$10.00

<http://www.amazon.com/From-Folks-Who-Brought-Weekend/dp/1565847768>

This book will be covered on Tuesday.

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"The Powell Memo (also Known as the Powell Manifesto)." *Reclaim Democracy*. N.p., 03 Apr. 2004. Web. 21 Feb. 2015. <http://reclaimdemocracy.org/powell_memo_lewis/>.

This reading will be covered on Wednesday.

Schulte, Brigid. *Overwhelmed: How to Work, Love and Play When No One Has the Time*. New York: Picador, 2014. (Available on Kindle)

ISBN-10: 1565847768

ISBN-13: 978-1565847767

Hardcover: \$19.40

Paperback: \$11.80

Kindle: \$10.00

<http://www.amazon.com/Overwhelmed-Work-Love-Play-When/dp/1501209981>

This book will be covered on Thursday.

RECOMMENDED READING:

Estey, Ken. *A New Protestant Labor Ethic at Work*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2002. Print.

<http://www.amazon.com/New-Protestant-Labor-Ethic-Work/dp/160899578X>

Uchitelle, Louis. *The Disposable American: Layoffs and Their Consequences*. New York: Knopf, 2006. Print.

<http://www.amazon.com/The-Disposable-American-Layoffs-Consequences/dp/1400034337>

Smith, Hedrick. *Who Stole the American Dream?* New York: Random House, 2012. (Available on Kindle)

<http://www.amazon.com/Stole-American-Dream-Hedrick-Smith/dp/0812982053>

PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS:

Before doing the pre-class reading assignments, write a short essay – no more than one page – on what the phrase “American Dream” means to you. Bring a printed copy of your essay to the first day of class.

Read Cullen: *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea*. This book is an easy and short read. For Monday.

Read Ehrenreich: *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. This book is an easy and short read. For Thursday.

Select one of the following to read in-depth and follow through the course as a case study. Students will group by case study to do a final presentation on the last day of class. (Number of selections will depend on the number of students enrolled) Students will negotiate in their groups about a topic on which to present a relevant case study.

1. Reading about the American Dream
2. Reading about the Mortgage Crisis
3. Reading about the Labor Movement
4. Reading about Income Inequality
5. Reading about Oppression in the Workplace
6. Reading about What Works in the Workplace
7. Student-selected Reading about the American Workplace

The case studies will be presented by small groups on the last day of class.

Read Fox: *The Reinvention of Work: A New Vision of Livelihood for Our Time*. Chapters 2, 3, 6 and 9. For Tuesday through Friday.

Read the Powell Memo. http://reclaimdemocracy.org/powell_memo_lewis For Wednesday.

Read Murolo and Chitty: *From the Folks Who Brought You the Weekend: A Short, Illustrated History of Labor in the United States*. Chapters 7 – 9. For Tuesday.

Read Schulte: *Overwhelmed: Work, Love and Play When No One Has the Time*. Exact chapters will be determined by the time the final syllabus is available.