

FT 1228: Organizing for Congregational Renewal Intersession 2015 • Course Syllabus



Photograph of The
Poor People's
Campaign taken in
June 1968 by James
Pickerell



January 18 – 23, 2015

Dr. Bradley Burroughs
Assistant Professor of Ethics

email: bburroughs@cdsp.edu
telephone: 510.204.0730

Office Hours

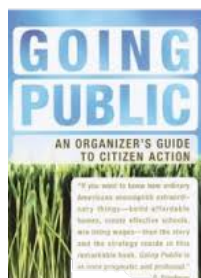
208 Shires Hall (CDSP Campus)
Tuesday 10 – 11 AM
Wednesday 10 – 11 AM
Other times by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course seeks to develop conceptual and practical skills that will equip students in leading the public mission of ecclesial congregations. We will focus on mission, sustainable leadership, strategic thinking and acting, and forming collaborative relationships for missional action. The course is taught by a team of experienced Industrial Areas Foundation community organizers and will also include a theological reflection section led by a CDSP faculty member (required for those seeking academic credit). Presentations, discussions, and role-play will be used as learning tools. Readings (both prior to and during the course), a pre-course paper, participation, and final paper will all be required.

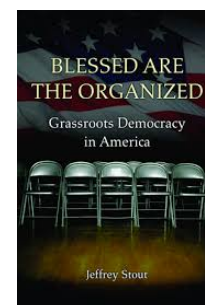
COURSE RESOURCES

Required Texts

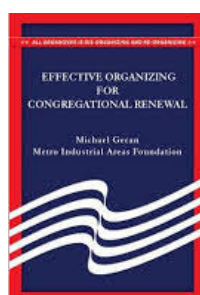


Michael Gecan, *Going Public*.
Anchor Books.
ISBN: 978-1400076499

Jeffrey Stout, *Blessed are the Organized*. Princeton.
ISBN: 978-0691156651



Michael Gecan, *Effective Organizing for Congregational Renewal*. ACTA.
ISBN: 978-0879463847



Additional required readings will be available in PDF format on

COURSE FORMAT

During the week that we will be together (January 18–23), the majority of the course will be led by leaders from the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), who will conduct an intensive training in community organizing. This training will be held Sunday 3:00 – 7:30 PM, Monday 10:00 AM – 5:30 PM, Tuesday 10:00 AM – 5:30 PM, Wednesday 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM, Thursday 10:00 AM – 5:30 PM, and Friday 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM. In addition to those times, Dr. Burroughs will lead theological reflection sessions from 5:30 – 6:30 PM on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. As with all other elements of the training, the theological reflection sessions are required for those seeking academic credit; nevertheless, they will also be open to all others participating in the training.

This course is being offered for three academic credits, the same amount as a typical semester-length course, and the workload will be commensurate. *Prior to our first meeting*, students must read all of the required readings and write a seven-page paper (see “Course Requirements” and “Course Schedule” below). This will require discipline and self-motivation so that you are prepared to get the most out of the course. In addition to the pre-course work, each night during the course students will be asked to review relevant readings in preparation for the next day. Failure to devote sufficient time to preparation will not only hurt your grade, but in light of the emphasis that this course will place upon accountability, could lead to public embarrassment, as well!

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will ...

- (1) Have a solid grasp of the central tenets and tactics of broad-based community organizing;
- (2) Be able to articulate the connections between broad-based community organizing and the Christian faith, as well as the potential, and possible limits, of using broad-based organizing as a model to guide public ministry;
- (3) Possess the ability to employ broad-based organizing tools in order to create connections with others and assess ministry possibilities in their respective contexts.

Competence in this will be assessed by ...

- (1) Pre-Course Paper, Final Paper, Participation
- (2) Pre-Course Paper, Final Paper, Participation
- (3) Final Paper

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reading and Review

All reading assignments detailed on the course schedule (below) should be **completed before the start of class** and in time to submit the pre-course paper on January 17. As we proceed through the course students should also review the relevant readings for each day before the start of class.

**Before
1/17**

Pre-Course Paper

Students will write and submit a seven-page paper that draws upon the course readings in order to identify key intersections and divergences between the Christian faith and the goals and tactics of grassroots democracy. (See “Assignment Description” on page 6 for details.)

**Jan
17**

Attendance and Participation

Students should attend all training sessions and all theological reflection sessions. They should come prepared to be informed, constructive, and energetic participants in all activities.

**Each
Day**

Final Paper

Students will submit a 12-page paper in which they reflect upon their experiences conducting six one-on-one meetings with people in a ministry context. The papers will recount the meetings and bring the course readings to bear in order to process the experiences, highlight crucial dynamics, and identify future possibilities for action. The full assignment description can be found on page 6.

**Feb
18**

GRADING



35% = Pre-Course Paper

45% = Final Paper

20% = Class Participation



Grades will be awarded based on the following scale:

A = 93% and above; A- = 90–92.9%; B+ = 87–89.9%; B = 83–86.9%; B- = 80–82.9%; C+ = 77–79.9%; C = 73–76.9%; C- = 70–72.9%; F = 69.9% and below. A grade of “Pass” requires a student to earn at least 70% and also to complete *all* assignments.

COURSE POLICIES

Communication and Academic Discourse

All class communication will be grounded in mutual respect. Both the students and the instructor must be open to academic discourse, which can include challenges to and critiques of ideas. This is different from personal attacks (bullying or “cyber-bullying”), which will not be tolerated.

Inclusive Language

In keeping with the inclusive language policies of CDSP and the GTU, students are required to use inclusive language for human beings in all of their coursework.

Accommodations

Students whose first language is other than English and who need accommodations with regard to completing class assignments should communicate their needs to the instructor. All students, especially those with documented learning disabilities, should communicate to the instructor any limitations and challenges they face in class participation and the completion of assignments.

Plagiarism

From the CDSP Academic Handbook (revised Jan. 2013, p. 47): **Plagiarism is the presentation of another’s ideas, methods, research or words without proper acknowledgment.** It runs the gamut from failing to cite a reference (sloppy scholarship) to passing off another’s work as one’s own. It includes close paraphrasing as well as lifting of entire lines nearly verbatim without acknowledgment. As the effects of the plagiarism will be the same regardless of intent, intent will not be construed as essential to the act, although it may be considered in determining whether the charge of plagiarism should be pursued or what the penalty may be.

COURSE SCHEDULE

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Date	Topics, Assignments, and Activities
Before Jan 17	<p>Pre-Course Preparation</p> <p><u>Read:</u> Jeffrey Stout, <i>Blessed are the Organized</i>, all Michael Gecan, <i>Going Public</i>, all Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” from <i>A Testament of Hope</i>, pp. 83-100 (PDF) Stanley Hauerwas, “A Haunting Possibility: Christianity and Radical Democracy” from <i>Christianity, Democracy and the Radical Ordinary</i>, pp. 17-30 (PDF) Luke Bretherton, “Local: Augustine, Alinsky, and the Politics of the Common Good” from <i>Christianity and Contemporary Politics</i>, pp. 71-106 (PDF)</p> <hr/> <p><u>Read:</u> Michael Gecan, <i>Effective Organizing for Congregational Renewal</i>, pp. 1-54 Thucydides, “Melian Dialogue,” pp. 1-6 (PDF) David Nyberg, “The Very Idea of Power” from <i>Power over Power</i>, pp. 37-62 (PDF) John Herman Randall, “The Importance of Being Unprincipled,” pp. 1-9 (PDF) Marilynne Robinson, “Family” from <i>The Death of Adam</i>, pp. 87-108 (PDF) Sheldon Wolin, “Contract and Birthright” from <i>The Presence of the Past</i>, pp. 137-151 (PDF) Additional short readings will be added via Moodle and students notified at that time</p> <p>¹ Readings below this line are assigned to all participants in the course while those above will be read only by students taking the course for academic credit.</p>
Jan 17	<p>*** DUE: SEVEN-PAGE, double-spaced paper by noon; submit via email to bburroughs@cdsp.edu</p>
Jan 18	<p>Sunday 3:00–7:30 PM</p> <p><u>Review:</u> Thucydides, “Melian Dialogue,” pp. 1-6 (PDF) (read twice)</p>
Jan 19	<p>Monday 10:00 AM–5:30 PM (Group Training) & 6:30–7:30 PM (Theological Reflection)</p> <p><u>Review:</u> Thucydides, “Melian Dialogue,” pp. 1-6 (PDF) (read again) David Nyberg, “The Very Idea of Power” from <i>Power over Power</i>, pp. 37-62 (PDF)</p>
Jan 20	<p>Tuesday 10:00 AM–5:30 PM (Group Training) & 6:30–7:30 PM (Theological Reflection)</p> <p><u>Review:</u> John Herman Randall, “The Importance of Being Unprincipled,” pp. 1-9 (PDF)</p>
Jan 21	<p>Wednesday 10:00 AM–8:00 PM (Group Training, Including a Public Action)</p> <p><u>Review:</u> Marilynne Robinson, “Family” from <i>The Death of Adam</i>, pp. 87-108 (PDF) Additional Reading TBD</p>

Jan 22	Thursday 10:00 AM–5:30 PM (Group Training) & 6:30–7:30 PM (Theological Reflection) <i>Review:</i> Sheldon Wolin, “Contract and Birthright,” pp. 137-151 (PDF)
Jan 23	Friday 10:00 AM–3:00 PM (Group Training) <i>Review:</i> Reading TBD
Feb 18	*** DUE: TEN-PAGE , double-spaced paper by noon; submit via email to bburroughs@cdsp.edu

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

PRE-COURSE PAPER

Prior to **noon on Saturday, January 17, 2015**, students are to submit a seven-page, double-spaced paper in response to the following prompt.

- Drawing substantively and consistently upon the assigned readings, write a theological appreciation of the goals and tactics of broad-based community organizing. The bulk of this paper, roughly 6 pages, should be devoted to articulating the goals and tactics of such organizing (a task in which Stout and Gecan will prove vital) and, most importantly, to showing where they intersect with key elements of Christian scriptures and traditions. In other words, what themes, doctrines, stories, or examples of the faith might prompt Christians to get involved in broad-based community organizing? In the final page or so, students might note what they see as the divergences or tensions between the Christian faith and broad-based community organizing. What, if any, are the key differences between them? Are there possible ways of bridging those divides?

Students should be sure to *substantiate their claims* by appropriately quoting from and citing the assigned readings. Citations should be in Turabian format using footnotes. A citation guide can be found at: <http://library.duke.edu/divinity/help/citation.html>.

This paper should be **submitted in .doc or .docx format to bburroughs@cdsp.edu**. If you have questions about the essay, please do not hesitate to email the instructor.

FINAL PAPER

No later than **noon on February 18**, students are to submit a **12-page**, double-spaced paper that responds to the following prompt. Students may select their own essay topic in consultation with the instructor or respond to following prompt.

- After the class ends, please conduct 6 one-on-one relational meetings with people who are part of a ministry context in which you are active. In identifying potential interviewees, you should focus upon those in whom you see potential leadership qualities or who have interests that might be furthered by joining in an organizing effort. Remember, the purpose of these meetings is to be curious, and to enter into a deeper understanding of what is most important to the person with whom you are meeting—the self-interests, motivations, and inner commitments that make them who they are. (*continued on next page*)

The paper should begin with a brief description of the persons with whom you met (using pseudonyms) and why you chose them. Particularly in identifying the reasons for selecting each person, the paper should be sure to make reference to assigned readings. From there it should describe the way the meetings went, the focus and questions you brought, and what you learned—particularly things that were surprising or that broke open stereotypes about particular people. This section of the paper should comprise roughly 5 pages.

The second major section of the paper should reflect upon these meetings using materials, concepts, and insights from the course. In doing so, it should focus upon a particular question. To take an example, it might consider the concept of self-interest, including how it is talked about in the literature and how that lines up with your interviewees' understandings. Or, it might explore questions about the nature of leadership or power or other relevant topics. This section should be approximately 5 pages.

In the final two pages, consider what these interviews and reflections suggest for future possibilities in this context. For instance, what issues might be likely to gain traction? Or what methods would be most likely to get people involved in broad-based organizing? How might the interests that people identify be interpreted and articulated within a Christian theological idiom?

The paper should **substantively engage no fewer than five (5) of the assigned readings**. They should also *substantiate their claims* by appropriately quoting from and citing the assigned readings. Citations should be in Turabian format using footnotes. A citation guide can be found at: <http://library.duke.edu/divinity/help/citation.html>.

Please **submit the paper in .doc or .docx format to bburroughs@cdsp.edu** by the due date. If you have questions about the essay, please do not hesitate to email the instructor.