

## **ST 3438 Ethics II: Worship and Ethics: Political Ethics**

(Course also can count as WO 4560 Worship and Ethics: Political Worship)

### **Spring Semester 2008: Second Six Weeks**

Luther Seminary

NW 230

Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:40-12:00

### **Instructor**

Dr. Christian Scharen

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Office Hours: Sign-ups on my door for Tuesday afternoon, 3-5 and Thursday noon, 12-1:30

### **Course Description**

“Beginning with historical and contemporary understandings of the political meaning of the church in liberal democratic societies, the course explores the political nature of the church with worship as the central practice of the 'fellow citizens with the saints' (Eph. 2:19).”

### **Objectives**

For each student and for the class as a whole:

1. To consider together the nature and character of Christian citizenship, seen both in relation to our loyalty to God in Christ through the rule of the Spirit, and in relation to our loyalty to a particular nation-state;
2. To more deeply understand such citizenship in relation to the nature of contemporary liberal democratic societies, especially considering the United States as a case, and attending both to its political and underlying theological claims;
3. To gain facility with contemporary Protestant and Catholic theologians working at the intersection of worship and ethics in relation to the concrete topic of citizenship/politics;
4. To consider strategic means to lead congregations in a way of life that seriously engages their place as ‘citizens with the saints’ in relation to the calling of citizenship in and for the sake of the national society.

### **Structure**

Students will engage in lively and close engagement with texts and case studies, putting these in relation to projects considering life and mission in actual congregations. Participation is highly valuable and thus constitutes its own grade.

### **Evaluation/Grading and Requirements**

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|--------------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|
| 1) Pledge of Allegiance Paper        | 10% | Due 3rd <sup>nd</sup> class |
| 2) 5 Participation/Response Journals | 50% | Due each Thursday           |
| 3) Final Paper                       | 40% | Due finals week             |

The course can be taken for a letter grade (A,B,C, etc.) or on a Pass/Marginal/Fail basis.

### **Notes on Assignments**

- 1) In brief form, note the diversity and complexity of your experiences of national citizenship up to today. Consider early formation, family life, public celebrations, military

service, citizenship classes, scouts, political action, public service or employment, or any other examples that have shaped your sense of national citizenship. Less than 5 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font.

2) After the first session and each subsequent week, students should write a one-page response to their learning and reflection in the class. This ought to consist of **questions**, of **wondering at the edge of your learning**, not merely a report on the readings or class discussion. These papers will serve as the basis for small-group discussion on Thursdays and must be completed, printed out, and brought to class.

3) Final paper, 15 pages double spaced and 12 point font, on topic negotiated with the professor by May 7<sup>th</sup>. Paper must engage in thinking through the materials of the course in relation to strategic means to lead congregations in a way of life that seriously engages their place as 'citizens with the saints' in relation to the calling of citizenship in and for the sake of the national society.

### **Required Textbooks**

Dan Erlander, *Manna and Mercy* (1992)

Steven M. Tipton, *Public Pulpits: Methodists and Mainline Churches in the Moral Argument of Public Life* (Chicago: 2007)

William Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics and the Body of Christ* (Blackwell 1998)

Bernd Wannewetsch, *Political Worship: Ethics for Christian Citizens* (Oxford 2004) (On Reserve and eReserve only)

Sam Wells, *God's Companions: Reshaping Christian Ethics* (Blackwell 2006)

### **Recommended Textbooks**

Philippe Sands, *Torture Team: Rumsfeld's Memo and the Betrayal of American Values* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)

Various additional readings distributed in class or available online

## Week One

### Tuesday, March 31

Presentation

Torture and Moral Values: “We felt righteous in doing it”

- Frontline: *The Question of Torture* (Aired on PBS in 2005)

### Thursday, April 2—Response journal due

Discussion

Modes of Christian Moral Thought

Assigned Readings

- Erlander, *Manna and Mercy*, chapters 1-2
- Gushee, “5 Reasons Torture is Always Wrong,” *Christianity Today* 2006 (pdf)
- Rejali, “5 Myths About Torture and Truth,” *Washington Post* 2007 (pdf)

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## Week Two

### Tuesday, April 7--(Pledge of allegiance paper due)

Presentation

Public Faith in an Ambiguous Polity

Assigned Readings

- Tipton, *Public Pulpits*, Preface, 1, 2,

### Thursday, April 9 (off for Easter break)

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## Week Three

### Tuesday, April 14 (off for Easter break)

### Thursday, April 16—Response journal due

Discussion

Ecclesiology in Action

Assigned Readings

- Tipton, *Public Pulpits*, 7, 11, and appendix

## Week Four

### Tuesday, April 21

Presentation

Political Worship: A Contemporary Catholic Proposal

Assigned Readings

- Erlander, *Manna and Mercy*, chapters 7-8
- Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, Introduction, 1-4
- Cavanaugh, "Liturgy as Politics: An Interview with William Cavanaugh" *Christian Century* December 2005 (pdf)

### Thursday, April 23—Response journal due

Discussion

Political Worship: A Contemporary Catholic Proposal

Assigned Readings

- Erlander, *Manna and Mercy*, finish
- Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 5-6
- Aquinas, *Treatise on the Virtues*, selections, (handout)

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## Week Five

### Tuesday, April 28

Presentation

Political Worship: A Contemporary Protestant Proposal

Assigned Readings

- Wannenwetsch, "Liturgy," *Blackwell Companion for Political Theology* (pdf)
- Wannenwetsch, *Political Worship*, Introduction (on Reserve at the Library)

### Thursday, April 30—Response journal due

Discussion

Political Worship: A Contemporary Protestant Proposal

Assigned Readings

- Wannenwetsch, *Political Worship*, chapters 1, 2, 4, 6, and more if you can
- Luther, "Concerning the Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ and the Brotherhoods," *Luther's Works* 35 (selections, handout)

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## Week Six

### Tuesday, May 7—Final paper topic must be finalized with Professor

Presentation

Political Worship: In Local Congregational Life

Assigned Readings

- Erlander, *Manna and Mercy*, finish
- Wells, *God's Companions*, Preface, Introduction, Part One

**Thursday, May 9**—Response journal due

Discussion

Political Worship: In Local Congregational Life

Assigned Readings

- Wells, *God's Companions*, Part Two

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## **Week Seven**

**Tuesday, May 12**

Discussion

Political Worship: In Local Congregational Life

Assigned Readings

- Wells, *God's Companions*, Part Three

**Thursday, May 14**

Evaluation and wrap-up

Final Paper Due