

University of Dubuque Theological Seminary
HT567 Christianity and the Common Good
3 credits | Letter or Pass/Fail | Fall 2020 |

Instructor: Rev Dr. Christopher James

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Course Description

Recent political events and national issues have brought perennial questions about the role of church in society back to the forefront of Christian reflection and debate. Drawing insights from biblical and historical approaches, this class will focus on the late modern American context with particular interest in the fraying and reweaving of the social fabric. In a time when the West is increasingly 'post-Christian' and with the U.S. presidential election in full swing, students will learn from ecumenical voices in contemporary political theology. Exploring questions at the intersections of ecclesiology (what is the church?), eschatology (where is God leading history?), and missiology (how is the church to join in God's mission?), this class will approach the contemporary moment enriched by grounded theological reflection and with an clear interest in gaining practical insights for leading among God's people in a post-Christian, pluralist democratic republic. This course will count as an elective in Mission.

Course Learning Outcomes

As a result of taking this course, successful students will be able to:

- Articulate multiple ecumenical approaches to Christian political theology
- Identify features of the late modern American context
- Demonstrate energy to engage in Christian mission for the common good
- Facilitate group reflection on Christian engagement in the public sphere

Program Learning Outcomes

MDIV

- Lead and nurture congregations to promote peace and justice in the public arena and encourage the witness and service of the church in mission to the world
- Engage contemporary theological and ethical issues with insight and humility
- Evangelize the world with faithfulness and contextual sensitivity

MAMD

- Articulate and reflect critically and constructively on the biblical and theological foundations of God's mission to the world
- Develop, implement, and assess strategies for missional living in a specific cultural context
- Develop skills and capacities for faithful and competent Christian witness

MACL

- Identify and interpret key themes from the Christian scriptures
- Articulate key theological affirmations of the church's theological tradition.
- Develop a missional strategy with attention to a particular cultural context.

Texts

The Vanishing Neighbor, Dunkelmann

Political Theology: A Guide for the Perplexed, Phillips

Practices for the Refounding of God's People, Roxburgh and Robinson