PUBLIC THEOLOGY 1:
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CRISES

賴信道教授 (Prof. Dr. Stephen Lakkis)

Course Description:
Post-Enlightenment thinkers had long predicted the disappearance of faith and religion from developed societies. But this disappearance never occurred. Instead, we have seen the reawakening of religion in the public sphere, and the resurgence of religious views across all areas of public life. While several of these religious resurgences have been strongly negative (ranging from religiously infused prejudice and racism through to terrorism), there has also been a reawakening regarding the positive power of faith to shape societies and to concretely enhance life.

Public theology concentrates on this connection between faith and our shared social and cultural systems. And it aims to investigate both aspects of this phenomenon: the way that faith can become toxic and be used to destroy life, and the way that it can be implemented positively to significantly enhance life for all.

The use of religious resources for the active enhancement of life can be seen in many areas. In this course, specific attention will be given to political and economic crises. This course will (1) introduce students to the core principles and methodology of an engaged public theology; examine concrete case studies of theology in the public sphere during (2) times of political and (3) economic crises. These concrete case studies will give students an appreciation of the power of theology to harm but also enhance life.

At the end of this course, students will:
1. have a good working knowledge of the critical discourse between theology and politics and economics;
2. understand and develop theological perspectives on current political and economic challenges;
3. be able to express coherently their own views on the interrelation between theology and the public sphere;
4. understand the way in which church organizations can be involved in constructive social critique;
5. be able to use historical examples to develop their own models for modern social reconstruction;
6. have basic firsthand experience of performing theology in the public sphere;
7. know how to develop their own concrete projects that work toward the enhancement of life in their own contexts.

Assessment:
2 Newspaper/Blog/Facebook posts (20%)
1 Book Review (40%)
1 Research Paper (40%)

Core Texts:

Additional Texts for Individual Topics:


Course Outline:
Note: The content of the course may be adjusted during semester to meet student needs.

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<td><strong>Part I: Introduction and Guiding Principles</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. Doing Theology in the Open: Introduction and Methodology</td>
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<td>2. Jürgen Moltmann: Eschatology and Social Reform</td>
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<td><strong>Part II: Theology in Times of Political Crisis</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. Theo-Politics: Totalitarianism, Sovereignty, and the Deification of Culture and the State (Hegel, Barth, and Schmitt)</td>
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<td>2. Terrorism and Religious Violence: Principles and History</td>
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<td>3. The Barmen Confession</td>
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<td>6. The Confession of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan</td>
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<td>7. Global Christianity and International Peace Structures</td>
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<td><strong>Practical Training: Enhancing Life Programmes</strong>&lt;br&gt;How to prepare a practical research project</td>
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<td><strong>Part III: Theology in Times of Economic Crisis</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. Poverty and Liberation Theology</td>
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<td>2. Thomas Chalmers: Theology, Economy, and the “Unworthy Poor” in the UK</td>
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