

Heath W. Carter
Valparaiso University
Fall 2015

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT AND PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

Valparaiso University is a comprehensive, independent Lutheran university, comprised of five colleges – Arts & Sciences, Business, Engineering, Nursing & Health Professions, and Christ College (our honors college) – as well as a law school and a graduate school. Students come from across the nation and increasingly the world, though the largest number hail from Indiana, Illinois (especially Chicago and its suburbs), and the surrounding region. They come to Valpo for a variety of reasons: some are drawn by the strength of our professional programs, including our nationally-recognized meteorology and engineering faculties; others are attracted to the university's reputation for excellent undergraduate teaching, as facilitated by small class sizes and close mentoring relationships with faculty; and still others are attracted to the university's church-related mission and identity.

The Christopher Center for Library and Information Resources and the Chapel of the Resurrection stand together at the center of campus, representing spatially the University's commitment to standing at the intersection, as Tertullian once put it, of Athens and Jerusalem. Valpo remains seriously rooted in its Lutheran identity but is also deeply committed to the freewheeling exchange of ideas. The creative tension between its particularity and its openness to the whole world is captured in this description of its mission: "Valparaiso University will be a distinguished Lutheran community of learning constituted by people of many and various beliefs and backgrounds in dialogue with one another in common pursuit of truth." Note the language of "constituted by..." and also "common pursuit of truth," as opposed to, say, "pursuit of common truth"; these are recent reworkings and represent an attempt to reflect/advance the University's evolving sense of its own identity.

I am appointed in the history department, an academic unit within the College of Arts & Sciences, and teach all of our post-Civil War American history courses. As the resident modern Americanist, I am well poised to design classes that will draw non-majors into our orbit and I am intentional about doing so, offering for example History of Chicago and Hip Hop America. At the same time, every year I usually pitch at least one of my courses at the highest academic level and cross-list it with Christ College.

Christ College is home to a rigorous, interdisciplinary curriculum and, in its own words, "offers the benefits of a highly-selective liberal arts college to students at Valparaiso University." All of its courses are small and oriented around intensive discussion of primary texts. Every year the top 10% of the entering class is invited to apply to the honors college. Its prestige and mission to cultivate "intellectual, moral, and spiritual virtues" mean that it attracts a disproportionate number of legacy and Lutheran students.

I taught Social Gospel in American Life for the first time in the Spring of 2015 and it was oversubscribed even before seniors had finished registering. The course's emphasis on the intersection of Christian faith and social justice has great appeal to Valpo students or at least to a specific subset of the same. The vast majority of the students in that inaugural run were Lutheran, most coming from a Missouri Synod background, and brought a profound interest in the theological

content of the readings. I was intentional about persistently injecting historical context and questions into our conversations, but was also happy to indulge the students' theological interests.

Our time together revolved mostly around discussion of primary texts. In advance of each session I required them to submit a written response to the readings. These tended to be very high-level and often underscored the fact that students were deeply personally engaged with the content of the readings; for many of them, it was not just a grade at stake but also the shape of their own theological outlook. Early in the course, for example, we read a short essay by Richard Ely on the contrast between individual and social salvation. At the beginning of that discussion we situated Ely in historical context but the students were most intent upon talking about whether such a thing as social salvation exists. Similarly, when we got to Dorothy Day, they were happy to hear about her involvement in social movements but were most interested in discussing her incarnational approach to social reform and her insistence upon the practice of voluntary poverty.

I require each student to write a research paper and this assignment does force them to dive deeply into historical and historiographical readings. By the time they are seniors, Christ College students have written any number of such papers and I am consistently impressed by how they excel at the task.

In some institutional contexts the blurring of the lines between history, theology, and ethics that happens in this course would not be advisable or perhaps even appropriate. But at Valpo – and especially in Christ College – it is not only allowed but also strongly encouraged. Many of the students in the first run of this course went on to reflect that it was among the most defining intellectual experiences of their Valparaiso University careers.

Social Gospel in American Life
HIST-492-X/CC-300-FX
Valparaiso University

Instructor	Course
Professor Heath W. Carter Office: Arts & Sciences, Room 367 Phone: 219-548-7728 E-mail: heath.carter@valpo.edu Office Hours: TR 9-12pm	Social Gospel in American Life HIST-492-X/CC-300/THEO-329-CX TR 3-4:15pm Arts & Sciences, Room 236

Course Description

Historians have often construed the Social Gospel as an elite theological movement within Liberal Protestantism – one which was driven by white, male ministers and seminary professors and which flourished primarily in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

In this course we will explore the viability of an alternative narrative, which posits a much wider and longer Social Gospel tradition in American life. Over the course of the last two centuries countless American Christians have sought to apply the gospel to the most pressing problems of their day. Believing that sin infects not only persons but also systems and structures, they have set out to save not just individual souls but also the whole of society. In this class students will be introduced to a diverse array of social gospelers – women and men, rich and poor, Catholics and Protestants, African Americans, Latinos, and more – who participated in social struggles ranging from abolitionism to the labor movement, from battles for Civil Rights to campaigns to revive blighted urban neighborhoods. As we move chronologically from the early-nineteenth century to the present, we will spend most of our time immersed in primary documents, but we will also attend throughout to historical contexts, with an eye especially toward understanding the larger impact that social gospelers have had on the modern United States.

Student Learning Objectives (SLO) for History Majors:

1. Students will develop excellent writing and speaking skills exemplified by the ability to use primary and secondary sources, distinguish biases, and construct historical arguments.
2. Students will demonstrate methods of historical analysis, historical veracity, and an understanding of historiography.
3. Students will develop global perspectives or, in classes in US history, develop their appreciation of cultural diversity.
4. Students will historically contextualize faith systems and issues of social justice.

This course will address all four of these objectives.

Course Texts

In addition to a number of shorter selections, available via Blackboard, the following books are required:

Heath W. Carter, *Union Made: Working People and the Rise of Social Christianity in Chicago*

Shane Claiborne and Chris Haw, *Jesus for President: Politics for Ordinary Radicals*

Dorothy Day, *Loaves and Fishes: The Inspiring Story of the Catholic Worker Movement*

Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite & Mary Potter Engel, eds., *Lift Every Voice: Constructing Christian Theologies from the Underside*

Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis in the 21st Century* (ed. Paul Rauschenbush)

Charles Monroe Sheldon, *In His Steps*

Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*

Accessibility of the Instructor

In addition to my set office hours (see the header above), I have an “open door” policy. If you see me in my office, even if the door is closed, you should feel free to knock. If you want to be sure to catch me outside of my posted hours, send me an e-mail in advance regarding the desired time of your appointment. If it would be more convenient for either you or I, we can also meet in a digital “office” – ie. through the video chat function available through the university Gmail.

One further note on my accessibility via e-mail: during the work week (ie. Mon-Fri) I am committed to responding to all student e-mails within 24 hours (I will often respond much faster). On weekends and over holidays I will check e-mail less frequently and my response time may therefore be longer. The bottom line here is to be as timely as possible in communicating your needs and questions. If you wait until 2am on the day of class to e-mail me, you may or may not receive a response before our session that day.

Grading

Your grade will be determined in accordance with the following percentages:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Point Value (and % of Final Grade)</u>
Attendance and Participation	Throughout	60 pts (15%)
Reading Responses	Throughout	120 pts (30%)
Research Paper	Jan 29 th	220 pts (55%)

Attendance and Participation (15%)

One of our main goals in this class is to forge a lively intellectual community. Your timely attendance and engaged participation will contribute mightily to this undertaking. If you happen to

be absent, all work due that day must still be turned in by the start of class. *Work turned in after 3:00pm on the day it is due will be considered late and will be docked 10%; for every additional day it is late, an additional 10% will be docked (in cases where extenuating circumstances call for a different arrangement, the student must arrange a conference with me to discuss the matter in advance).*

Finally, two notes on technology in the classroom:

1) Cellphones should be turned off during class. Under no circumstances should students be texting, surfing the web, etc, on their phone. Students who violate this policy will be asked to leave class early that day and will have their participation grade docked accordingly.

2) Laptops should be stowed during class, unless I give explicit permission for them to be used in a given session.

Reading Responses (30%)

Each student will prepare brief written responses to our readings. These should be (at least) one page in length and must be posted to Blackboard no later than 8am on the day of class. There is no “formula” for these responses, but your classmates and I will be especially interested in knowing what aspect of the text you’d like to discuss in class and why. You might reflect on one or more of these questions in order to get the writing juices flowing: Was there a particular point or passage you found particularly helpful/troubling/provocative/etc? Was there a particular question or problem that emerged out of your reading of the text? How do you see this text relating to the other readings and/or our class discussion? You might also choose to engage with something a classmate has said in their post. There is no “right” or “wrong” response to the reading but if it is clear to me that you did not in fact read the text, you will not receive credit (conversely, so long as your response reflects **serious engagement** with the text, you will receive full credit). Each response is worth 5 points and you will need to complete a total of 24 for the semester.

Research Paper (55%)

Each student will write a 12-15 page research paper on a question of her/his own choosing. This assignment will unfold in a series of steps. For more details, see below.

Academic Honesty Policy

Academic honesty is a very serious issue. It is up to each and every one of you to implement your honor code at Valparaiso University, which reads: "I have neither given or received nor have I tolerated others' use of unauthorized aid." "Unauthorized aid" which violates the honor code includes, but is not limited to: 1) making use of outside materials or others' tests during test-taking time, 2) copying from others' writings (this includes the internet!) in your papers (plagiarism). If you are uncertain about the proper methods for citation of sources, it is your responsibility to consult with the instructor. You'll also find helpful resources and explanations at http://www-ret.valpo.edu/student/honor/honor_code.html and <http://www-ret.valpo.edu/student/honor/tips.html>. All “unauthorized aid” that comes to my attention will be viewed as a violation of the honor code and will be treated accordingly.

Statement of Welcome and Inclusion

Valparaiso University aspires to be a welcoming community, one built on participation, mutual respect, freedom, faith, competency, positive regard, and inclusion. We see difference as a strength and reason for celebration. As such, we do not tolerate language or behavior that demeans members of our classrooms based on age, ethnicity, race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, biological sex, disabilities, socio-economic status, and national origin. Instead we commit to respect and care for one another, conducting our classroom as “a learning community where students are encouraged to question, to engage, to challenge, to explore, and ultimately, to embark on a rewarding personal and professional journey. This can be done only in an environment where diversity is honored and respected. Diversity of thought. Diversity of background. Diversity of faith” (President Mark Heckler).

Class Cancellations

Notifications of class cancellations will be done through Blackboard with as much advanced notice as possible. It will be both posted on Blackboard and sent to your Valpo e-mail address. If you don’t check your Valpo e-mail account regularly or have it set-up to be forwarded to your preferred e-mail account, you may not get the message. Please check Blackboard and your Valpo e-mail or e-mail it forwards to before coming to class.

Students with Disabilities

Please contact Dr. Sherry DeMik, Director of Disability Support Services, at 5456, if you believe you have a disability that might require a reasonable accommodation in order for you to perform as expected in this class. Dr. DeMik will work with you and me directly to make sure you receive any reasonable accommodation needed as the result of a disability.

Schedule of Meetings

[please note: this schedule is subject to change; if you miss class, be sure to check with me and/or another student to confirm that you are up to speed on any amendments to the plan set out here.]

Day	Date	Unit	Texts & Assignments to Prepare before Class
TUES	JAN 12	Introductions	- Syllabus - Richard Ely, “Social Aspects of Christianity,” 1-18, 147-161 (BB)
THUR	JAN 14	Precedents	- John Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity” (BB) - Thomas Bacon, “Sermon to Maryland Slaves” (BB)
TUES	JAN 19	Precedents	- Frederick Douglass, “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave” (Appendix) (BB) - Mary Hershberger, “Mobilizing Women, Anticipating Abolition” (BB)
THUR	JAN	Social Gospels	- <i>Union Made</i> , pp. 1-48

	21	Rising	
TUES	JAN 26	Social Gospels Rising	- <i>Union Made</i> , pp. 49-128
THUR	JAN 28	Social Gospels Rising	- <i>Union Made</i> , pp. 129-182 - Research Question Due
TUES	FEB 2	Social Gospels Rising	- <i>In His Steps</i> , pp. 1-60
THUR	FEB 4	Social Gospels Rising	- <i>In His Steps</i> , pp. 61-122
TUES	FEB 9	Social Gospels Rising	- <i>In His Steps</i> , pp. 123-180 -
THUR	FEB 11	Social Gospels Rising	- <i>In His Steps</i> , pp. 181-233
TUES	FEB 16	Social Gospels Rising	- <i>Christianity and the Social Crisis</i> , pp. xi-37
THUR	FEB 18	Social Gospels Rising	- <i>Christianity and the Social Crisis</i> , pp. 39-79 - Bibliography Due
TUES	FEB 23	Social Gospels Rising	- <i>Christianity and the Social Crisis</i> , pp. 81-121
THUR	FEB 25	Social Gospels Rising	- <i>Christianity and the Social Crisis</i> , pp. 123-176
TUES	MAR 1	No Class: Enjoy Spring Break!!	
THUR	MAR 3		
TUES	MAR 8		
THUR	MAR 10		
TUES	MAR 15	Social Gospels Rising	- <i>Christianity and the Social Crisis</i> , pp. 177-280 -
THUR	MAR 17	Social Gospels Rising	- <i>Christianity and the Social Crisis</i> , pp. 281-350 - Thesis Paragraph Due
TUES	MAR 22	Social Gospels On the Move	- <i>Loaves and Fishes</i> , pp. ix-68
THUR	MAR 24	Social Gospels On the Move	- <i>Loaves and Fishes</i> , pp. 71-105
TUES	MAR 29	Social Gospels On the Move	- <i>Loaves and Fishes</i> , pp. 106-165
TUES	MAR 20	Social Gospels On the Move	- Film Showing at 8pm: Fight in the Fields
THUR	MAR 31	Social Gospels On the Move	- <i>Loaves and Fishes</i> , pp. 166-221
TUES	APR 5	Social Gospels On the Move	- <i>Jesus and the Disinherited</i> , pp. 1-57

THUR	APR 7	Social Gospels On the Move	- <i>Jesus and the Disinherited</i> , pp. 58-112
TUES	APR 12	Social Gospels On the Move	- MLK speeches: “Beyond Vietnam” and “All Labor has Dignity” - Outline Due
THUR	APR 14	Social Gospels On the Margins	- <i>Lift Every Voice</i> , pp. 30-39, 53-81
TUES	APR 19	Social Gospels On the Margins	- <i>Lift Every Voice</i> , pp. 97-142
THUR	APR 21	Social Gospels On the Margins	- <i>Lift Every Voice</i> , pp. 237-250, 267-276, 289-302
TUES	APR 26	Social Gospels On the Margins	- <i>Jesus for President</i> , pp. 15-138
THUR	APR 28	Social Gospels On the Margins	- <i>Jesus for President</i> , pp. 139-224
TUES	MAY 3	Social Gospels On the Margins	- <i>Jesus for President</i> , pp. 225-336
TUES	MAY 10	n/a	- Research Paper Due

RESEARCH PAPER

Each student in this course will write a 12-15 page research paper that draws primarily (though not exclusively) upon primary sources. This assignment will unfold in 5 steps:

- 1) **Select a research question.** Students will submit a research question, along with a brief, one-paragraph description of how they plan to explore it, on **Thursday, January 29th**. If your initial question is approved, then you have successfully completed this step; if it is not, then you will be required to schedule a meeting with me. In order to receive credit, your research question must be approved by Tuesday, February 10th. 15 points.
- 2) **Dive into the sources.** Depending on your topic, you might look for sources in the Christopher Center’s stacks and electronic databases, or somewhere else altogether. The key here is not to collect a random assortment of sources on a particular topic but rather to develop a body of sources that will speak to one another and enable you to develop an interesting essay. Be in touch with me and/or Professor Mark Robison (our history department liaison) for assistance here. You will need to cite **a minimum of ten primary documents** and **three secondary sources** in the final paper, and will turn in a bibliography (formatted in accordance with Chicago style) on **Thursday, February 19th**. 25 points.
- 3) **Construct a thesis paragraph.** As you find and explore your sources, you should begin to develop an answer to your research question. On **Thursday, March 19th**, each student will turn in a paragraph that clearly frames and states their argument. 20 points.

- 4) **Develop your argument.** On **Tuesday, April 14th**, each student will turn in a detailed, 4-page outline. This should include your research question and revised thesis paragraph. It should also include topic sentences for every paragraph in the paper; should list the evidence you plan to use to develop that point in the paragraph (ie. your primary sources); and should explain how that particular source helps you to make your point. 60 points.
- 5) **Craft your paper.** Successful papers will include the following components:
 - a. *Attention-grabbing introduction.* Conventionally, this would be some kind of historical anecdote that both grabs the reader's attention and that conveys or illustrates your argument. (roughly 2 pages)
 - b. *Thesis paragraph.* Your revised thesis paragraph should appear at the end of your introduction and should help transition the reader to the body of your paper. (roughly 1 pages)
 - c. *Historical Exposition.* Here is where you will showcase the original research that you've done. While you might cite the secondary literature occasionally in this section, you should be focused on exposition of your primary sources (remember: a minimum of 10 primary and 3 secondary). In particular, you should use them to make your argumentative case. (roughly 8-11 pages)
 - d. *Conclusion.* You will want to restate your argument here, hopefully in a snappy, thought-provoking way. Remember, this is the last impression the reader will have of your research. (roughly 1 page)

Papers should be double-spaced with 1" inch margins all the way around the page. They should be typed in Times New Roman 12pt font and should include both footnotes and a bibliography, formatted in accordance with Chicago style. Papers need not have a title page but they should have a creative title that suggests your topic and (ideally) your thesis. If you wish to receive feedback on a rough draft (or part of one), you should submit it to me no later than Friday, April 25th (this is not required). Final drafts are due by 5:30pm on **Friday, May 8th**. 100 points.

A few final notes: 1) A **hard copy** of each component of this assignment must be turned in at the beginning of class on the designated date. If you will be absent that day, it is your responsibility to turn in a hard copy of the material to the professor's box prior to the start of class. 2) I am happy to consult with you at every step along the way. Do not hesitate to e-mail questions or to make an appointment to meet with me. I am eager to help! 3) Have fun!! It is a privilege to spend one's days reading and writing, and I hope you take full advantage of this opportunity to pursue your own interests in the material.