

# Resilience, Vulnerability and Religious and Theological Leadership

Sunday, July 10 – Thursday, July 14, 2016

## Instructors:

[Dr. Dean Bell](#), Provost, Vice President and Professor of History, Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership, [dbell@spertus.edu](mailto:dbell@spertus.edu). In addition to teaching at Spertus, Dr. Bell has taught at DePaul University, Northwestern University, Hebrew Theological College, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and the University of California, Berkeley. He has served as President, Vice-President, and Secretary-Treasurer of the Midwest Jewish Studies Association and has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Association for Jewish Studies. Dr. Bell is a widely published author in the areas of Medieval and Early Modern Jewish history. His current research focuses on early modern cultural responses to natural disaster and severe weather.

[Dr. Michael Hogue](#), Professor of Theology, Meadville Lombard Theological School, [mhogue@meadville.edu](mailto:mhogue@meadville.edu). In addition to teaching at Meadville Lombard, Dr. Hogue has taught at DePaul University, Loyola University, St. Xavier University, and the University of Chicago. He has served as President of the American Theological Society (Midwest) and is currently the Vice President of the Institute for American Religious and Philosophical Thought. He is the Editor of the *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* and is on the Editorial Boards of *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* and *Religion, Science and Culture*. He has published articles and books in the areas of religious and environmental ethics and American philosophy of religion. Dr. Hogue's current writing project develops a political theology of American immanence. He is currently a fellow with the [Enhancing Life Project](#).

## I. OVERVIEW

As a multifaith and international collaboration between Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership and Meadville Lombard Theological School, this course engages theories of vulnerability and resilience in relation to religious questions and offers students an opportunity to learn at the leading edge of the theory and practice of religious leadership for a changing world.

In a globalizing world of increasingly complex and entangled systems—human and nonhuman, planetary and political, individual and institutional—this course explores questions of the utmost relevance to faith formation, religious leadership, institutional development, and social justice. Its guiding premises are, first, that theories of resilience and vulnerability can equip religious leaders to more deeply understand the perils and possibilities in our world and, second, that interpreting our individual and institutional context through the lenses of vulnerability and resilience can empower us to live and lead more creatively in a complex world.

By using case studies, readings, lectures, discussions, and group work, the course will interpret resilience and vulnerability in theoretical and applied perspectives and in religious and theological terms. Examining these concepts at individual, institutional, and systemic levels, we will explore such topics as spiritual development and interpersonal relationships; organizational and institutional vulnerability and resilience; and the relevance of vulnerability and resilience as social justice categories. We will interpret

these and other topics through psychological, theological, historical, and cross-cultural lenses. The role of resilience and vulnerability in the enhancement of individuals, communities, and systems of life provides an integrative theme for the course.

[This course has been developed with the support of The Enhancing Life Project and a grant from the Wabash Center.]

## II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

\*Through readings and lectures, students will gain an introductory understanding of various theories of vulnerability and resilience and learn how to apply those theories at individual, institutional and systemic levels in ways that contribute to the enhancement of life and leadership.

\*Through case analyses and case development, students will learn how to correlate theories of vulnerability and resilience to practical questions of moral and spiritual development, organizational and institutional leadership, and systems theory and social analysis.

\*Through readings, lectures and discussion, students will become acquainted with historical, comparative, and theological interpretations of vulnerability and resilience and acquire facility thinking across disciplinary frameworks.

\*Through scriptural interpretation and partnered dialogue, students will deepen their knowledge of other religious traditions and become acquainted with religious resources for thinking through questions about resilience and vulnerability.

\*Through everyday classroom engagement, students will become more skilled multicultural / multifaith learners and leaders.

\*In all of these ways, students will discover the life-enhancing strengths of their own vulnerabilities in order more fully to realize their resilience as leaders.

## III. EXPECTATIONS

Learning Strategies: This class combines seminar and workshop styles of teaching and learning. In addition to readings assigned in advance, it will include lectures, discussion, paired and small group learning, case studies, and student presentations.

The instructors will host a conference call on June 8<sup>th</sup>, from 1-2pm Central Standard Time (Chicago time). The purpose of the call is to orient students and address logistics. We will provide the dial-in information and codes through our Populi course site closer to the date of the call. Understanding that some students may not be able to join us for the call, we will make a recording available afterwards.

On the first day of class, Sunday July 10<sup>th</sup>, we will meet from 2pm – 8pm. From Monday the July 11<sup>th</sup> through Thursday July 14<sup>th</sup> we will be in class the whole day, from 9am to 5pm. Students will be expected to contribute significantly to the content of the course and therefore *must complete all the*

*reading before arriving on campus for class on Sunday July 10.* Since students will have diverse religious, cultural, and national backgrounds, we will intentionally work together from the beginning of the course to cultivate multifaith and multicultural learning practices.

Learning Accommodations: We are committed to making reasonable accommodations to assist individuals with disabilities in reaching their academic potential. If a student has a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and requires accommodations, the student should contact the appropriate person at the institution through which they have registered for the course. Meadville Lombard students should contact the Academic Administrator, Derrick Dawson, [ddawson@meadville.edu](mailto:ddawson@meadville.edu), or call 312.212.0674 for information on appropriate policies and procedures. Please note that accommodations cannot be provided without an approved Accommodations form. Spertus students should contact the Assistant Dean, Beth Schenker, [bschenker@spertus.edu](mailto:bschenker@spertus.edu), or call 312.322.1743.

Learning Resources: This course includes study texts, which provide theoretical background for our work, and religious texts, which we will use in relation to cases and theories. Many of the readings will be provided as PDFs and made available to students online. Once the course opens, students will be given access to a course site through Populi. The daily schedule and themes for the courses, along with the PDFs, will be made available to students on this course site by May 30. In addition to the PDFs, students should purchase or borrow the following books: Donella H. Meadows, *Thinking in Systems: A Primer*, and Judith Rodin, *The Resilience Dividend*.

Learning Deliverables: In addition to completing the reading in advance and participating in the class sessions, students will be expected to submit *a case study of approximately 3000 words (10-12 double spaced pages) as their final assignment*. Although this final assignment does not need to be submitted until the end of the summer term on August 19, we will be working on the case assignment through the week of class. With this in mind, ***students are expected to bring a draft of the narrative section of the case with them to the first day of class, as well as some ideas about religious resources relevant to the case.*** Some time each day will be given to students to integrate their learning into their cases. This case study should include four main parts (each containing approximately 750 words).

Case Narrative: The first part should provide a narrative description of some challenge (e.g. stress, change, trauma) in religious and community leadership. Preferably this challenge would be one about which the student has some intimate knowledge. The case could focus on any of the levels we're working on in this class: individual/interpersonal, organizational/institutional, or systemic/structural. The case narrative should roundly describe a situation of stress, change, trauma, or some other kind of anticipated or actual change. For example, the case could explore how a particular community or organization is responding to environmental and social impacts related to climate change such as flooding, crop failure, or economic hardship caused by climate-induced natural disaster. The case could focus on how the community was unprepared for such an event and how it then adapted; it could focus on how a community is anticipating the likelihood of such an event and is planning to mitigate its most negative impacts; it could also focus on how the community is critically intervening within the larger political and economic systems that contribute to climate change.

Hypothesis and Theory: The second part should hypothesize how a theory of vulnerability and resilience explored in class relates to the case. After stating the hypothesis, the student should summarize the theory [and of course properly cite the scholarly literature (Chicago style; footnotes;

author/title/publisher/date)]. The choice of theory should be relevant to the level of focus in the case. For instance, if the case has an individual focus, the theory should probably also be about individual vulnerability and resilience. However, it may be that the student would like to hypothesize that there are important ways that a systemically focused theory is relevant to a case focused on individuals or communities, or vice versa. Regardless of whether the case and theoretical levels match, the student’s hypothesis should provide at least 2 reasons for exploring the selected theory in relation to the case summarized in the first section.

**Hypothesis and Religious Text:** The third part of the case parallels the second but summarizes a religious text, symbol or religious practice instead of a theory of resilience and vulnerability. The student should first articulate a hypothesis that provides at least 2 reasons for thinking the religious text, symbol or ritual practice is relevant to the case. Then the student should summarize the text, ritual, or practice. For example, let’s say the case has to do with the death or illness of the religious leader in a religious community. The student then might choose to summarize a religious text, ritual, or practice related to mortality and death. For instance, the student might summarize “The Charnel Ground Contemplations” in the Buddha’s discourse on “The Four Foundations of Mindfulness” [from the Satipaṭṭhana Sutta in the Majjhima Nikāya / The Middle-length Discourses]. After summarizing the text and practice, the student would then reflect on how the ritual contemplation of death has or could support resilient communal responses to death and illness. For instance, the student might argue that familiarizing community members with their own and others’ bodily vulnerability is conducive to the community’s anticipation of and adaptive response to illness or death in the community.

**Conclusion:** In the fourth and concluding section of the case, the student would summarize the efficacy of theory and the religious text in relation to the case, and then suggest how the theory and the religious text (or ritual or event) could be useful for future cases of a similar kind.

#### IV. Grading

Since this course includes both seminar and workshop components, and incorporates case study, significant student participation is expected each day. With that in mind, 40% of your grade will be based on your case study (described above). Participation will account for the remaining 60% of your grade.

Grade/Assignment	A	B	C
Case Study (40%)	Students complete the Case Study assignment by addressing all four dimensions. The case narrative is grammatically sound and well written. The theory and theological (textual) sections are creatively coordinated, the hypotheses are justified and the	Students complete the Case Study assignment by addressing all four dimensions. The case narrative is grammatically and syntactically sound. The theory and theological (textual) sections are well coordinated and the hypotheses are	Students complete the Case Study assignment by addressing all four dimensions. The case narrative is poorly written and includes numerous grammatical errors and syntactical infelicities. The theory and theological (textual) sections are insufficiently

	analyses are insightful. The concluding discussion critically connects the previous sections and articulates the broader relevance of the case.	justified. The concluding discussion clearly connects the previous sections and articulates the broader relevance of the case.	connected and the hypotheses are missing or insufficiently justified. The concluding discussion is superficial.
Participation (60%)	Students are well prepared for class discussion and have read and critically engaged all course materials. They contribute regularly to discussion with thought provoking points and analysis that contributes to others learning. They treat colleagues and instructors with respect and maintain focus on the breadth of questions at hand.	Students are prepared for class discussion and have read all course materials. They contribute regularly to discussion with relevant points and analysis. They treat colleagues and instructors with respect and maintain focus on the specific questions at hand.	Students do not provide evidence that all materials have been read closely. They contribute regularly to discussion. They treat colleagues and instructors with respect.

V. Schedule of Topics and Bibliography

A. Sunday, July 10: Introduction and Orientation

- a. William E. Rees, "Thinking 'Resilience'," *The Post Carbon Reader*, Richard Heinberg and Daniel Lerch, eds. (posted as PDF)
- b. Judith Rodin, *The Resilience Dividend*, 1-3
- c. David Chandler, "Resilience: Putting Life to Work," *Resilience: The Governance of Complexity* (posted as PDF)
- d. Peter A. Hall and Michèle Lamont, "Introduction: Social Resilience in the Neoliberal Era," *Social Resilience in the Neoliberal Era*, Hall and Lamont, eds. (posted as PDF)

B. Monday, July 11: Individual Vulnerability and Resilience

- a. Kenneth Pargament, "An Introduction to the Concept of Coping" and "The Flow of Coping," *The Psychology of Religion and Coping* (posted as PDF)
- b. Brene Brown and Eric Greitens (readings to be provided in class)
- c. Martha Fineman, "The Vulnerable Subject: Anchoring Equality in the Human Condition," *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* (2008) 20:1  
<http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1277&context=yjlf>
- d. Leanne S. Son Hing, "Stigmatization, Neoliberalism, and Resilience," *Social Resilience in the Neoliberal Era*, Peter A. Hall and Michèle Lamont, eds. (posted as PDF)

- C. Tuesday, July 12: Institutional and Organizational Vulnerability and Resilience
- a. Post Carbon Institute, "Six Foundations for Building Community Resilience" (posted as PDF)
  - b. Judith Rodin, *The Resilience Dividend*, Chs. 9-11
  - c. Peter Senge, selections from *The Fifth Discipline* (posted as PDF)
  - d. Warren G. Bennis and Robert J. Thomas, "Crucibles of Leadership," *From Geeks to Geezers* (posted as PDF)
- D. Wednesday, July 13: Systemic Vulnerability and Resilience
- a. Judith Butler, "Bodily Vulnerability, Coalitional Politics," *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (posted as PDF)
  - b. Judith Butler, "Violence, Mourning, and Politics," *Precarious Life* (posted as PDF)
  - c. William E. Connolly, "Steps Toward an Ecology of Late Capitalism," *The Fragility of Things*
  - d. Donella H. Meadows, *Thinking in Systems*
  - e. Thomas Homer-Dixon, "Tectonic Stresses" and "Catagenesis," *The Upside of Down* (posted as PDF)
  - f. Thomas Homer-Dixon, "Our Panarchic Future," <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/6008>
  - g. C. S. Holling, "Understanding the Complexity of Economic, Ecological, and Social Systems," *Ecosystems* (2001) 4: 390-405 (posted as PDF)
- E. Thursday, July 14: Critiquing and Assessing of Vulnerability and Resilience
- a. Judith Rodin, *The Resilience Dividend*, Ch. 12
  - b. Melinda Cooper and Jeremy Walker, "Genealogies of Resilience: From Systems Ecology to the Political Economy of Crisis Adaptation," *Security Dialogue* (2011) 14:2 (posted as PDF)
  - c. Wanda Vradi and Nicholas Michelsen, "Resilience and Solidarity: A Forum," <https://thedisorderofthings.com/2015/01/07/solidarity-and-resilience-a-forum/#more-9497>
  - d. Rhys Kelly and Ute Kelly, "Why We're Not Ditching Resilience Yet," <https://thedisorderofthings.com/2015/01/09/why-were-not-ditching-resilience-yet/>
  - e. Dozios, Langlois, and Blanchet-Cohen, *A Practitioner's Guide to Developmental Evaluation* (2010). Read introductory pages 10-15 and "How" chapter, pages 25-52. (posted as PDF)
  - f. Kien Lee, *Ensuring a Cross-Culturally Competent Evaluation* (2009). Report prepared for The Colorado Trust. Read Introduction p.4-6 and select one of the four case scenarios. (posted as PDF)
  - g. Recommended resource: University of Wisconsin, *Facilitator Toolkit: A Guide for Helping Groups Get Results* (2007), pp. 1 – 41. (posted as PDF). Especially pages 7-17.