

Spring 2025

3 Credit Hours

**(CL-620) Faith in Place:
Organizing for Environmental Justice**
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Instructors

Rev. Brian J. Sauder
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Instructors: The two main instructors, Rev. Sauder and Rev. Johnson facilitate the course. Numerous classes will also include a third Faith in Place staff member who will present a real-world case study about their work organizing for environmental justice. Over the course, students will engage with several Faith in Place staff members working in different departments to advance Faith in Place's mission.

Course Description

This course provides students access and learning through story telling by leaders at Faith in Place (www.faithinplace.org), a leading faith-based environmental justice nonprofit organization. This course will give students the practical tools and information to imagine, understand, and even create their own nonprofit organization. The teaching methodology connects students to the day-by-day experiences of leaders of Faith in Place seeking to organize measurable steps towards environmental justice. These stories are presented as case studies to be examined and debated. Case studies are the real lived experiences of organizers working on the ground to advance an environmental justice mission. Particular attention will be given to case studies that highlight the multi-cultural, multi-regional (rural, semi-urban, urban), interfaith, and antiracist commitments and experiences of Faith in Place. As a result, students will gain insight and practical tools for navigating the challenges and opportunities to create change through nonprofits.

Office Hours: By Appointment

Prerequisites: None

Course Format: Online Synchronous via Zoom

Office Hours: by Email Appointment

Class Time: Fridays, 9:00am-Noon with two 15-minute breaks, first class is January 31st.

Tech Requirements: To participate in the course, you will need to have consistent, reliable high-speed internet access and a reasonably up-to-date computer with webcam, microphone, and operation system.

Netiquette: Please join the Zoom classroom from a *private, quite location* to eliminate all potential background noise or visual disruptions. You will want to test your microphone and video settings beforehand to ensure that all technical aspects are working properly, you are set up

correctly, and you are fully prepared to participate in class. We will take two 15-minute breaks, but otherwise, you are expected to be as present and engaged as you would for a traditional residential course.

A few helpful tips on online presence:

- elevate your camera so that you are looking straight into rather than down upon the camera
- center yourself on the screen, neither too close nor too far
- set up a light source in front of instead of behind you
- mute your microphone when not speaking – and unmute to speak
- reduce distractions to you and others (e.g. ringing cell phone, barking dog, checking email/social media/browsing)
- when technical difficulties occur, be patient and gracious with others and yourself

Student Learning Outcomes

Students who graduate from this course will have:

1. Deeper knowledge of the intersection of environmental injustice and racism in communities.
2. Basic understanding of the limits and opportunities of nonprofits as a tool to create positive change in community.
3. Develop substance as a leader in bringing a practical lens of environmental justice and intersectionality to all aspects of ministry
4. Present and dialogue around practical and real-world case studies, growing in understanding the wisdom needed in making theory a reality.
5. Scan any nonprofit organization and quickly understand their vision, mission, theory of change, principles, outreach methodology, organizational structure, strategic plan, balance sheet, and budget.
6. Communicate and evaluate different approaches to effective work and management of antiracist nonprofit organizations committed to environmental justice.
7. Articulate real-world nonprofit case studies to help inform future ministry in environmental outreach, programs, and advocacy.
8. Imagine and create a strategic plan to launch a new nonprofit.

Required Texts and Web Pages (all assigned sections of texts will be provided electronically as PDF)

www.faithinplace.org

www.faithinplaceaction.org

www.guidestar.org

www.charitynavigator.org

Financial Statements of Faith in Place and Faith in Place Action Fund – to be provided

Written case studies provided by Faith in Place staff. Case studies will give real-world challenges faced by staff working in development, operations, communications, outreach, programs (food & land use, youth, advocacy, climate, and water), green team coaching, and more.

Example strategic plans from other national and local environmental organizations will be provided to analyze and discuss.

B. Holly Schadler. The Connection: Strategies for Creating and Operating 501c3s, 501c4s, and Political Organizations. The Alliance for Justice: 1998.

Cone, James H. “Whose Earth Is It, Anyway?” *Earth Habitat: Eco-Injustice and the Church’s Response*, ed. Dieter Hessel and Larry Rasmussen. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001.

Finney, Carolyn. Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors. The University of North Carolina Press, 2014.

Ganz, Marshall. People, Power, Change: Organizing for Democratic Renewal. Oxford University Press: 2024.

Green for All. Nonprofit Social Enterprise: Models and Funding. Greenforall.org. 2022.

Le, Vu. [10 things progressive funders must learn from conservative ones, or we are all screwed.](#) Nonprofitaf.com. 2018.

Thomas, Leah. The Intersectional Environmentalist. Souvenir Press Limited. 2022.

Lobbying IL: How you can make a difference in Public Policy; Christopher Z Mooney and Barbara van Dyke-Brown; University of IL at Springfield, Springfield, Illinois, 2007.

Course Requirements

A. Written Nonprofit Strategic Plan 35%

This course will provide the student with guidance to forming a strategic plan detailing their own imaginary nonprofit with the following components:

- Vision
- Mission
- Theory of Change
- Programs
- Target Audience
- Guiding Principals
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
- Long Term Goals

- Short Term Goals
- Strategies and Tactics: Funding, Board Formation, Personnel, Operation Structure; Programs, Advocacy, Outreach Development, Action Plans

Definitions and direction of each of these components will be provided in class as well as examples from previous students of this course.

B. 11 Weekly Reflection Papers Due Each Wednesday after Class by Noon CT (2 page double-spaced, Times Roman 12-point font, 1 inch margins) 25%**

1. ½ Page - summarize the content learned succinctly – when case studies are presented, focus on what specifically you learned from the case study.
2. ½ - 1 Page - reflect on the content learned and the application for your future ministry.
3. ½ - 1 Page - identify what questions remain for you.

**If students wish they can submit a 5 minute recording of them talking about their reflections in all three categories instead of submitting written responses.

**Each assignment submitted in full is worth 2.275 points. Unless there is an accommodation granted, if the deadline is missed, the score for that submission will be 0 and a deadline will note be extended.

C. Class Participation – 25%

Class participation involves the following expectations:

1. You attend every class period and are on time
2. You demonstrate familiarity with the assigned readings and topics for the day
3. You listen carefully to the instructors, staff, and your classmates
4. You are an active participant in the class discussions
5. You lead or co-lead a a Spiritual Grounding session to start a class

D. Final Class Presentation on Outreach Projects – 15%

PowerPoint Pitch Deck Presented to Class for New Nonprofit highlighting components of Strategic Plan

Grading scale

97-100	A+	77-79	C+
93-96	A	73-76	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-

Course Schedule

(Week 1 January 31st) Before class review Syllabus

- 1st Hour:
 - Spiritual Grounding. Introductions and Review of Syllabus and Case Studies Format. Sign up for Spiritual Grounding Going Forward.
- 2nd Hour:
 - Introduction to Intersectionality, Environmental Racism, and Environmental Justice
- 3rd Hour
 - Introduction to Case Study Methodology: Faith in Place, Faith in Place Action Fund, Green Team Model, and Program Areas.
 - Review of Assignments for next class –reflection due Wednesday at noon CT. Complete readings before next class.

(Week 2 February 7th): Before class review websites of [Faith in Place](#) and [Faith in Place Action Fund](#), and Read Case Study.

- 1st Hour
 - Spiritual Grounding. Discussion around Questions in Reflections. Wrap up any 3rd Hour previous class content.
- 2nd Hour
 - Introduction to Faith in Place/Action Fund Financial Statements and Budgeting.
- 3rd Hour
 - Case Study from Development team – “How to Win a Grant.”
 - Review of Assignments for next class –reflection due Wednesday at noon CT. Complete readings before next class.

(Week 3 February 14th): Before class Read James Cone article, watch this youtube video: [How to Write a Mission Statement that Doesn't Suck](#), Read [Vu Le Blogpost](#), Review [Faith in Place Financials](#) (notice multiple tabs),

- 1st hour
 - Spiritual Grounding. Discussion around Questions in Reflections. Discussion on readings. Wrap up any 3rd Hour previous class content.
- 2nd Hour
 - Introduction to various types of nonprofits: C3, C4, Political Action Committee (PAC), and Social Enterprises
- 3rd Hour
 - Creating your Imaginary Nonprofit – starting first drafts of Vision, Mission, and Theory of Change. Review of Definitions and Outline of Strategic Plan. Review student examples.

- Review of Assignments for next class –reflection due Wednesday at noon CT. Complete readings before next class. First draft of of Vision and Mission statement due next week by Thursday 5pm CT.

(Week 4 February 21st): Before class read Nonprofit Social Enterprises (whole document) and skim The Connection noting differences between C3, C4, and PAC. Review Strategic Plan Examples from Previous students. Read Case Study.

- 1st hour
 - Spiritual Grounding. Discussion around Questions in Reflections. Discussion on readings. Wrap up any 3rd Hour previous class content.
- 2nd Hour
 - Further Theory of Change discussion. Introduction to Class Worktime on Strategic Plan Projects – feedback on draft Vision and Mission statements.
- 3rd Hour
 - Case Study: Green Team Coaching and Faith in Place Guiding Principles in conflict
 - Review of Assignments for next class –reflection due Wednesday at noon CT. Complete readings before next class. Update draft of of Vision and Mission statement and add Theory of Change and Draft Budget. Due next week by Thursday 5pm CT.

(Week 5 February 28th): Before class read Chapter 2 of The Intersectional environmentalist. Read Case Study.

- 1st hour
 - Spiritual Grounding. Discussion around Questions in Reflections. Discussion on readings. Wrap up any 3rd Hour previous class content.
- 2nd Hour
 - Class Worktime
- 3rd Hour
 - Case Study: Isioma
 - Review of Assignments for next class –reflection due Wednesday at noon CT. Complete readings before next class. Update draft of of Vision and Mission statement and add Theory of Change and Draft Budget and add in Target Audience and Guiding Principles. Due next week by Thursday 5pm CT.

(Week 6 March 7th): Read before class designated chapters from People, Power, and Change

- 1st hour
 - Spiritual Grounding. Discussion around Questions in Reflections. Discussion on readings. Wrap up any 3rd Hour previous class content.
- 2nd Hour
 - Class Worktime
- 3rd Hour
 - Case Study: Legislative Visit
 - Review of Assignments for next class –reflection due Wednesday at noon CT. Complete readings before next class. Update draft of of Vision and Mission

statement, Theory of Change, Draft Budget, Target Audience, Guiding Principles, Programs and add in SWOT and Goals. Due next week by Thursday 5pm CT.

(Week 7 March 14th): Before class read Lobbying IL

- 1st hour
 - Spiritual Grounding. Discussion around Questions in Reflections. Discussion on readings. Wrap up any 3rd Hour previous class content.
- 2nd Hour
 - Class Worktime
- 3rd Hour
 - Case Study: Legislative Visit #2
 - Review of Assignments for next class –reflection due Wednesday at noon CT. Complete readings before next class. Update full strategic plan draft. Due next week by Thursday 5pm CT.

(Week 8 march 21st): Read more chapter in People Power and change

- 1st hour
 - Spiritual Grounding. Discussion around Questions in Reflections. Discussion on readings. Wrap up any 3rd Hour previous class content.
- 2nd Hour
 - Class Worktime
- 3rd Hour
 - Case Study: Cesar Youth
 - Review of Assignments for next class –reflection due Wednesday at noon CT. Complete readings before next class. Update full strategic plan draft. Due next week by Thursday 5pm CT.

SPRING BREAK March 24-28th

(Week 9 April 4th): Read Black Faces White Spaces

- 1st hour
 - Spiritual Grounding. Discussion around Questions in Reflections. Discussion on readings. Wrap up any 3rd Hour previous class content.
- 2nd Hour
 - Class Worktime
- 3rd Hour
 - Case Study: Princess Food & Land Use
 - Review of Assignments for next class –reflection due Wednesday at noon CT. Complete readings before next class. Update full strategic plan draft. Due next week by Thursday 5pm CT.

(Week 10 April 11th): Read more chapters in People Power and Change

- 1st hour
 - Spiritual Grounding. Discussion around Questions in Reflections. Discussion on readings. Wrap up any 3rd Hour previous class content.
- 2nd Hour
 - Class Worktime
- 3rd Hour
 - Case Study:
 - Review of Assignments for next class –reflection due Wednesday at noon CT. Complete readings before next class. Update full strategic plan draft. Due next week by Thursday 5pm CT.

April 18th Good Friday no Class – will be made up Wednesday may 7th

(Week 11 April 25th): Final presentations

(Week 12 May 2nd): Final Presentations

(Week 13 Wednesday May 7th): Final Presentations