

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS
Liberation Theologies

Fall 2012

Discipline: Religious Studies
RELG 3559: New Course in Religion: Liberation Theologies
Division: Upper
Faculty Name: Barry Penn Hollar

Pre-requisites: A course in Christian Theology, New Testament, or, the Christian Bible, or at the approval of the instructor/registrar.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores Christian Liberation Theologies and their critics. After an initial consideration of the common characteristics of various liberation theologies and their European and North American precursors, the course will give sustained attention to liberation theologies in Africa and Latin America, and, in particular, their relationship to revolutionary political struggles in those contexts. Throughout, the focus will be on careful attention to classic liberationists texts and reflection on them nourished by field experiences in Ghana, South Africa, Argentina, and Brazil.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to identify and explain in writing the general characteristics of liberation theologies.
- Students will be able to identify and explain in writing the primary precursors to and historical moments in the development of Liberation Theology.
- Students will display critical familiarity with five major texts in Latin American and African liberation theologies.
- Students will be able to identify and explain in writing distinctive liberationist approaches to theological method, Christology, and political ethics.
- Students will be able to identify and explain in writing the standard criticisms of liberation theology.
- Students will be able to write critical reviews of theological texts identifying their primary theses and patterns of reasoning, identifying strengths and weaknesses in the texts.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

AUTHOR: Gustavo Gutierrez
TITLE: *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*
PUBLISHER: Orbis Books
ISBN #: 978-0800616977
DATE/EDITION: Revised Edition, 1988
COST: \$15.93

AUTHOR: Mercy Amba Oduyoye
TITLE: *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*
PUBLISHER: Orbis Books
ISBN #: 978-0883449998
DATE/EDITION: 1995
COST: \$18.25

AUTHOR: Desmond Tutu
TITLE: *The Rainbow People of God*
PUBLISHER: Doubleday
ISBN #: 0-385-47546
DATE/EDITION: 1994
COST: \$12.35

AUTHOR: Miguez, Rigoer, and Sung
TITLE: *Beyond the Spirit of Empire*
PUBLISHER: SCM Press
ISBN #: 978-0334043225
DATE/EDITION: 2009
COST: \$24.04

AUTHOR: Leonardo Boff
TITLE: *Passion of Christ, Passion of the World*
PUBLISHER: Fortress Press
ISBN #: 978-1570759093
DATE/EDITION: 1983
COST: \$17.16

AUTHOR: Arthur McGovern
TITLE: *Liberation Theology and Its Critics: Toward an Assessment*
PUBLISHER: Wipf and Stock
ISBN #: 978-1606088937
DATE/EDITION: 2005
COST: \$26.64

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1) **Attendance:** Regular attendance is expected. One absence is allowed. After one absence, other unexcused absences will be penalized, reducing the final grade 2.5 points per absence. Tardiness to three classes counts as an absence.

2) **Readings:** Readings are to be completed *before* the class session to which they are related. The

class will be conducted primarily in a seminar/discussion format. Careful attention to assigned readings prior to class is essential to the students' learning experience. There may be occasional "reading quizzes" at the beginning of class which will constitute part of students' class participation grade.

3) **Student Presentations:** Each student will make one in-class presentation related to an assigned reading. The presentation will involve a critical summary and review of the reading intended to stimulate class discussion.

4) **Fieldwork Journals:** Each student will keep a journal for reflective relating of experiences in Faculty-Led Trips and S@S trips to course material. On the basis of those journals, students will write an essay (750-1000 words in length) that address specific themes and questions related to course material. These papers will be evaluated based on their demonstration of key concepts from liberation theologies relevant to the field experience, and, critical engagement with the beliefs, attitudes, and practices being observed from the perspective of liberation theologies.

4) **Field Lab experience and essay:** Students are required to participate in a seminar experience through the Instituto Superior de Educacion Teologica in Buenos Aires, Argentina on Monday, November 5.

The purpose of this seminar will be to enable students to understand the way in which liberation theology contributed to the "revolutionary situation" of the 1960s and 1970s; its role in inspiring the work of the Methodist (and other) churches in protecting and promoting human rights; and, the way in which those shaped by liberation theology see the ongoing struggle for justice in a democratic context in Argentina and in the current global context. With reference to the latter, students will be introduced to Nestor Miguez's research and reflections having to do with "Doing Theology Under the Global Empire," now that the earlier "revolutionary situation" seems to have passed. Students will be given the opportunity to reflect on the relevance and implications of the Argentine experience for the ministry of Christian communities in their own settings.

An essay of 3-5 pages describing the ways in which the experience deepened and made more concrete their understanding of liberation theology is due no later than November 16.

5) **Midterm Test:** There will be a midterm exam based on a study guide distributed at least 3 class sessions prior to the exam. It will involve short answer and essay questions. Day 13/October 24.

6) **Final Exam:** There will be a final exam based on a study guide distributed at least 3 class sessions prior to the exam. It will involve short answer and essay questions. December 3.

GRADE STRUCTURE

Class participation

10%

Student Presentation	10%
Field Work Essay	10%
Field Lab Essay	15%
Midterm	25%
Final Exam	30%

The grade scale is: A 100-90; B 89-80; C 79-70; D 69-60; F 59 or lower.

The course requirements and course schedule above are subject to adjustment as deemed necessary by the professor. Students will be notified well in advance of changes.

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Liberation Theology: Introduction & History

Day 1/Aug 25 Liberation Theologies: General Introduction

Introduce the course and its requirements. In lecture, offer a general description of the common characteristics of liberation theologies.

Day 2/Aug 27 The “History” of Liberation Theologies

The precursors to Liberation Theologies, the historical contexts in which liberation theologies emerged in Latin American. The impact of the “demise” of Marxism on Liberation Theology, and the post-Marxist directions of liberation theologies.

McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, Ch, 1 & 2
Introduction, The Theology of Liberation, Rowland, (pdf)

BACKGROUND, FURTHER READING

Hillar, “Liberation Theology: Religious Response to Social Problems” (pdf.)
Boffs, “Concise History of Liberation Theology,” (pdf)
John Yu, “A Chronology of Liberation Theology 1512 – 1986” (pdf)
“Justice in the World,” (pdf.)
Gaudium et Spes (pdf.)

Day 3/Aug 29 The “History” of Liberation Theologies

Liberation Theology in Africa: the complex interaction of cultural, racial, and economic oppression.

Mbiti, “The Encounter of Christian Faith and African Religion,” (pdf)
Oduyoye, *Challenge to the Church*,” (pdf)
Oduyoye, *Praying for Transformation*, (pdf)

Walshe, "THE EVOLUTION OF LIBERATION THEOLOGY ..." (pdf)
Muzorewa, "Some Thoughts on African Liberation: From Independence to True Liberation," (pdf)

BACKGROUND, FURTHER READING

Maluleke, Black and African Theologies in the New World Order (pdf)
Tutu, "Black Theology/African Theology—Soul Mates or Antagonists," (pdf)
Boesak, "Liberation Theology in South Africa," (pdf)

The First Formulation: Gustavo Gutierrez

Day 4/Sept. 4 (Ireland)	Gustavo Gutierrez <i>Theology of Liberation</i>	Intro & Chs. 1- 5, xiii-46
Day 5/Sept. 16 (London)	Gustavo Gutierrez <i>Theology of Liberation</i>	Chs. 6-9, 47-105
Day 6/Sept 18 (Iberian Peninsula)	Gustavo Gutierrez <i>Theology of Liberation</i>	Chs. 10-13, 106-175

Liberation Theology in Africa

Day 7/Sept 27 (Morocco)	Liberation Theology in Africa	Oduyoye, <i>Daughters of Anowa</i> , Intro and Chs. 1-3
Day 8/Oct 3	Liberation Theology in Africa	Oduyoye, <i>Daughters of Anowa</i> , Chs. 4-6
Day 9/Oct 6 (Ghana) Study Day/Oct. 10	Liberation Theology in Africa	Oduyoye, <i>Daughters of Anowa</i> , Chs. 7-10

Liberation Theology in the Struggle Against Apartheid

Day 10/Oct. 13

Liberation Theology in the Struggle Against Apartheid

Selections from *The Rainbow People of God*, Tutu

- 1-A Growing Nightmarish Fear
- 2-Oh God How Long Can This Go On?
- 3-We Drink Water to Fill Our Stomachs
- 6-The Divine Imperative

(See Folder “South African History” in “10/October 13)

Day 11/October 15

Liberation Theology in the Struggle Against Apartheid

Selections from *The Rainbow People of God*, Tutu

- 11-Agents of Transformation
- 15-Your Politics are Unbiblical, Unchristian, Immoral and Evil
- 21-We Have Seen Some Extraordinary Things
- 22-Why I Believe This is Happening
- 23-I Am Not a Politician
- 27-Nuturing Our People
- 32-A Miracle Unfolding

Day 12. Oct 17

Liberation Theology in the Struggle Against Apartheid

The Kairos Document (pdf)

Goba, THE KAIROS DOCUMENT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS (pdf)

(See “SA Theology” in “12/October 17)

(Cape Town)

Day 13/Oct. 24

Midterm Exam

Liberation Theology And Christology

Day 14/Oct. 2

Boff, *Passion of Christ, Passion of the World*, Chs. 1-3

Day 15/Oct. 29

Boff, *Passion of Christ, Passion of the World*, Chs. 4-7

Day 16/Oct. 31

Boff, *Passion of Christ, Passion of the World*, Chs. 8-11

Liberation Theology After the End of History

(Buenos Aires/Montivideo)

Field Trip-Nov. 5

Liberation Theology After the End of History

Day 17/Nov. 9

Field Trip Follow-up

(Rio)

Day 18/Nov. 14

Bell, After the End of History, pdf
Miguez, Rieger, and Sung, *Beyond the Spirit of Empire*, Intro, Chs. 1

Day 19/Nov 16

Miguez, Rieger, and Sung, *Beyond the Spirit of Empire*, Chs. 2-4

Study Day/Nov. 18

Day 20/Nov. 19

Miguez, Rieger, and Sung, *Beyond the Spirit of Empire*, Chs. 5-6
Petrella, "Liberation Theology and Democracy," pdf

Liberation Theology: Criticism and Assessment

Day 21/Nov. 21

The Critics of Liberation Theology

McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, Ch. 3
Ratzinger, Notes on Liberation Theology, pdf

Day 22/Nov. 26

The Critics of Liberation Theology

McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, TBD
"A Critique of Liberation Theology by a Cross-Cultured Calvinist," Woudstra, pdf

(Manaus)

Day 23/Nov. 28

The Critics of Liberation Theology

McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, TBD
Capitalism Rightly Understood, Novak, pdf

Final Exam/Dec. 3

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While I agree the class struggle is real, and I agree that the church cannot pretend it doesn't exist, shunning traditional values and theology to focus on overturning corporatism is not a solution. We should care for the poor, and we should love our neighbor, that includes loving those who oppress us. It's not an excuse to do nothing, as the author insists. It is a direction to be careful and love. Probably worth reading if you are interested in such topics, but it won't bring you closer to Christ nor bring those around you to the right hand of the Lord. I think those are more important. Liberation theology said the church should derive its legitimacy and theology by growing out of the poor. The Bible should be read and experienced from the perspective of the poor. The church should be a movement for those who were denied their rights and plunged into such poverty that they were deprived of their full status as human beings. The poor should take the example of Jesus and use it to bring about a just society. Some radical priests became involved in politics and trade unions; others even aligned themselves with violent revolutionary movements. A common way in which priests and nuns showed their solidarity with the poor was to move from religious houses into poverty stricken areas to share the living conditions of their flock. A Theology of Liberation is a recognized classic in its field, which, one can even say, the author, Peruvian Dominican monk, Gustavo Gutierrez, literally invented the field since he coined the term "Liberation Theology" in a 1969 paper on the subject, shortly after the 1968 Medellin conference of Bishops, at which he was a consultant. The one great category of Christian theology which Gutierrez does address is eschatology, history, last things. But he does it in one of the most surprisingly odd ways, by invoking Sir Thomas More's notion of Utopia. On the face of it, this seems odd, because More wrote his book as a satire, and 'Utopia' is based on the Greek words for 'no where'.