

"...from the moment when God became human-poor, the human-poor became the measure of all things."

- Leonardo Boff

REL 3300 THEOLOGIES OF LIBERATION

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PLEASE READ THE SYLLABUS CAREFULLY AND KEEP IT WITH YOU WHENEVER YOU COME TO CLASS. ALL THE INFORMATION ON THE SYLLABUS IS IMPORTANT AND INCLUDES EVERYTHING YOU NEED IN ORDER TO DO WELL IN THIS CLASS. YOU WILL ALSO BE ABLE TO DOWNLOAD THE SYLLABUS ON eLEARNING IF YOU SOMEHOW LOSE THIS COPY.

Catalog Description

Exploration of the historical roots, characteristics, methods, and current expressions of liberation theology. After an initial consideration of the origins and development of liberation theology in Latin America in the second half of the 20th century, the course will turn to the various currents of liberation theology that have emerged in different contexts across the globe, particularly how representatives of those theologies use Christian (and other) traditions to understand and respond to historical contexts and experiences of oppression.

Course Learning Outcomes

After the course, students will be able to:

- i. Trace the growing influence of liberation theologies from a Latin American phenomena to a worldwide movement.
- ii. Demonstrate knowledge of some of the classical texts of liberation theologies from the non-Western world, particularly how liberation theologians analyze and respond to historical contexts and experiences of oppression in view of a vision of a just social order that is rooted in Christian (or other religious) tradition.
- iii. Undertake a critical reflection on a contemporary historical situation in light of the Christian (or other religious) tradition that (1) engages the situation in solidarity with those on its "underside" and (2) moves toward a vision of liberation.
- iv. Demonstrate ability to engage theological positions by thinking with and from a variety of perspectives from the "underside" of history.

- v. Indicate the ways in which their own theological/or philosophical beliefs have been affirmed, challenged, and/or changed as a result of what they have learned about theologies of liberation.

Methods

The course will be conducted in seminar format encouraging considerable reading and discussion. Class will begin with the instructor's synopsis of key ideas especially on the "big-picture" issues and continue with discussion of the reading(s), focusing on students' comments, observations, and questions. Presence and preparation for class are, therefore, indispensable for a fruitful outcome. Exchanging ideas, reflecting, positive arguing, learning the views of others, making follow-up questions and expressing differences are a demonstration of thinking clearly and engaging people who think differently.

Course Reading Materials

- Readings are primarily drawn from the following texts:
 - Miguel A De La Torre, ed. *Introducing Liberative Theologies*.
 - Excerpted materials from the following (available in PDF format on the eLearning site for this course)
 - Leonardo Boff & Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*
 - Ursula King, ed. *Feminist Theology from the Third World*.
 - Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas and Anthony B. Pinn. *Liberation Theologies in the United States: An Introduction*.
 - Rosino Gibellini, ed. *Paths of African Theology*.

On Reading these Texts

The texts for this course are difficult in two senses. First, if this is your first course that deals with topics in theology, then some of the vocabulary and concepts will be unfamiliar to you. This will be addressed in the synopsis of key ideas and class discussions, but you can already begin to address this difficulty on your own, while reading, by consulting theological dictionaries. The reading will also be difficult in a second, deeper sense. Liberation theologians offer radical critiques of Western Christianity and Western modernity which some or all of you are familiar with, and from which you have immensely benefited. As such, many of the readings will profoundly challenge your worldviews and ask you to look at historical situations in new ways. Taking up this challenge is the most difficult aspect of reading theologies of liberation and of this course, but also the most rewarding aspect.

Films

Romero
Roses in December
Cry the Beloved Country
America Beyond the Color Line

Course Website

This class has a course website – *eLearning*, located in “my.carthage.edu” portal. You can find

there announcements, course syllabus and schedule, course readings in PDF format, and other information. It is your responsibility to check and make sure you are up to date with the information. If you have difficulty accessing this site, please contact me.

Course Requirements and Assessment

The following criteria will be used to assess student success:

1. Attendance, Punctuality & Preparation: 10 points, **10%**
You are expected to attend all sessions of this course. Be on time for class, and come prepared. Three times late to class count as an undocumented absence (discussed further below).
2. Participation: 15 points, **15%**
“Participation” means (1) wakeful presence, (2) preparation of reading assignments, (3) meaningful contribution to class discussion by responding to questions or comments raised by others, sharing your perspective on their reflection, or adding new information, and (4) completion of all in-class writing assignments. Full participation is also expected in small group sessions that will take a variety of forms. For example: groups interpreting different parts of difficult readings together and sharing their results with the class; groups taking positions and defending them in debates with other groups on the various themes we cover; groups responding to songs, poems, short literary excerpts, or short movie clips; etc.
3. Discussion Questions: 15 points, **15%**
For each class you will bring in two questions, comments, observations, quotations, issues, or a combination of these related to the reading(s) for the day. These will jumpstart, continue, or enrich our class discussions.
4. Unit Reflection Essays: 25 points, **25%**
At the end of each unit you will be asked to write a short reflection essay (5 essays in total, 3-4 pages long apiece, double -spaced). It is a reflection essay and not a summary of class materials. In other words, this is the product of your analysis, intuitions, concerns, and/or desire to knowing more on the course topics. The goal of the reflection essay is to encourage you to begin articulating your own discourse by expressing your own concerns, voicing your agreement or disagreement with the authors’ scholarly work, etc. Each essay will count for 5% of semester grade. Due on dates shown on the course schedule; submitted via eLearning.
5. Team Presentation: 15 points, **15%**
One of the key objectives of this course is to facilitate our/your discovery of the “places” from which theologies of liberation emerge: places are geographical, political, economic, cultural, social, religious—and, above all, REAL, parts of this world and our shared global life. In four teams of three-four, you will be asked to “adopt” one country on one of the four continents we will “visit” in this course: South/Latin America, Africa, Asia, and North America. The culmination of this “adoption process” will be a presentation to the class at the end of the semester, introducing the rest of us to the “their continent” – via a country the team may have chosen—with facts, maps, music, photos, and other media. The intention is to help us understand why and in what ways theologies of liberation might/would arise from and speak

to the realities of those countries/that continent and how we can/should connect with that reality as thinkers.

Teams:

South/Latin America/Brazil or Colombia:

Africa/South Africa or Cameroon:

Asia/India or South Korea:

North America/US:

6. Final Paper: 20 points, **20%**

As the capstone of your learning in this course you will write a 7-8 page paper in which you summarize and evaluate one of the following from your own perspective: Latin American liberation theology, Asian liberation theologies, African liberation theologies, and North American liberation theologies. Specific topics must be negotiated with the professor. Submitted via eLearning.

Checklist/rubric for final paper

- 1" margins, cover page (not counted or numbered) containing your name, my name, and a title for the paper.
- 5-7 page, double spaced body of paper using 12 pitch font, exact quotations properly documented and cited (parenthetical, footnotes, or endnotes acceptable) with a numbered bibliography page.
- The paper will begin with a thesis, purpose, or focus statement. The remainder of the paper will argue for that topic, thesis, or purpose. If you want to express the topic, thesis, purpose, or focus statement in the second (or third?) sentence, you may do so, but express it early, not in the middle or at the end of the paper. Usually, for a short, argumentative paper, the best sentence for the thesis, purpose, or focus statement is the first sentence.
- Be analytical, that is, show evidence of your ability to use relevant analytical tools in the exploration of the thesis, issue, or topic.
- Must utilize course readings materials.
- Write grammatically and eliminate all words and ideas except those that are most important (i.e. to the point).
- Conclusive statement must be made; thesis must be resolved; purpose must be met.

- *Due on or before midnight, May 15 2017*

Grading Scale

The grading scale used in this class is as follows:

A	93 - 100	A-	90 - 92.99	B+	87 - 89.99	B	83 - 86.99
B-	80 - 82.99	C+	77 - 79.99	C	73 - 76.99	C-	70 - 72.99
D+	67 - 69.99	D	63 - 66.99	D-	60 - 62.99	F	0 - 59.99

Etiquettes

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory. A note from a doctor, dentist, coach, or funeral director will render any absence excused. Without such a note, the absence will not be excused. Please note

that a phone call or email message from you, saying that you are ill, is not sufficient; nor is a note from the health center confirming an appointment. The note must indicate that you are unable to attend class and it must include contact information for the individual who provided the note.

Documentation of the absence must be provided to me in the first class that follows the absence.

Late documentation will not be accepted. Assignments must still be completed and/or handed in by the due dates, unless I have agreed an extension with you beforehand. Absences beyond three will lower your grade one letter for each absence. Three times late to class or leaving class early will result in a marked absence. I reserve the right to fail any student who misses more than five class periods.

Be prepared for class

You need to have the assigned readings done before class so that you are prepared to participate in discussions and activities. Also, you need to bring your textbook and other assigned readings to class with you. Not having your course materials for discussions and activities will result in a loss of participation credit. Criteria for evaluation of preparedness include:

- 1) Daily attendance
- 2) Preparation for and quality of contributions to discussions
- 3) Completion of daily assignments

Technology

No activated cell phones and other mobile communication devices are allowed in the classroom (so please turn them off). Audio or visual recording of lectures or members of the class is strictly forbidden.

A laptop (or tablet) can be used during class for note-taking and other class-related work only. No multi-tasking in class, such as checking email, browsing the web, playing games, tweeting friends, updating Facebook, working on assignments for other classes, etc. Should you use a laptop during class for purposes not related to this class, you must leave the classroom for the remainder of the class period and be counted absent.

Behavior to Avoid

Please avoid distractions and disruptive behavior during class-sessions, as illustrated by the following examples: (1) private conversation during lectures or discussions; (2) packing one's things prior to the end of the class; (3) late arrival to class-sessions and, especially, habitual tardiness; (4) leaving the classroom to get drinks or to use restrooms; (5) sleeping; (6) personal grooming; (7) doing homework or reading for other courses; (8) using active cell-phones; (9) using headphones for electronic devices; (10) searching the internet or checking email for anything other than as instructed during class-sessions; (11) listening to music; (12) side-bar chats with your classmates - they are distracting and annoying to other students who are trying to pay attention. Such behavior will result in dismissal from class-sessions, be assigned an unexcused absence, and loss of attendance and participation points.

Communication

E-mail is the primary means of official communication for this course. Please include the course and section number in the subject line of all email communications. All communication between student and instructor and between student and student should be respectful and professional. You are responsible for maintaining your college e-mail account and for checking it regularly.

Respect

In order to learn, we must be open to the views of people different from ourselves. Each and every voice in the classroom is important and brings with it a wealth of experiences, values and beliefs. In this time we share together over the semester, please honor the uniqueness of your fellow classmates, and appreciate the opportunity we have to learn from each other. Please respect your fellow students' opinions and refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments of any kind.

Return of Graded Assignments

1. I will conscientiously grade all assignments as quickly as possible.
2. I ask you to remain patient as you await the grading of your graded exercises. Evaluating written work requires more time than grading examinations or tests. Furthermore, certain times of the semester will be busier than other times.
3. You should carefully review all comments on your graded assignments before making appeals (either in conversation or in writing) to me with reference to any grades about which you may have questions or concerns. I will not discuss individual graded assignments with students immediately prior to, during, or immediately after class. You should review the entire graded exercise before attempting to discuss questions or concerns with me.
4. You should schedule times to meet with me outside class (preferably during office hours) to discuss questions or concerns about graded exercises.

Office Hours

I am available for meetings to discuss problems you might have understanding any part of the course. However, this is not a substitute for you to do readings and reflect on them critically. It is critical that you address such areas in a timely fashion. If you wish to see me, but are unable to come to my office hours, I will be happy to make an appointment for another time. Please send me an e-mail (the most reliable option).

Academic Honesty

There is a zero-tolerance policy toward plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty in this course. This means that anyone caught taking credit for work that is not his or her own, or cheating in any other way, will receive a failing grade for the entire course. If you are not familiar with the Academic Honesty Guidelines, you can find them here:

<https://www.carthage.edu/community-code/academic-concerns/academic-honesty-guidelines>.

Penalties for academic dishonest are available at <https://www.carthage.edu/community-code/academic-concerns/penalties/>.

Special Needs

Students with special learning needs are encouraged to see me during the first two weeks of class to discuss appropriate accommodations and support. You should also have documentation on file with Diane Schowalter, director of Learning Accessibility Services (262-551-5802; dschowalter1@carthage.edu). This information will be kept confidential.

Tentative Course Schedule

WEEK 1	TR 2/3	Getting to know each other Understanding course content and processes: the Syllabus
WEEK 2	TU 2/7	Theologies of Liberation: South/Latin America Read: De La Torre, <i>Introducing Liberative Theologies</i> , ch. 1
	TR 2/9	Read: Gutierrez, "The Task and Content of Liberation Theology," in Christopher Rowland, <i>The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology</i>
WEEK 3	TU 2/14	Read: Boff, <i>Introducing Liberation Theology</i> , ch. 3 Film: Romeo or Roses in December
	TR 2/16	Theologies of Liberation: Africa Read: De La Torre, <i>Introducing Liberative Theologies</i> , ch. 2 Unit 1 Reflection due
WEEK 4	TU 2/21	Read: Rosino Gibellini, <i>Paths of African Theology</i> , ch. 9
	TR 2/23	Read: Jean-Marc Ela, "Christianity and liberation in Africa" in Rosino Gibellini, <i>Paths of African Theology</i>
WEEK 5	TU 2/28	Read: Engelbert Mveng, "Impoverishment and liberation : a theological approach for Africa and the Third World," in Rosino Gibellini, <i>Paths of African Theology</i>
	TR 3/2	Read: Lebamang Sebidi, "The Dynamics of the Black Struggle and Its Implications for Black Theology," in Itumelang Mosala and Buti Tlahagale, <i>The Unquestionable Right to Be Free</i> Film: Cry the Beloved Country
WEEK 6	TU 3/7	Read: Virginia Fabella and Mercy Amba Oduyoye. <i>With Passion and Compassion: Third World Women Doing Theology</i> , ch 4
	TR 3/9	Theologies of Liberation: Asia Read: De La Torre, <i>Introducing Liberative Theologies</i> , ch. 3 Unit 2 Reflection due
WEEK 7	TU 3/14	Read: B. Wielenga, "Liberation Theology in Asia," in Christopher Rowland, <i>The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology</i>
	TR 3/16	Read: Sun Park, "Minjung Theology"
WEEK 8	TU 3/21	SPRING BREAK
	TR 3/33	
WEEK 9	TU 3/28	Read: TBD, on Dalit Theology
	TR 4/30	Read: Ursula King, ed., <i>Feminist Theology from the Third World</i> , ch. 25 Unit 3 Reflection due
WEEK 10	TU 4/4	Theologies of Liberation: North America (Black Theology, Womanist Theology) Read: Anthony Pinn, "Black Theology," in Stacey Floyd-Thomas and Anthony Pinn, <i>Liberation Theology in the United States</i> , ch 1
	TR 4/6	Read: Edward Antonio, "Black Theology," in Christopher Rowland, <i>The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology</i>
WEEK 11	TU 4/11	Read: Miguel De La Torre, <i>Introducing Liberative Theologies</i> , ch. 10
	TR 4/13	Read: Stacey Floyd-Thomas, "Womanist Theology," in Stacey Floyd-Thomas and Anthony Pinn, <i>Liberation Theology in the United States</i> , ch 2

		Film: America Beyond the Color Line Unit 4 Reflection due
WEEK 12	TU 4/18	Theologies of Liberation: North America (Feminist, Latina/Mujerista, American Indian) Read: May Grey, "Feminist Theology: a Critical Theology of Liberation," in Christopher Rowland, <i>The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology</i>
	TR 4/20	Read: Mary McClintock-Fulckerson, "Feminist Theology," In Stacey Floyd-Thomas and Anthony Pinn, <i>Liberation Theology in the United States</i> , ch 10
WEEK 13	TU 4/25	Read: Nancy Pineda-Madrid, "Latina Theology," in Anthony Pinn and Stacey Floyd-Thomas, <i>Liberation Theology in the United States</i> , ch 3
	TR 4/27	Read: George Tinker, "American Indian Theology," in Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas and Anthony B. Pinn, <i>Liberation Theologies in the United States</i> , ch 8 Unit 5 Reflection due
WEEK 14	TU 5/2	Group Presentation
	TR 5/4	Group Presentation
WEEK 15	TU 5/9	Group Presentation
	TR 5/11	Group Presentation Final Reflections
WEEK 15	5/15-17	Final Exams Final Paper due on or before May 15

This order and schedule of the readings, discussions, and assignments listed in this syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor and you will be notified of any and all changes.