

**School of Theology and Ministry  
Seattle University  
901 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, PO Box 222000  
Seattle, WA 98122-1090  
Fall 2012**

**COURSE INFORMATION:**

STMA 521 Theologies of Liberation, 3 credits  
Hunt. 100  
Monday 9 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.

**INSTRUCTOR:**

Dr. Jeanette Rodriguez  
Casey 227  
Office Hours: Tuesdays  
10:30 -noon  
jrodrigu@seattleu.edu

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Our era has witnessed the emergence of theological voices, especially voices long muted and buried, that need to be taken seriously by the church, academy, and the wider society. Students in this course will be exposed to these various theological voices around the world as to their context, method, and content, and the challenges they pose. This is done with the hope that these various theological voices will widen students' theological views and help them articulate a theological position with a global sensibility.

**TEXTS AND MATERIALS:**

***Required texts:***

- Boff, Leonardo and Clodovis. *Introducing Liberation Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987.
- Gutierrez, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation*. Maryknoll, NY: 1973.
- Hennelly, Alfred, S.J. *Liberation Theologies: The Global Pursuit of Justice*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1997.
- Sobrino, Jon. *Principle of Mercy: Taking the Crucified People from the Cross*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994.
- Article: TBD

***Recommended texts and materials:***

- Aquino, María Pilar. *Our Cry for Life: Feminist Theology From Latin America*.
- Burke, Kevin, SJ. *The Ground Beneath the Cross: The Theology of Ignacio Ellarcuría*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2000.
- Douglas, Kelly Brown. *The Black Christ*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994.
- Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*. New York, NY: Crossroads Publishing Company, 1983.
- Sobrino, Jon. *Jesus the Liberator: A Historical-Theological View*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993.
- Sugirtharaja, R.S. (Ed). *Asian Faces of Jesus*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Describe the social and religious context in which Liberation Theologies arose in Latin America.
- Trace the steps leading to the emergence of Liberation Theologies as a major theological movement.
- Identify major personalities, central themes, key terminology, and major events in Latin American Liberation Theologies.
- Trace the growing influence of Liberation Theologies from a Latin American phenomena to a worldwide movement.
- State your own critical conclusions as to the contribution and validity of Liberation Theologies.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Demonstrate intention to approach all of your work with openness to the presence of diversity.
- Ability to reflect theologically on the central themes of the Christian Tradition.
- Knowledge of the interaction of religious/spiritual experience and culture in their ecumenical and multicultural dimensions.
- Awareness of your own social location/assumptions/hermeneutics as you engage the text in your own lives, your communities, and the larger world.
- Ability to draw critically and constructively on Christian moral traditions to lead toward a more just and sustainable world.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

### GRADING SCALE

A	100-94	B	86-83	C	79-73	D	66-63
A-	93-90	B-	82-80	C-	72-70	D-	62-60
B+	89-87	C+	79-77	D+	69-67	Below 59 - E	(not passing)

## EVALUATION

NOTE: Assignments must be **turned in on day due** for full credit. Always bring the assigned reading (bible, textbook or handout) to class.

**Participation and Attendance (10 pts.):** Your participation in this course is vital to your own learning and to the experience of everyone involved in the class. You demonstrate solid participation by attending regularly, coming well prepared for active class discussion as a result of daily readings and posing thoughtful questions in class.

## STUDENT PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

**Chapter Review (10 pts):** Each student will choose a chapter from *The Global Pursuit of Justice*. Reflection papers offer an opportunity to reflect more deeply on class discussions and readings.

Papers receiving the maximum number of points will be written clearly, thoughtfully, originally, and accurately in regard to the material discussed in class.

**Question and Answer Assignment (60 pts):** Six set of questions. Themes will consist of roots of liberation theology, the methodology of liberation theology, the Bible in liberation theology, liberation and salvation, the ecclesiology of liberation theology, and the Christology of liberation theology.

- “A” – work is excellent. An “A” paper is focused with an explicit thesis statement. It exhibits a clear, effective and organized line of thought as well as a thorough understanding of the material. It has no English usage problems, anticipates possible objections (if helpful) to its point of view and/or supporting arguments, and frequently provides pertinent citations to make its case. The writer’s “voice” is confident and clear.
- “B” – work is very good. A “B” paper directly states and addresses the driving question or thesis and provides supporting citations. The writing may show some English usage problems, but the punctuation, grammar and spelling are generally better than average insofar as they do not prevent the reader from comprehending the point(s) the writer is making. The material is well-organized but transitions may be abrupt and information may be too “thin” or too general.
- “C” – work is adequate. A “C” paper demonstrates that the student basically follows the directions for the assignment. The driving question or thesis has been articulated and argued, but may have been vaguely or imprecisely formulated. The analysis contains some organizational problems. Citations are superficial and/or infrequent. The writing may be awkward, unclear or contain English usage problems.
- “D” – work is below adequate. A “D” paper may be late or written without regard for the assignment’s instructions. It lacks a thesis statement or driving question. It is careless, poorly organized, and the information is not under the control of the writer.
- “F” – work is inadequate.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Please review the Academic Honesty Code in the Student Handbook. Every student is expected to comply fully with it. Please recall that even unintended plagiarism is plagiarism. Be fully aware of what constitutes plagiarism. If you have any questions, please ask me.

## **COURSE POLICIES AND REMINDERS**

**Assistance.** I urge you to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about the course. I am happy to meet with you during office hours or at some other time if your schedule conflicts with these times. If you do want to meet with me during office hours, an appointment is not necessary but it may be helpful to prevent your having to wait while I meet with other students.

**Late Work.** Reflection papers are due at the beginning of class. **Late papers are not accepted without approval from me.**

Even if you do not have your paper completed on the day it is due, it is important that you come to class so that you do not miss out on the material discussed that day. **An additional two points will be deducted from your paper if you are absent from class the day the paper is due.**

### **Final Assignment (20pts):**

The course has reflected on a general understanding on Latin American Liberation Theology. We have explored its roots, methodology, Christology, etc. for this final assignment you are asked to choose one of the theologies of liberation expressed globally and to present its main tenets and theological contributions.

If there are many people interested in the same area, it may be best to form a group. The assignment is for you/your group to:

- 1) Choose to explore Asian, African, Middle East and/or U.S. racial minorities expression of liberation theology.
- 2) As a group, prepare a **20-minute PowerPoint presentation** to be shared in class. This will include not just the context of the summary of the theology, but creative and intriguing images or media presentation of the subject matter.
- 3) Create a **two-page handout** that summarizes the specific theology of liberation. Add citation and footnotes to everything!
- 4) **Individually**, each member will write a **three-page reflection paper** of course and/or research learnings.

Thus, in lieu of a final, you will demonstrate in this assignment your ability to read and identify key themes, and critically reflect, present, and demonstrate competency in this material.

More detailed information will be handed out in class.

## TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE:

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### **Class 1: Monday, September 24<sup>th</sup>**

**Introduction:** expectations; definition of terms

**Discussion:** How to Think Theologically

#### **Assignment for next class:**

Read "The Poor Have Good News Preached to Them: The Earliest Tradition about Jesus of Nazareth" (in reader)

Read *Introducing Liberation Theology*, Chapter 1-3

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### **Class 2: Monday, October 8<sup>th</sup>**

**Discussion:** Earliest Tradition of Jesus

Task of Theology Lecture

#### **Assignment for next class:**

Read Hennelly "Theology from the Underside of History" Chapter 1

Assignment 1: Roots of liberation theology

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### **Class 3: Monday, October 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Discussion:** Contextualizing the Experience of Latin America and the impact of Vatican II

**View:** *Romero*

**Discussion:** *Romero* film

#### **Assignment for next class:**

Read *Introducing Liberation Theology*, Chapter 4

Assignment 2: The methodology of liberation theology

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### **Class 4: Monday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**Discussion:** The Latin American context and methodology of liberation theology

#### **Assignment for next class:**

Read *Introducing Liberation Theology*, Chapter 5 & 6

Read Gutierrez, pg. 3-57

Assignment 3: The Bible in liberation theology

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### **Class 5: Monday, October 29<sup>th</sup>**

**Discussion:** Classical Task of Liberation Worldwide

Levels and Themes of Latin American Liberation Theology

#### **Assignment for next class:**

Read Gutierrez, pg. 162-173

Assignment 4: Liberation and salvation

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**Class 6: Monday, November 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Discussion:** The Bible in Liberation Theology  
Theological reactions for a preferential option for the poor

**Assignment for next class:**

Read Gutierrez, pg. 106-120  
Assignment 5: The Christology of liberation theology

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**Class 7: Monday, November 12<sup>th</sup>**

**Veteran's Day: No Classes/Office closed**

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**Class 8: Monday, November 19<sup>th</sup>**

**Discussion:** The Principle of Mercy and the Theology of Jon Sobrino  
Students will choose from among the theologies of liberation globally to present.  
The Christology of Liberation Theology

**Assignment for next class:**

Assignment 6: The ecclesiology of liberation theology  
Read Intro, Part I and II of Sobrino

**Note:** These last two classes are dedicated to student presentations

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**Class 9: Monday, November 26<sup>th</sup>**

**Discussion:** Theological voices from racial/ethnic minorities in the U.S. TBD

**Suggested Reading:**

Banuelas, Arturo (Ed). Mestizo Christianity. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 1995.  
Cone, James. A Black Theology of Liberation. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 1990.  
Valentin, Benjamin (Ed). In Our Own Voices. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 2010.

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**Class 10: Monday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Discussion:** Voices from the margin: Asian Theology; African Theology

Theologies from the Middle East and Europe.

**Suggested Readings:**

Amaladoss, Michael. Life in Freedom: Liberation Theologies from Asia. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 1997.  
Ateek, Naim Stifan. Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002.

Katongole, Emmanuel (Ed.) African Theology of Today. Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 2002.

Schreier, Robert (Ed). Faces of Jesus in Africa. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995.

Sugirtharaja, R.S. (Ed). Asian Faces of Jesus. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993.

Westhelle, Vitor. "Is Europe Christian: A Challenge to a Viking" in *For All People: Global Theologies in Context*.