

Liberation Theologies
RELG 336 (001)
Fall 2011
T, Th 12:45 p.m.
Byrnes 209

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Text

Available in bookstore:

Floyd-Thomas and Pinn, *Liberation Theologies in the U.S.* (LTUS in syllabus)

On Blackboard,

The following chapters/excerpts:

- J. Wright, “Doing Theology in the Black Church”
- W. Maathai, excerpt from *Unbowed*
- Hope, et al, excerpts from *Training for Transformation*
- J. Gonzalez, “Free Trade . . .”
- Y. Lee, “A Theological Reflection on the Korean People’s Han and Hanpuri”
- De la Torre, excerpt from *Hope of Liberation in World Religions*
- F. Matsuoko, “Signs of Peopling . . .”
- Pew Research report, *Wealth Gaps Rise . . .*
- ADDITIONAL READINGS TBD

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify key elements of liberation theologies
- Understand the differences that race and nation create for considerations of liberation
- Discuss the potential for liberation theologies today

OPENING STATEMENT:

Liberation theologies have globally developed from the 1960s through the 1990s, particularly in oppressed communities. While many religious groups have participated in liberation movements, this course will focus on Christian expressions. We will consider a few liberation theologies from other countries but primarily will explore those in the United States. We will consider some of these historic aspects in order to lead to our analysis of “liberation” today.

Starting Norms for the class: (initial list; more to be added the first day)

We will fully listen to and respect the experiences and feelings of others.

We will work together as co-learners.

We will take care not to impose our views on each other.

Others??

Grading and Assignments/weights:

A = 100-90 points
B = 89-80
C = 79-70
D = 69-60
F below 60

Midterm (cumulative) 25%

Group project: Is it possible to educate Americans to participate in/care about liberation theology? Why or why not? This will be a project that develops sample materials for American audiences to discuss liberation theology. Sources: *Training for Transformation* excerpts; Matsuoko essay; Pew report 25%

Final paper: The topic of this 5-7 page research paper will be selected with the approval of the professor. The paper will be an opportunity to explore one topic of interest to the student. If such a selection is not possible, the professor will assign a topic. (See section on “The Importance of Writing.”) Paper is due at the time of the final exam. 25%

Final exam (cumulative) See registrar web page for date of exam. 25%

REGARDING ABSENCES:

University of South Carolina policy: “Absence from more than 10 percent of the scheduled class sessions, whether excused or unexcused, is excessive and the instructor may choose to exact a grade penalty for such absences. It is of particular importance that a student who anticipates absences in excess of 10 percent of the scheduled class sessions receives prior approval from the instructor before the last day to change schedule as published in the academic and refund calendars on the registrar’s Web site (<http://registrar.sc.edu/>).

It must be emphasized that the “10 percent rule” stated above applies to both excused and unexcused absences. Faculty members should notify classes, specifically in the course syllabi, the attendance policy which they intend to follow in each class. It is also recommended that the faculty include a policy statement in their syllabi requesting students to meet with the instructor early in the semester to discuss the consequences of potential excessive absences due to participation in University-sponsored events.”

The Importance of Writing:

College level writing is critically important for this class. Your grade for the class will be at risk if you hand in late assignments, un-typed papers (except for in class assignments), plagiarized, undeveloped, etc. If you have any concerns about your own writing, make an appointment at the writing center.

Papers must be typed, double-spaced. Handwritten papers will not be accepted. When needed, you must use a notation format -- MLA, Chicago, APA -- consistently throughout any paper. In addition, poor grammar and spelling can be grounds for lowering a grade. The aim in these restrictions is to develop college level, critically sharp papers that (really!) say what you mean them to say.

Due Dates and Reading Assignments: (readings should be completed by the date shown)

Because of the relationship between reading, class work, and group discussions, late papers are *seldom* accepted.

In order to ***participate in class discussions***, reading all assignments, by the date/week each is due, is absolutely necessary and critical to your success in this class!

August 18

- Introductions, syllabus overview

August 23, 25, 30

- Excerpt, Maathai
- Lecture:
- Politics/faith
- Nation
- Freedom
- Individual/community
- Systemic injustice
- Oppression/liberation
- Social/sin
- DISCUSSION: THE GROUP PROJECT

September 1, 6

Lecture/discussion:

- Theology
- Religion
- Societal roles of churches/denominations

September 8, 13

Lecture/discussion:

- Christianity/freedom
- Reading: *Training for Transformation* excerpts
- J. Wright, “Doing Theology . . .”

September 15

- Matsuoko excerpt
- Pew research report
- Discussion of group project

September 20, 22

- Excerpt, de la Torre
- Introduction to text, LTUS

September 29, October 4, 6

- Chapters 1 and 2, LTUS
- STUDENTS SUBMIT FINAL PAPER TOPIC TO PROFESSOR FOR APPROVAL

October 11 MIDTERM

October 13, 18

- Gonzalez, “Free Trade . . .”
- Chapters 3 and 4, LTUS

October 20 NO CLASS, FALL BREAK

October 25, 27

- Gonzalez, “Free Trade . . .”
- Chapters 3 and 4, LTUS

November 1, 3, 8, 10

- Y. Lee, “A Theological Reflection on . . .”
- Chapters 5, 6 LTUS

November 15, 17

- (Additional readings to be assigned in this section)
- Chapters 9 and 10, LTUS

November 22 STUDENTS MEET TO FINALIZE GROUP PROJECT

November 24 HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

November 29

- GROUP PROJECT PRESENTATION

December 1

- Final review
- If you choose, final paper draft is due for professor's review

For date of final exam (also the date that final paper is due), see registrar's instructions.