

**REL 347: Liberation & Theology**  
 California Lutheran University, Spring 2011  
 Tue/Thu 10:00-11:50  
 SWEN 106

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**Office Hours: Wed 1-4pm**  
**and by appointment**

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

*An introduction to theologies of liberation in Latin America and in Southern California, this course asks how social, economic, and political readings of the Bible can be used both to oppress and to liberate communities.*

This course is an introduction to theologies of liberation in Latin America and in the U.S., especially regarding contemporary issues of immigration in Southern California. Students examine how social, economic, and political readings of the Bible can be used both to oppress and to liberate communities. **First**, we begin with the historical development of a movement in the Roman Catholic churches of Latin America in the 1970's called "Liberation Theology." Students will learn about the social and political realities of this late 20<sup>th</sup> century movement in various countries (such as Nicaragua, El Salvador, Mexico, Guatemala, Brazil). **Second**, we study the changes in Liberation thought as it moves into many U.S. minority contexts (Black Theology, Feminist, Womanist and Mujerista Theologies). **Finally**, we will examine the current immigration debate in Southern California as a contemporary context for liberationist reflection. In this part of the course, students will engage in specific day-week long visits with community based organizations in the U.S./LAm to reflect on the ways Latino, Asian, Anglo, and African American men and women of various classes and religious traditions use "liberationist" thought around the topic of immigration.

*The goal of this course is that you learn to think in new ways by attending to different interpretations of biblical, religious, and cultural traditions, by listening carefully and respectfully to your colleagues in the classroom and in the community, and by taking imaginative risks in approaching our common topic of study from various social perspectives.*

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course fulfills the **upper division Religion** core requirement and the **U.S. Diversity** core requirement.

**20 % Collegial scholarship** is critical and will be evaluated. As scholars and colleagues in the classroom, students take responsibility for their own learning and for raising the level of learning in the classroom as a whole. This means 1) Students commit to regular class attendance, regular preparation to discuss the assigned readings, and completion of all writing and reading assignments for each day's class; 2) Students commit to taking initiative in pursuing topics of interest and doing background research to better understand their reading assignments; 3) Students commit to engaging in class discussion through constructive conversation, asking questions, volunteering responses, and active listening to their colleagues; 4) Students who disrespect their colleagues in conversation, repeated tardiness, or repeated and obvious lack of preparation will not be developing Collegial Scholarship and their grade will suffer.

**30% Argument Analysis Papers** are one page critical evaluations of assigned readings. Students will write 5 papers during the semester. Everyone writes the first paper, then you may choose which other four to write. *Use 250 words per page, Times New Roman font in 12 point and single space.* Each paper will 1) summarize the author's thesis and argument,

- 2) critically evaluate the thesis and argument,
- 3) respond to the argument
- 4) pose two good questions for class discussion,
- 5) include terms or concepts you looked up to better understand the article.

Finally, consider this question: *What insights does the author's social location add to their interpretation?*

The goal of this exercise is to evaluate the author's argument and evidence, as well as to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their particular social (gender, class, ethnic, educational, political, ideological) perspective.

\*\*\* **Late Papers drop one grade.**

**Inclusive Language** with respect to humankind is required for all course work, spoken and written (see last page of syllabus).

**Nota Bene:** All students are responsible for knowing and following the University policies on Academic Honesty, Dishonesty, and Plagiarism found in the *Student Handbook*, pp. 29-30.

### **20% Scholar's Background work:**

Students will be "scholars for the day" who are responsible for background information on a particular country or figure. They will each prepare selected social background material on their country or figure and be ready to supply the class with background in presentation form (1 page of bullet points, or other oral/written/visual form). (5 min max) The goal of this assignment is to help the class understand the socio-political and historical context of the figure or country we are focusing on that day.

**30% Final Projects** will be developed in consultation with the Professor around a community-learning experience. (Possible immersion communities: Pasadena, Oxnard, Thousand Oaks)

\* In this project, students will first research the socio-cultural dynamics and the historical setting of one community in a particular neighborhood or socio-political or socio-economic situation. (3-4 pp)

\* Second, students will prepare a "teach-in" for the class following the teacher-learner paradigm Freire develops in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

\* Third, students will write a theology of liberation for that community that considers race, gender, class, and religion, but focuses in depth on *one* of these aspects of the community's life. (3-4 pp)

\* The goal of the final project is for each student to integrate and demonstrate their learning about Liberation Theology in a concrete social setting, applying and evaluating what they have learned over the course of the semester.

\* Finally, students will also submit a written self-evaluation and synthesis of their work over the semester (1-2 pp).

Collegial Scholarship	20%
Argument Analysis Papers (5 total)	30%
Scholar for the day	20%
Final Project (8-10 pp paper & "teach-in")	30%

### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

Leonardo Boff. *Introducing Liberation Theology* (1987, Brazil)

Daniel Carroll. *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible* (2008, Guatemala, USA)

Gustavo Gutierrez. *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*

Philip Martin, et.al. *The New Rural Poverty: Agriculture and Immigration in California*

### **SUGGESTED READINGS & RESOURCES**

Matthew Soerens & Jenny Hwang. *Welcoming the Stranger: Justice, Compassion and Truth in the Immigration Debate* (2009)  
 Ben Daniel. *Neighbor: Christian Encounters with Illegal Immigration* (2010, SoCal)  
 Peter Schrag. *Not Fit for Our Society: Immigration and Nativism in America* (2011)  
 Virgilio Elizondo. *Galilean Journey: The Mexican-American Promise*  
 Paulo Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*  
 Ada Maria Isazi-Diaz and Fernando Segovia. *Hispanic/Latino Theology*  
 Fernando Segovia. "Reading from a Hispanic Perspective." *The New Interpreter's Bible*  
 Ernesto Cardenal. *The Gospel in Solentiname* 4 vols. (Nicaragua)  
 Ho-Youn Kwon. *Korean Americans and Their Religions: Pilgrims and Missionaries . . .*  
 James Cone. *A Black Theology of Liberation*. (USA)  
 Howard Thurman. *Jesus and the Disinherited*. (USA)  
 Chung Hyun Kyung "Who is Jesus for Asian Women?" *Asian Faces of Jesus*, (223-246)  
 Eva Sperling. *Signs from the Heart: California Chicano Murals* (LA)  
 Jon Sobrino. *No Salvation Outside the Poor: Prophetic-Utopian Essays* (2007/8)  
 Recinos, "The Barrio as the Locus of a New Church" (pp 183-194)  
 Pineda. "Hospitality" (pp 29-42)

### **Center for Academic and Accessibility Resources**

*California Lutheran University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with various documented disabilities including, but not limited to, physical, learning, visual, hearing, or psychological. If you are a student requesting accommodations for this course, please contact your professor at the beginning of the semester and register with the Coordinator for Students with Disabilities (Pearson Library, Center for Academic and Accessibility Resources, Ext. 3260) for the facilitation and verification of need. Faculty will work closely together with you and your coordinator to provide necessary accommodations.*

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **WEEK ONE: Introduction to Course**

(1/19) Thu What is Liberation Theology?  
 Community Learning Sites: overview  
 Read: Boff. *Introducing Liberation Theology* Chapter 2 in class

### **WEEK TWO: Introduction to Liberation Theology: Latin America**

(1/24) Tue Read: Boff. *Introducing Liberation Theology* chs 1,3-4  
 Read: Bible in class (selections)

(1/26) Thu Read: Boff. *Introducing Liberation Theology* chs 5-7  
 Write: Argument Analysis Paper on Boff  
 Read: Bible in class (selections)

### **WEEK THREE: A Theology of Liberation**

(1/31) Tue Read: Gutierrez, *Theology of Liberation* Part I  
 Film: *The Forbidden Land*  
 Research: Vatican II (1962-1965) purpose / changes / effect

(2/2) Thu Read: Gutierrez, *Theology of Liberation* Part II  
 Write: Argument Analysis Paper  
**Research**: Gustavo Gutierrez

**WEEK FOUR: A Theology of Liberation**

(2/7) Tue Read: Gutierrez, *Theology of Liberation* Part III  
**Research**: Conference of Latin American Bishops (1968)

(2/9) Thu Read: Gutierrez, *Theology of Liberation* Part IV  
 Write: Argument Analysis Paper

**WEEK FIVE: El Salvador**

(2/14) Tue Read: "Preface" (pp11-12) & "God's Justice" (pp134-152)  
 (Bb ebook: *Violence of Love*, by Óscar Romero)  
**Research**: Salvadoran Civil War / 1979 / FMLN  
 Film: *Romero*

(2/16) Thu Read: "They Both Deny God" (Bb ebook: *Violence of Love* 114-129)  
 "Option for the Poor" (176-199)

**WEEK SIX: Nicaragua**

(2/21) Tue Read: *Gospel in Solentiname* (Selections on Bb)  
**Research**: Solentiname / Ernesto Cardenal / FSLN  
 Film: *Of Lives Uprooted*

(2/23) Thu Read: *Gospel in Solentinime* (Selections on Bb)  
 Film: *Dream of a Free Country*

**WEEK SEVEN: African American & Womanist Theologies**

(2/28) Tue Read: James Cone. "The Content of Theology"  
 OR: Dwight Hopkins "Heart and Head: Black Theology"  
 Intro & Ch 7 on James Cone (*EBOOKS*)  
**Research**: James Cone  
 Write: Argument Analysis Paper

(3/1) Thu Read: Williams. "A Response to James Cone" (Bb)  
 OR: Dwight Hopkins "Black Theology and Womanist Theology" (*EBOOKS*)  
**Research**: Williams/Womanist Theology  
 Write: Argument Analysis Paper  
 Presentation: Aminah Hassoun, Liberation and Rap

**WEEK EIGHT: Mujerista Theology**

- (3/6) Tue Read: Isazi-Díaz. "Un Poquito de Justicia" (Bb pp 325-339)  
 Read: Rodriguez. "Sangre Llama a Sangre" (Bb pp 117-133)  
**Research**: Mujerista Theology/Isazi-Díaz/Feminist Theology  
 Write: Argument Analysis Paper
- (3/8) Thu Read: Loo. "Why an Asian American Theology of Liberation?" (Bb 49-54)  
**Research**: Asian-Am.s in CA/Native Am.s in CA/Japanese Am.s in CA

**WEEK NINE: La Frontera / The Mexican – U.S. Border**

- (3/13) Tue Read: Schrag's "Introduction" to *Not Fit for Society* (pp1-17)  
**Research**: Tijuana / Nogales, AZ / Mexicali / Laredo, TX  
 Film: *Mojados* (2004, 70 min.)
- (3/15) Thu Speaker: George Johnson  
 Read: Johnson's "On Poverty"

**WEEK TEN: Bible: Liberation and Immigration**

- (3/20) Tue Read: Schrag's "They Keep Coming," *Not Fit for Society* (pp163-193)  
 Write: Argument Analysis Paper on Schrag's "They Keep Coming"  
**Research**: Mexican-American War (1846-1848) /  
 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) / Cristero War (1926-29)
- (3/22) Thu Read: Ben Daniel ch.1-2  
 Write: Argument Analysis Paper on Ben Daniels ch.1-2  
 Film: *The Invisible Mexicans of Deer Canyon* (2006, 73min)

**WEEK ELEVEN: Biblical Paradigms in the Immigration Debate**

- (3/27) Tue Read: Daniel Carroll *Christians at the Border* chs 1-3  
 Write: Argument Analysis Paper
- (3/29) Thu Read: Daniel Carroll *Christians at the Border* chs 4-5  
 Film: *The Invisible Chapel* (2007, 31 min)  
 Write: Argument Analysis Paper

**SPRING BREAK**

**WEEK TWELVE: The Economics of Immigration in SoCal**

- (4/10) Tue Read: *The New Rural Poverty*  
**Research**: Cesar Chavez / United Farm Workers Movement
- (4/12) Thu Read: *The New Rural Poverty*  
 Write: Argument Analysis Paper  
 Film: *A Better Life* (2011, 97 min.)

**(4/14) SAT Farm Worker Immersion**

**THIRTEEN: Living Pedagogy of Liberation**

(4/17) Tue Read: Freire  
Write: Argument Analysis Paper  
Speaker: Dreamers

(4/19) Thu Read: Freire  
Write: Argument Analysis Paper

**(4/21) SAT Pasadena Interviews**

**FOURTEEN: Teach-In**

(4/24) Tue

(4/26) Thu

**WEEK FIFTEEN: Teach-In**

(5/1) Tue

(5/3) Thu

**Exam: Course Reflection DUE Tuesday May 8<sup>th</sup>, 10:30-12:30**

## Inclusive Language

Inclusive language is language which assumes that women and men are fully equivalent participants in humanity. In other words, inclusive language is not biased in such a way that it perpetuates the tacit assumption that men are the standard form of human being. One strategy of the civil rights struggle included a repudiation of language which implied that whiteness was the paradigm of humanity or virtue (e.g., "that's mighty 'white' of you."). It became apparent that language was infected with racist stereotypes and assumptions. **Language is not a neutral or innocuous system of signs but can be a bearer of corrupt and degrading ideas. A recognition of the full humanity of all peoples should prompt an attempt to speak and think in ways which include all human beings and degrade none.**

Language which refers to all human beings need not reflect the assumption that all people are men. The identification of a general class (human) with a subset of it (men) naturally works in favor of the subset and to the detriment of the rest. (Think how certain advertisers would like for all soft drinks to be called "cokes" or all brands of tissue to be called "Kleenex"). Words like people, the world, us, human being, humanity, etc. can replace man, mankind, men. Likewise, the pronoun "he" can usually be replaced by plural (human beings/they rather than man/he). Another alternative is to alternate masculine and feminine pronouns (the scientist/she). We invite the students taking classes with us to participate in our experiments with inclusive language.

*Quoted from the Department of Religion at Emory University "Statement on Inclusive Language" © Emory University <http://www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/RELIGION/about/statement.html>*

### Argument Analysis Format:

1. State the author's thesis (the main point they are presenting)
  - a. What does the author want you to believe/think/know about their topic when you finish?
1. Describe the main points of the author's argument (try to summarize in 3-4 points)
  - a. Include the evidence the author uses (documents, experience, science, archeology)
  - b. Include assumptions: what do they ask you to take for granted?
1. Evaluate the author's argument
  - a. Is the evidence they use sufficient?
  - b. Is their reasoning logical?
  - c. Do they give a credible reading of the text?
4. Evaluate the author's argument objectively
  - a. Is the evidence they use sufficient?
  - b. Is their reasoning logical?
  - c. Do they give a credible reading of the text(s) and evidence?
5. Give your opinion--gut reaction and critical response
6. Define key new words you encounter after looking them up in a respectable dictionary.