THEOLOGY 285: Liberation Theology
Fall 2014

Image: Christ of the Breadline, Fritz Eichenberg (1901-1990)

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Course Hashtag: #LiberatingEcology

Class Meetings: Section A – MWF 10:30-11:20
Section B – MWF 11:30-12:20
Class Location: Poisson 104
Office Hours: T/TH 11:30-12:30, F 1-2
Appointment by email

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course examines Liberation Theology as a contemporary and distinct theological method beginning with its roots in Latin America, and its historical, socio-political, and pastoral ramifications. Beginning with an exploration of sources, methods, and historical events that shape this particular theological movement, the course then investigates the central Catholic doctrines as expressed in liberation theologies. Applying the liberationist lens to global ecological crises, the course accents the disproportionate effect of environmental degradation on impoverished communities and argues for the necessity of theological engagement with these communities in developing moral responses to these issues.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
- To encounter Catholic theology in the context of marginalized communities.
- To develop a strong grasp of the methodology and articulations of liberation theologies and their relevance for church, academic, and social life.
- To examine ecological crises through the lens of liberation theology.
- To articulate clear and nuanced arguments supported by evidence and analysis.
- To practice concrete skills necessary for public engagement, especially writing, critical and imaginative thinking, and information literacy.
COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES:

- **You are expected to attend every class meeting.** You are permitted three (3) absences for any reason. More than three absences will result in a participation score of zero.

- **You are expected to arrive on time for every class meeting.** More than three (3) late arrivals will result in a reduction of your participation grade.

- **You are expected to switch your cell phone to silent or vibrate prior to every class.** Please store your device away from your work surface. Texting during class will result in a reduction of your participation grade.

- **You are expected to use laptops and tablet devices responsibly during class.** These devices can be powerful tools in the classroom setting. They can also distract from the communal interaction and conversation that is the foundation of liberal arts education. Thus, these devices are permitted for taking notes, for viewing texts, and for facilitating group work. Using these devices for browsing the Internet during class will result in a reduction of your participation grade.

- **You are expected to complete the assigned reading every week.** Please come to class prepared to discuss the primary arguments, salient points, and possible critiques of each text. Failure to complete reading and prepare for class participation will result in a reduction of your participation grade.

- **You are expected to read and bring the assigned text to class.** Repeated failure to bring texts to class will result in a reduction of your participation grade.

- **You are expected to submit assignments by their designated deadlines.** Late assignments will only be accepted in cases in which demonstrable circumstances indicate that an extension is necessary. Unacceptable reasons include conflict with another homework assignment or other instances of poor schedule management. Acceptable reasons include documented family or medical emergencies. All unexcused late submissions will result in a score of zero.

- **You are expected to know and abide by the Saint Anselm College policy for Academic Honesty.** Adhering to this policy is crucial to your development as a scholar and citizen. It will be strictly enforced in this class. Work dishonestly completed will result in a zero on the assignment.

- **Students with documented disabilities can expect appropriate accommodations whenever necessary.** It is the student’s responsibility to present the verification letter to Prof. Flores within the first three weeks of the semester. Please contact the Academic Resource Center (ARC) at disabilityservices@anselm.edu for more information.

- **Student athletes are expected to present their schedule notification as soon as it is available.**

GRADE POLICY:

Prof. Flores will make every effort to grade your work fairly and in accord with the Saint Anselm College grading policy. In general, all assignments will be strictly evaluated based on thesis/argument, evidence (quality and factual correctness), writing quality, depth of analysis/insight, and creativity/inspiration.

- **Appealing Grades:** At least 48 hours after an assignment has been returned, a student may email professor Flores to request an appointment for grade review.

- **A Note on Drafts:** It is a good idea to complete a draft of the assignment in advance of the due date so you can revise and edit your work. Due to the volume of students
enrolled between both sections of the class, Prof. Flores will not read drafts of your assignments. She strongly advises you, however, to share and discuss your drafts with other classmates. You are also encouraged to take advantage of the peer tutoring and writing support available at the Academic Resource Center (ARC). See http://www.anselm.edu/arc for more information.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

PARTICIPATION:
CONTRIBUTION TO CLASSROOM COMMUNITY AND COURSE POLICY
ADHERENCE – 10%

Class participation includes attentive listening, thoughtful contributions to large group discussion, positive participation in small group discussion, quality reading responses, and completion of occasional in-class and/or homework assignments.

Policy adherence includes abiding by the basic expectations for attendance and assignment submission detailed in the “Course Expectations and Policies” section of this syllabus.

READING RESPONSES – 10%

Each student will write a response of 250-500 words reflecting on each unit’s assigned readings and post it to the Sakai Forum. Entries can include a summary of salient themes and arguments or reflect the student’s own thoughts on the text; the goals are to read the texts and to think about them in preparation for class and other assignments. The entries are evaluated on a Credit/No Credit basis; however, the quality of responses will be considered as a part of the overall participation score. This assignment requires one submission for each of the five (5) units as defined in the “Course Outline” section of the syllabus.

RESEARCH & WRITING:

MIDTERM ESSAY – 15%

Each student will write an essay of no more than five (5) double-spaced pages (including footnotes), responding to prompts identified by Prof. Flores.

FINAL ESSAY – 25%

Each student will write an essay of no more than five (5) double-spaced pages (including footnotes), responding to prompts identified by Prof. Flores.

SERVICE LEARNING OPTION (SL)

Interested students will be allowed to conduct RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY pertaining to poverty advocacy and environmental justice through the Melia Center. Generally, SL students will replace the two essays with a research report in coordination with a local service organization. PLEASE CONTACT PROF. FLORES BEFORE BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK OF CLASSES TO EXPRESS INTEREST IN THIS OPTION.

EXAMINATIONS:

IN CLASS EXAMINATION – 15%

A 50-minute, in-class examination will test comprehension of terms, concepts, and ideas from the theological foundations that structure the course. A study guide will be distributed prior to the examination.

FINAL EXAMINATION – 25%

This 120-minute examination, administered during the final examination period, will
test comprehension of major terms, concepts, and ideas drawn from the entire course. The essay portion will assess the development of theological reasoning skills. A study guide will be distributed prior to the examination.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
***Article PDFs (available on Sakai)
*All course texts are on reserve at the Geisel Library*

COURSE OUTLINE

UNIT I: “SIGNS OF THE TIMES”: INTRODUCING LIBERATION THEOLOGY
Objective: To encounter the foundational ideas of Liberation Theology toward understanding its character, history, and major developments

**Week 1 – Longing for Running Water: Poverty, Ecology, and Liberation** *(40 Pages)*

*Wednesday, 9/3 – Course Introduction*
***Anna Clark, “Going Without Water in Detroit” (3 Pages)***
***Goizueta, “What is Liberation Theology?” (6 Pages)***

*Friday, 9/5 – Christianity in a World of Suffering*
Boff and Boff, Chapter 1, “The Basic Question: How to Be Christians in a World of Destitution” (10 Pages)
Boff, Chapter 3, “How is Liberation Theology Done?” (21 Pages)

**Week 2 – How is Liberation Theology Done? (55 pages)**

*Monday, 9/8 – Option for the Poor & Key Themes*
Boff, Chapter 4, “Key Themes of Liberation Theology” (23 Pages)

*Wednesday, 9/10 – Social Sin and Structural Injustice*
***Kristin Heyer, “Social Sin and Inhospitality to Immigrants” (20 Pages)***

*Friday, 9/12 – Human Dignity in Catholic Social Tradition*
***Gaudium et spe, nos. 1-22 (12 Pages)***

**Week 3 – A History of Liberation Theology (44 Pages)**

*Monday, 9/15 – Community in Catholic Social Tradition*
***Gaudium et spe, nos. 23-32 (5 Pages)***
Wednesday, 9/17 - History of Liberation Theology
Boff and Boff, Chapter 5, “A Concise History of Liberation Theology” (12 Pages)

Friday, 9/19 – Liberation Theology and the Catholic Church
***Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faithful, “Instruction on Certain Aspects of Liberation Theology” (20 Pages)
***Joshua J. McElwee, “Pope meets with liberation theology pioneer” (3 Pages)

READING RESPONSE 1 DUE – POST TO SAKAI FORUM BY 12 NOON

Week 4 – Ecological Signs of the Times (37 Pages)
Monday, 9/22 – Ethics in the Anthropocene
Peppard, Chapter 2, “Theology and Ethics for the New Millennium” (18 Pages)

Wednesday, 9/24 – Liberation Ecology
***Kathryn Lilla Cox, “Green Solidarity: Liberation Theology, the Ecological Crisis, and the Poor” (19 Pages)

Friday, 9/26
No Reading

IN-CLASS EXAMINATION ON FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS

UNIT II: “THIS IS MY BODY” (Luke 22:19)
OBJECTIVE: To address social alienation and segregation from the liberationist lens of fundamental human sociality.

Week 5 – Human and Divine Relationship (59 Pages)
Monday, 9/29 – Conversion and Solidarity
***Gustavo Gutierrez, “Conversion: A Requirement for Solidarity” (12 Pages)

Wednesday, 10/1 – Encountering Human Suffering
***Laurie Cassidy, “Picturing Suffering: The Moral Dilemmas in Gazing at Photographs of Human Anguish” (24 Pages)

Friday, 10/3 – Service and Solidarity at Saint Anselm College
***Meghan J. Clark, “Engaging the Future of the Human Rights Project and Building Solidarity” (23 Pages)

Meeting in conjunction with Prof. J. Lucas’s Introduction to Peace & Justice Class
NHIOP, West Wing

Week 6 – Solidarity as Social Virtue (50 Pages)
Monday, 10/6 - Liberating Anthropology
***Michelle A. Gonzalez, “Who We Are: A Latino/a Constructive Anthropology” (19 Pages)

**Wednesday, 10/8 – Liberating Bodies**
Copeland, Chapter 2, “Enfleshing Freedom” (31 Pages)

**Friday, 10/10**
Continue Copeland Chapter 2

**READING RESPONSE 2 DUE – POST TO SAKAI BY FRIDAY AT 12 NOON**

**Week 7 – New Horizons in Theological Anthropology (45 Pages)**
**Monday, 10/13 – NO CLASS: FALL RECESS**

**Wednesday, 10/15 – Liberating Relationship**
Goizueta, Chapter 1, “Proclaiming the Truth in the 21st Century” (24 Pages)

**Friday, 10/17 – Relationship with Non-Human Creation (NHC)**
***Marcus Mescher, “Neighbor to Nature” (18 Pages)
***James Cone, “Whose Earth is it Anyway?” (3 Pages)

**MIDTERM ESSAY DUE – POST TO SAKAI BY FRIDAY AT 5PM**

OBJECTIVE: To examine the prevalent liberationist critique of surrogate suffering as presented in classical Christological conceptions and identify how it perpetuates ideologies of surrogacy in today’s global economy.

**Week 8 – Jesus and Surrogate Suffering (36 Pages)**
**Monday, 9/20 – Slavery and Surrogate Suffering**
***Delores S. Williams, “Black Women’s Surrogacy Experience and the Christian Notion of Redemption” (14 Pages)

**Wednesday, 9/22 – The Cross and the Lynching Tree**
Copeland, Chapter 5, “Eucharist, Racism, and Black Bodies” (22 Pages)

**Friday, 9/24 – Eucharist and Bodily Salvation**
Continue Copeland Chapter 5

**Week 9 – Labor Exploitation: Theological and Ethical Responses (49 Pages)**
**Monday, 9/27 – Exploiting Migrant Women**
***Nichole M. Flores, “The Invisible Woman: Seeing Migrant Women Through the Eyes of Christ” (2 Pages)

**Wednesday, 9/29 – Theological Responses**
Garcia-Rivera, Chapter 3, “Heaven and Earth” (28 Pages)
Friday, 10/31 – Ethical Responses
***Julie Hanlon Rubio, “Toward a Just Way of Eating” (19 Pages)

READING RESPONSE 3 DUE – POST TO SAKAI BY 12 NOON

UNIT IV: “A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH” (ISA 65:17, 2 Peter 3:13, Revelations 21:1)
OBJECTIVE: To encounter Liberation Theology’s responses to globalization, especially popular religion and theological aesthetics (beauty).

Week 10 – Beauty and Justice in a Globalized World (58 Pages)
Monday, 11/3 – Theology and Economics
Goizueta, Chapter 3, “Popular Catholicism” (41 Pages)

Wednesday, 11/5 – Theology and Economics
Continue Goizueta Chapter 3

Friday, 11/7 – Beauty and Justice in Catholic Theology
Goizueta, Chapter 5, “Seeing the Form: Theological Aesthetics from the Margins” (17 Pages)

Week 11 – For the Beauty of the Earth (55 Pages)
Monday, 11/10 – Beauty and Justice in a Globalized World
Goizueta, Chapter 6, “Reimagining the Border” (31 Pages)

Wednesday, 11/12
Continue Goizueta Chapter 6

Friday, 11/14 – Liberating Beauty
Garcia-Rivera, Chapter 4, “Endless Forms Most Beautiful” (24 Pages)

READING RESPONSE 3 DUE – POST TO SAKAI BY 12 NOON

UNIT V: “AS THE DEER LONGS” (Psalm 42:1)
OBJECTIVE: To examine the global fresh water crisis through the lens of liberation theology which reveals both the theological and material necessity of responding to this issue.

Week 12 – Water and Human Rights (47 Pages)
Monday, 11/17 – Fresh Water Under Siege
Peppard, Chapter 2, “A Primer on the Global Fresh Water Crisis” (15 Pages)

Wednesday, 11/19 – Right or Commodity?
Peppard, Chapter 3, “Water: Human Right or Economic Commodity?” (16 Pages)
Friday, 11/21 – Water and Pro-Life Politics
Peppard, Chapter 4, “A Right-to-Life Issue for the Twenty-First Century” (16 Pages)

Week 13 – Research and Writing Week

Monday, 11/24 - RESEARCH AND WRITING DAY

Wednesday, 11/26 – RESEARCH AND WRITING DAY

FINAL ESSAY DUE – POST TO SAKAI BY WEDNESDAY AT 5PM

Friday, 11/28 – THANKSGIVING RECESS

Week 14 – Religion and Environmental Justice (61 Pages)

Monday, 12/1 – Water and Religion
Peppard, Chapter 6, “The Jordan River” (18 Pages)

Wednesday, 12/3 – Moral Incompetence?
***Willis Jenkins, “Atmospheric Powers: Climate Change and Moral Incompetence”
(43 Pages)

Friday, 12/5 – Pragmatic Action
Continue Jenkins

READING RESPONSE 5 DUE – POST TO SAKAI BY 12 NOON

Week 15 – “Let Justice Roll” (Amos 5:24) (57 Pages)

Monday, 12/8 – Liberating Justice
***Nichole Flores, “The Personal is Political: Toward a Vision of Justice in Latina Theology” (10 Pages)
Goizueta, Chapter 2, “Reconciliation in Christ: Christian Truth as the Refusal to Impose Truth” (19 Pages)

Wednesday, 12/10 – Heaven and Nature Sing
Garcia-Rivera, Chapter 5 “The Garden of God: Toward a Theological Cosmology” (28 Pages)

FINAL EXAMINATION: DATE/TIME TBA