

TH 3390 – SPRING 2013 - Syllabus

EMPIRE & CAPITAL -

THEOLOGICAL

CONSIDERATIONS

Professor: Mark Lewis Taylor
Office: Hodge 115/Phone: 497-7918
Class Times: 2:00-4:50 p.m., Tuesdays

GOALS

- 1
To introduce course members to the general structures and dynamics of contemporary studies of "globalization," coloniality of power, class and empire, as challenges to critical reflection in theology and ethics.

- 2
To situate discussions of globalization, empire and capital within (a) *historical* contexts of colonialism, and (b) *cultural* contexts that clarify how diverse dynamics of race and gender intersect with those of class and economy. (White racism and gender inequalities, thus, will be crucial in the study of political domination and economic exploitation.)

- 4
To understand how Christianity has been integral to imperial and capitalist formations, and how it has functioned as a resource for critical resistance to them or to their transformation or overthrow.

- 5
To reflect on how Christian faith, and other spiritual traditions, can help create justice amid contemporary contexts of globalization, empire and capital.



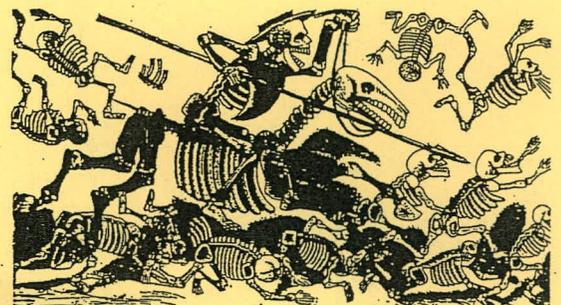
Here we are, the forever dead, dying once again, but now in order to live.
ZAPATISTA ARMY OF NATIONAL LIBERATION

The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.
KARL MARX

And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn . . . , since no one buys their cargo any more, cargo of gold, silver, jewels . . . fine linen... articles of ivory, . . . marble. . .wheat, cattle... chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls. **BOOK OF REVELATION**

Join us in this vigil
and you will know what it is to dream!
to dream awake,
to keep watch asleep,
to live while dying,
and to know ourselves already resurrected!

JULIA ESQUIVEL,
"THREATENED WITH RESURRECTION"



TEXTS

Books in the bookstore for this course are listed here. You may wish to check the “Agenda” of readings below, or check with the professor, to gauge the amount of reading required in each. This may guide your purchasing decisions.

► IN BOOKSTORE & LIBRARY RESERVE (From these, the most important pages and amounts of reading will be assigned):

HARDT, Michael, and NEGRI, Antonio. 2009. *Commonwealth*. Harvard University Press.

HORSLEY, Richard A. *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002.

KLEIN, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. Picador, 2008.

KWOK, Pui-Lan, and RIEGER, Jeorg. *Occupy Religion: Theology of the Multitude*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2012.

LOPEZ, Davina. *Apostle to the Conquered: Re-Imagining Paul's Mission*. Fortress Press, 2010.

McCLINTOCK, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. Routledge, 1995.

McLELLAN, David. *Marxism: Essential Writings*. Oxford University Press, 1988.

MARX, Karl. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Second edition. Edited by Robert C. Tucker. W. W. Norton, 1978.

TAYLOR, Mark Lewis, *Religion, Politics and the Christian Right: Post-9/11 Powers and American Empire*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005.

► REQUIRED TO READ ONLY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING (IN BOOKSTORE & RESERVE)

BRIGGS, Laura. *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico*. University of California Press, 2002

KIM, Jodi. *The Ends of Empire: Asian-American Critique and the Cold War*. University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

HOCHSCHILD, Adam. *King Leopold's Ghost: A Tale of Greed, Horror and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, Houghton Mifflin, 1998.

► REQUIRED & IN STORE AND RESERVE (but less reading required from these)

HARVEY, David. 2010. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

DAVIS, Angela. 2003. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Press.

_____. *Abolition Democracy: Beyond Empire, Prisons, Torture*. Interviews. NY: Seven Stories.

► EXTRA HELPFUL TEXTS (only on library reserve):

MOE-LOBEDA, Cynthia D. *Healing a Broken World: Globalization and God*. Fortress Press, 2001.

*OKIHIRO, Gary Y. *Common Ground: Reimagining American History*. Princeton University Press, 2001.

*PETERS, Rebecca. *In Search of the Good Life: The Ethics of Globalization*. New York: Continuum, 2004.

*PUI-LAN, Kwok, RIEGER, Jeorg, COMPIER, Don. Eds. *Empire and the Christian Tradition*. Fortress Press, 2008.

REQUIREMENTS

Percentages of grade, which are given below after each requirement, are not the basis for an exact calculus of grade, but rather suggest how the requirements are weighted relative to one another.

1. Faithful **attendance** in class, and diligent **coverage of assigned readings**.
2. Participation in one of the **precepts** held usually in the last hour of our three-hour class sessions. More information on this will be forthcoming. (These first two requirements constitute 10 % of grade.)
3. Participation as **panelist** for one of the panel discussions in the course (your panel being scheduled one of the dates for the last three weeks of the semester: April 2, 9 or 16). (15 % of grade). More information on the panels will be forthcoming.
4. **The Major Requirement:** To keep a CRITICAL LOG (which I differentiate from a "journal") during and about your reading. "Journals and journaling" have often been

used in many courses. In this class, a more rigorous form of that is the main requirement, beyond the above-mentioned points. I want members of this course to have the opportunity to read carefully and thoroughly, to make valuable notes, and to preserve the intellectual and other insights you have along the way of this course.

Below, in the text box on this page, are the criteria for a good Critical Log. These constitute the major criteria by which I grade the logs. Fulfillment of each criterion will enable your Critical Log to have the important dimension that I list in bold for each point. Each of the criteria below is differently weighted. NOTE: "Substance" and "Critique" are the two most important, most point-worthy criteria. 45 points make up the topmost grade on the Logs. As percentage of the total semester grade, the Critical Log counts 75 percent.

What follows is a presentation of the criteria used in evaluating the Critical Logs:

1) Signs that entries are made regularly, such that I can see development over time in the log. Flow. (5 points)
2) Signs that the main points, structure and argument of the materials read are noted and carefully being preserved. Substance. (12 points)
3) Signs of your own <u>critical</u> engagement with the material, i.e. that in addition to reading and understanding well, you are able to question it, challenge it, and <u>say why</u> you agree or disagree with the material. Critique. (12 points)
4) Signs that you are reflecting on <u>the implications</u> of the material for other issues, for various contexts, for your life and/or others. Breadth. (8 points)
5) Signs of creativity, i.e. carefully crafted written notes, (these too can be creative) also, outlines, charts, graphs, sketches, painting, etc. Creativity. (8 points)

At Midterm, Critical Logs are due for a quick assessment, during which I will give you summary feedback about how you are doing, using the above criteria. **At End-of-Term Time**, Critical Logs are due for final grading. I prefer that the Critical Log be typed. Please place your **SBN number** near your name on the finally submitted journal, and also make sure your last name appears in the File Name when sent to me by email (at midterm) or posted to Blackboard (at end of term).

THE LECTURES

My lectures for this course will seek to illumine the texts you are reading. I have determined, though, that my lectures will be centered on critical engagement of the book by Michael Hardt and Antonio

Negri, *Commonwealth*. This book, through my lectures, will facilitate our building unity across the diverse readings, bringing into play what is required for theological reflection on empire and capital: a critical relation between, on the one hand, political, economic and other theories (on sexuality, gender, white racism), philosophy, history, and, on the other, interrogation of, theological beliefs and practices. The book focuses on all of these in some way, and even though I disagree at points, it fruitfully provides a way to orient our discussions and understanding.

You will see - below in the Agenda's text-boxes - the particular page references to the texts in *Commonwealth*, on which I will be lecturing on each week. These texts are not required reading, since I will be presenting in class the texts' key moves and content each week. However, if you wish to read these texts and include reference to them in your Critical Log you may substitute the text from *Commonwealth*, which is almost always between 32-39 pages each week, for another reading of comparable length (meaning, within 10 pages, more or less). Please note in your Critical Log which of the assigned readings you are omitting, so as to make room for your commentary on the *Commonwealth* text of the week. *I will provide you a complete analytic outline of the book, more complete than its Table of Contents, in order to facilitate your identifications of the texts that might be of most interest to you.* Sufficient copies of the book also can be found in the bookstore should you wish to purchase it. (It is also on Reserve).

COURSE FORMAT

AGENDA

JAN 22 **INTRODUCING THE COURSE: EMPIRE, CAPITAL - & THEOLOGY?** (41 pp.)

Vijay Prashad, "This Concerns Everyone," in *We Are Many: Reflections on Movement Strategy from Occupation to Liberation*, 9-18.

Naomi Klein, "Blank is Beautiful: Three Decades of Making and Remaking the World, 3-26.

Kwok and Rieger, *Occupy Religion*, 1-10.

In class: Documentary film: *The End of Poverty? Think Again*.
2010. Cinema Libre Studio.

-On youTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pktOXJr1vOQ&wide=1>

-Official website:

<http://www.theendofpoverty.com/>

-Debates and critique (with bios on cast):

<http://povertythinkagain.com/critical-response-to-the-film-the-end-of-poverty/>

Recommended:

Harvey, "Freedom's Just Another Word. . .," in *Brief Introduction to Neoliberalism*, 1-38.

♦ *Lecture text: Hardt and Negri, Commonwealth, vii-xiv*

PART I

**EMPIRE & CAPITAL'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT –
THE COLONIALITY OF POWER**

"I write, then, in the conviction that history is not shaped around a single privileged social category. Race and class difference cannot, I believe, be understood as sequentially derivative of sexual difference, or vice versa. Rather, the formative categories of imperial modernity are articulated categories in the sense that they come into being in historical relation to each other and emerge only in dynamic, shifting and intimate interdependence."

Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather*

JAN 29

EMPIRE & CAPITAL IN THE "COLONIALITY OF POWER" (120 pp.)



McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*:

"Introduction," and, "The Lay of the Land: Genealogies of Imperialism," 1-74.

"Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising," 207-31.

"Postscript: The Angel of Progress," 391-96.

Katie Geneva Cannon, 2011. "Racism and Economics," in *Womanist Theological Ethics*, Ed. By Katie Geneva Cannon, Emilie M. Townes, Angela D. Sims. WJK Press.

♦ *Lecture text: Hardt and Negri, Commonwealth, 3-38*

FEB 5

CLASS AND THE U.S. IMPERIUM (101 pp.)

Kwok and Rieger, *Occupy Religion*, "We are the 99%," 11-30.

Marx, "The Communist Manifesto," and "Theses on Feuerbach in Tucker, 473-500, and 143-5, respectively.

Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, "The Other Doctor Shock: Milton Friedman and the Search for a Laissez-Faire Laboratory," 59-87



Kwok and Rieger, *Occupy Religion*, "The Multitude Springs into Action," 31-56.

♦ Lecture text: *Hardt and Negri, Commonwealth, 39-77*

PART II

**MARX AND MARXISMS:
A BRIEF INTRODUCTION**

"A commodity appears, at first sight, a very trivial thing, and easily understood. Its analysis shows that it is, in reality, a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties. . . . we therefore take leave for a time of this noisy sphere, where everything takes place on the surface, . . . and follow into the hidden abode of production . . . We shall at last force the secret of profit making."

Karl Marx, *Capital*

FEB 12

ALIENATION AND CLASS (77 pp)

Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, in Tucker, 66-93.

Klein, "States of Shock: The Bloody Birth of Counter-Revolution," *The Shock Doctrine*, 91-120.

_____. "Let it Burn: The Looting of Asia and 'the Fall of a Second Berlin Wall', *Shock Doctrine*, 332-53.

Taylor, "Preface" and "Introduction," in *Religion, Politics and the Christian Right*, ix-xiv, 1-16.

◆ *Lecture text: Hardt and Negri,
Commonwealth, 77-112*

FEB 19 MONEY & CAPITAL and FETISHISM & RELIGION (82 pp.)

Marx, *Capital*, Volume 1, "Commodities," "The Transformation of Money into Capital," "The Buying and Selling of Labor Power," "The Working Day," in Tucker, 302-64.



Taylor, "The 9/11 Moment," in *Religion, Politics and the Christian Right*, 35-46.

Davis, "The Prison Industrial Complex," in *Are Prisons Obsolete?* 84-104 (small pages)

◆ *Lecture text: Hardt and Negri,
Commonwealth, 112-49*

FEB 26 MARXISMS: ACROSS THE CONTINENTS (109 pp.)

Rosa Luxemburg, "Social Reform or Revolution," "The Mass Strike," "Lenin's Centralism," and "The Russian Revolution," in McLellan, *Marxism: Essential Writings*, 108-33

Mao Zedong, "The Peasantry as a Revolutionary Force," "On Guerrilla Warfare," "On Contradiction," "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," "Difficulties in the Cultural Revolution," 315-328 (at second paragraph break), 335-8.

Amilcar Cabral, "Class and Revolution in Africa," 392-408

Ernesto "Che" Guevara, "On Guerilla Strategy," and "Socialist Humanism and Revolution," 373-91.

Klein, "Shock Therapy in the USA: The Homeland Security Bubble," and "A Corporatist State: Removing the Revolving Door, Putting in an Archway," 357-407

Recommended:

Davis, Angela, "Sexual Coercion, Prisons, and Feminist Responses," in Davis, *Abolition Democracy*, 49-76 (small pages, easier reading).

◆ *Lecture text: Hardt and Negri, Commonwealth, 150-89*

SPRING READING PERIOD,
February 27 - March 11
(for this course)

PART III

**THINKING "GOSPEL" -
AMID/AGAINST "EMPIRE & CAPITAL"**

"The nations [ta ethnē] lie at a complex intersection of gender, race, sexuality, nationality, geography, military power, and economic structures. As a signifier, they occupy a site of struggle." . . . Paul's plea for disloyalty to imperial intercolumniations and solidarity among the defeated nations, marked by a refusal to "stay in place," appears as a nightmare for those vested with, and invested in, imperial power.

Davina Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered*

MAR 12 BEYOND THE DE-POLITICIZED JESUS AND PAUL (105 pp.)

Richard Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*, 1-78.

Davina Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered*, "Preface," and "The Nations in Nero's Nightmare," xi-xv, 1-25.

◆ *Lecture text: Hardt and Negri, Commonwealth, 189-218*

MAR 19 PAUL & THE RACED/GENDERED IMPERIAL IMAGINARY
OF THE NATIONS (*TA ETHNĒ*) (107 pp.)

Davina Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered*, "The Fate of the Nations in Roman Imperial Representation," 26-55, and "Re-Imagining Paul as Apostle to the Conquered," 119-24.

Klein, "Erasing Iraq: In Search of a 'Model' for the Middle East," *The Shock Doctrine*, 411-30.

◆ *Lecture text: Hardt and Negri, Commonwealth, 219-40*

MAR 26 THE GOSPEL AMONG THE DEFEATED NATIONS (78 pp.)

Davina Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered*, from Paul's "Gender-Critical Re-Imagination" to "Paul's "New Creation" Model of Solidarity, 124-73.

Klein, "Shock Wears Off: The Rise of People's Reconstruction," 560-89.

◆ *Lecture text: Hardt and Negri, Commonwealth, 240-74*

Part IV

THEOLOGIES OF THE MULTITUDE IN
AN AGE OF EMPIRE & CAPITAL

At the heart of the Jesus movement was not what has often been referred to as the demos of the Greeks, the assembly of privileged citizens from which the word "democracy" comes. At the heart of this movement were the laos and the ochlos, both of which describe the common people in contrast with the privileged citizens of the empire or of the religious elites.

Kwok Pui-lan and Jeorg Rieger, *Occupy Religion*

APR 2

PROPHETIC SPIRIT AND "THEOLOGY" OF THE MULTITUDE

Readings: (75 pages for everyone)

Kwok and Rieger, "Theology of the Multitude," in *Occupy Religion*, 57-82.

Davis, "How Gender Structures the Prison System," *Are Prisons Obsolete?* 60-83 (small booklet pages)

Taylor, "The Specter of Prophetic Spirit," and "Revolutionary Belonging," in *Religion, Politics and the Christian Right*, 96-109 and 110-23, respectively.

Panel:

Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico*. University of CA Press, 2002.

◆ *Lecture text: Hardt and Negri, Commonwealth, 274-311*

APR 9

PROPHETIC SPIRIT AND THE "GOD" OF THE MULTITUDE

Readings: (63 pages, for everyone)

Kwok and Rieger, "Re-Imagining the God of the Multitude," in *Occupy Religion*, 83-110.

Liu, Yvonne Yen. "Where Is the Color in Occupy?," and " in *We Are Many*, 75-80.

Taylor, "Revolutionary Expectation," *Religion, Politics and the Christian Right*, 124-55

Panel:

Jodi Kim, *The Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War*. University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

◆ *Lecture text: Hardt and Negri,
Commonwealth, 312-44*

APR 16 **PROPHETIC SPIRIT AND THE “CHURCH” OF THE MULTITUDE**

Readings: (54 pages, for everyone)

Kwok and Rieger, “Envisioning the Church of the Multitude,” *Occupy Religion*, 111-32.

Maharawal, Manissa McCleave. “Reflections from the People of Color Caucus at Occupy Wall Street,” 177-83.

Taylor, “Christian Faith and Counter-Imperial Practice,” in *Religion, Politics and the Christian Right*, 156-63.

Panel:

Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost: A Tale of Greed, Horror and Heroism in Colonial Africa*. Houghton Mifflin, 1998.

Recommended:

Klein, “Democracy Born in Chains: South Africa’s Constricted Freedom,” 245-74.

Harvey, David. “Freedom’s Prospect,” in *Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 183-205.

◆ *Lecture text: Hardt and Negri,
Commonwealth, 345-383*



José Guadalupe Posada

NOTE ON SYLLABUS ARTWORK

The illustrations in this syllabus are by the Mexican artist José Guadalupe Posada (1852-1913), a cartoonist, illustrator and artist, whose satire and perceptive folk art influenced especially Latin American artists, but also other thinkers the world over. Claudio Lomnitz, in his book, *Death and the Idea of Mexico* (Zone Books, 2005), writes: “. . . Luis Cardoza y Aragón, reminded his readers that in Mexico, the skulls and skeletons that Posada used for satiric purposes also had festive connotations, and the image of the skeleton is so pervasive in Mexican popular culture that it deserves to be recognized as ‘Mexico’s national totem.’ . . . Since the 1920s a number of Mexico’s renowned artists have taken the playful intimacy with death as a peculiarly Mexican sign.” Many of the drawings can be found in *The Works of José Guadalupe Posada*, ed. Hannes Jähn (Zweitausendeins, GE, 1976). These particular representations of Posada’s drawings I have taken from *Shadows of Tender Fury: The Letters and Communiqués of Subcomandante Marcos and the Zapatista Army of National Liberation* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1995).

NOTES ON THE SYLLABUS COVER QUOTATIONS: the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, from *Shadows of Tender Fury* (p. 55); Karl Marx, from “18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte” (2nd paragraph); Revelation of John, from *Revelation* 18:11-13; and Julia Esquivel, from *Threatened with Resurrection/Amenazado de resurrección: Prayers and Poems from an Exiled Guatemalan*. 2nd edition (Brethren Press, 1994), pp. 63, 65.