

TH 3444

LIBERATION THEOLOGY

OF

GUSTAVO GUTIÉRREZ

Fall 2011

Princeton Theological Seminary

Professor: Mark Lewis Taylor

Office: Hodge 115, 609 497-7918

Class: Tuesdays, 2:00-4:50 pm



OBJECTIVES

1. To introduce the theological structure and content of Gustavo Gutiérrez's theology of liberation.
2. To nurture critical conversation about liberation theory as well as of liberation theology.
3. To immerse course members in a growing awareness of Latin American struggles for liberation as these relate to Christian faith and human struggles for justice *within* the United States.

OUTCOMES

By end of the term, course members will have evidenced in their critical logs (see "Requirements below) the following outcomes -

1. A working knowledge of the liberation theology of one of Latin American liberation theology's key theological pioneers, Gustavo Gutiérrez, of Peru.
2. An ability to formulate and reflect on Christian beliefs today as a politically emancipatory discourse, engaging critically both biblical and theological traditions.

3. A capacity to identify and reflect on key international power relations between the U.S. and Latin America which are also pertinent to living *within* the United States.
4. A beginning awareness of how issues of race, gender, and sexuality are co-constitutive of the immiseration of poverty spawned by class exploitation.

TEXTS

ALTHAUS-REID, Marcella. *The Queer God*. Routledge, 2003

CESAR, Waldo, and SHAULL, Richard. *Pentecostalism and the Future of the Christian Churches*. William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2007.

COMBLIN, José. *Called for Freedom: The Changing Context of Liberation Theology*. Orbis Books, 1998.

FLOYD-THOMAS, Stacey, and PINN, Anthony. Eds. *Liberation Theologies in the United States: An Introduction*. NYU Press, 2010.

GALEANO, Eduardo. *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*. New Foreword by Isabelle Allende. Monthly Review Press, 1973/1997.

GUTIÉRREZ, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation [TL]*. 15th Anniversary Edition, with a new introduction by the author. Orbis Books, 1988.

_____. *Gustavo Gutiérrez: Essential Writings*. Ed. James Nickoloff. Fortress Press, 1996.

HORSLEY, Richard A. *Jesus and the Powers: Conflict, Covenant and the Hope of the Poor*. Fortress Press, 2011.

PETRELLA, Ivan. *Latin American Theology: The Next Generation*. Orbis Books, 2011.

PINEDA-MADRID, Nancy. *Suffering and Salvation in Ciudad Juárez*. Fortress, 2011.

ROWLAND, Christopher. *Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*. 2nd edition. Cambridge University Press, 2007.



COURSE PROCEDURE

1. Course meeting times are in a three-hour block on Tuesday afternoons from 2:00 p.m. to 4:50 p.m. Normally this period will be broken up into three parts: (a) professor's lecture, (b) all-class discussion and questions, and (c) break-out for small group discussion in precepts.
2. The last three meetings of the class (Nov. 15, Nov. 29, and Dec. 6) will feature shorter lectures by the professor, and substantial input from student-constituted panels. More information on this later; but be prepared to sign up to be a panelist for one of these last three weeks.
3. The only written assignment – but it is significant – is the “Critical Log.” Please read the section on the Critical Log, carefully, as given under “Requirements.”
4. Spanish-speaking course members are encouraged to use Spanish translations, especially of Gutiérrez's work. I am having the Spanish versions of *A Theology of Liberation*, placed on reserve.



REQUIREMENTS

1. Faithful, weekly (and on-time) *attendance* and participation in courses and discussion.
2. Coming to class *with the assigned reading completed* so that you are ready to be an active participant even if you choose not to speak on some occasions. It is recommended that you have the reading done by the week's class period.
3. *Serve once as a precept initiator* in the one-hour class session to which you are assigned. As the initiator, please bring a one-paragraph, typed presentation of your comment or question to provide the instructor. The comment and question should reference some particular segment of the texts that everyone read for that week.
4. *Serve as a panelist* on one of the panelists that will be set up for the last three weeks of the course. See the Agenda in this syllabus, so that you can decide, as soon as possible, which week you would like to serve as panelist. Instructions for these panels will be given out later, but generally each panelist will be asked to offer a brief 5-7 minute response to the reading of the week they have chosen.
4. **The Major Requirement:** To keep a CRITICAL LOG during and about your reading. Journals and “journaling” have often been used pedagogically in many courses. In this class, it is the main requirement, other than the above-mentioned points. I want people in 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 is what I look for in a good critical log. I have numbered below the five major criteria by which I evaluate the logs. Fulfillment of each criterion will enable your critical log to have the important dimension that I list in bold for each point.

- 1) Signs that entries are made regularly, such that I can see development over time in the log. **Flow.**
 - 2) Signs that the main points, structure and argument of the materials read are noted and carefully being preserved. **Substance.**
 - 3) Signs of your own critical engagement with the material, i.e. that in addition to reading and understanding well, you are able to question it, challenge it, and say why you agree or disagree with the material. **Critique.**
 - 4) Signs that you are reflecting on the implications of the material for other issues, for various contexts, for your life and/or others. **Breadth.**
 - 5) Signs of creativity, i.e. carefully crafted written notes, (these are creative expressions, after all) but also, outlines, charts, graphs, sketches, painting, etc. **Creativity.**
5. **At Midterm**, journals are due for a quick assessment, during which I will give you feedback about how you are doing in terms of the above criteria. **At Term Time**, journals are due for final grading, submitted, preferably in hard-copy, but I will accept electronic mailings. Please place your **SBN number** near your name on the finally submitted journal.

NOTE: Determining Final Grades. This is always a difficult process and my grading method does not pretend to be an exact science. It is not purely impressionist either. The general guide is that the Critical Log will each count about 60% of the final grade (10% of which is met by submitting it for review at mid-term), your panel presentation in the last three weeks (20% of the grade), precept initiation and general participation (about 10%), with the remaining 10% an intangible relating to the quality of the course member's work.



AGENDA

This ten-week course is divided into three parts, taking you from a general introduction to Latin American Theology viewed through the lens of Gutiérrez's early context and the present U.S.-Latin American nexus (Part One), to the theological belief system of Gutiérrez's liberation theology and contemporary retrievals of it (Part Two), to, finally, a consideration of the future of liberation theology, especially for U.S. Christians (Part Three).

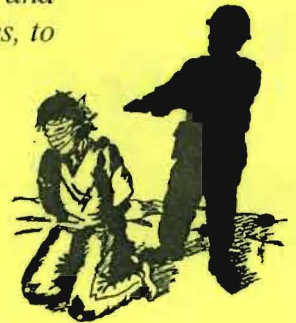
PART ONE –

LIBERATION THEOLOGY, LATIN AMERICA & THE PRESENT MOMENT

The two opening weeks of the course are designed to give you a first introduction to Latin American liberation theology, by turning first to Gutiérrez's political and religious context, and then to the ways that context continues, in different ways, to characterize present U.S./Latin American relations.

SEPT 20 INTRODUCING LIBERATION THEOLOGY (57 pp.)

By way of the video presentation and the first readings, I aim to inaugurate feeling and thinking within the kind of challenging context(s) faced by Gutiérrez and others in 1970s/1980s Latin America.



[in class video presentation, “The State of Fear”]

(note: the reading is lighter this first week, so, if you can, please also start on the assigned materials for next week, which feature more pages.)

-José Comblin, “Introduction: Facts,” in Comblin, *Called For Freedom*, “Social Liberation,” xv-xix, 62-97.

-Christopher Rowland, “The Future of Liberation Theology,” in Rowland, *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*, 304-307.

-Gutiérrez in Nickoloff, “Toward a Theology of Liberation,” 23-8.

-Stacey Floyd-Thomas and Anthony Pinn, “Introduction,” in Floyd-Thomas and Pinn, *Liberation Theologies in the United States*, pages 1-14.



We turn here to understanding both the history of present U.S. impact and intervention in Latin America and also the way it continues to challenge Christians in the present. The phone-in from Pennsylvania's death row prisoner/journalist, Mumia Abu-Jamal, who has read and been inspired by some Latin American liberationist thought is meant to jumpstart our reflections here.

The two Items, (a) and (b) below, in preparation for the in-class phone-call from Mumia Abu-Jamal (these two brief essays will be distributed in class the week before):



- (a) Ignacio Martín-Baró, *Writings for a Liberation Psychology*, eds. Adrienne Aron and Shawn Corne. Harvard University Press, 1994, pages 1-32.
- (b) Mumia Abu-Jamal, "Isn't It Odd," and "Christian? Christlike?" in *Death Blossoms: Reflections from a Prisoner of Conscience* Plough Publishing Company, 1997, pages 39, and 44-52.

Basic Readings for the week:

-Galeano, *Open Veins of Latin America*, Isabelle Allende, "Foreword" (ix-xiii), and "In Defense of the Word" (xiv-xv), "Introduction: 120 Million Children in the Eye of the Hurricane" (1-8), and "The Contemporary Structure of Plunder" (205-61).

-LaFeber, "Introduction: Overview of the System" (5-18), "Setting Up the System" (19-45), "Honduras: The Transformation of a Banana Republic" (178-85), "Internal Alternatives: Bases for Christian and Other Revolutions" (218-24), "Honduras: Main Girder in the Bridge" (261-4), "Honduras: Refitting the Aircraft Carrier" (310-12), "The USS Honduras to the Rescue" (330-33).

-Harbury, "The Lessons Latin American Human Rights History," in Jennifer K. Harbury, *Torture, Truth and the American Way: The History and Consequences of U.S. Involvement in Torture*. 28-54.



-Gutiérrez in Nickoloff, “‘I Will Not Restrain My Tongue’,” 311-320.

Recommended:

Eduardo Galeano, “Lust for Gold/Lust for Silver,” *The Open Veins of Latin America*, 11-58.

PART TWO –

GUTIÉRREZ'S THEOLOGY

In this the heart of the course, we go more in depth into Gutiérrez's liberation theology, reading in his A Theology of Liberation. We will also supplement this reading with liberation thinkers in the present who are responding with similar biblical and theological interpretations.

OCT 4 INTRODUCTION: THEOLOGY AND LIBERATING PRAXIS (89pp)

This week we take up Gutiérrez's understanding of the very meaning of what “theology” is, and how he sees it as related to “praxis.” Attend especially to what he means when he says theology is a “second act.” Other readings here help us grasp this view of theology, with Petrella's essay below being especially important for giving specificity to the “praxis of the poor” which is the key matrix for liberation theology.

-Gutiérrez, “Original Introduction,” xiii-xv; and “Theology and Liberation,” in his *A Theology of Liberation [TL]*, 1-25, and “Posing the Problem,” *TL*, 27-46.

-Gutiérrez in Nickoloff, “The Limitations of Modern Theology,” 35-42.

-Ivan Petrella, "The Global Material Context of the Liberation Theologian: The Poverty of the Majority," in Petrella, ed. *Beyond Liberation Theology: A Polemic*. SCM Press 2008, pages 5-44.

Recommended:

-Zoë Bennett, "'Action is the Life of All'": the Praxis-Based Epistemology of Liberation Theology," in Rowland, 19-38.

OCT 11 OPTIONS FOR THE CHURCHES (113pp)

What are we to make of an organization like "the church?" How does the context of Latin America set certain challenges before it? And why might Gutiérrez be taking up the question of the church before discussing "Christ" And "salvation?" And, don't forget to ask – What does Gutiérrez mean by "Church?"

-Gutiérrez, "The Option Before the Latin American Church," *TL*, 47-77.

-Comblin, "The Church Context," 1-20, "The Gospel of Freedom," 21-47.

-Andrea Smith, "Native Feminist Theology," in Pinn and Floyd-Thomas, 149-67.

OCT 18 - SALVATION AND CHRIST IN HISTORY & POLITICS (116pp)

Be prepared this week to discuss equally challenging approaches to the meanings of "salvation" and "Christ." After reading Gutiérrez, here, the Horsley text sets in place key perspectives that explain why and how matters of Christ and salvation have often been extracted from political considerations even while playing prominent and politically repressive roles.

- Gutiérrez, "Faith and the New Humanity (Part 4, Section 1)," in *TL*, 81-140.

- Gutiérrez in Nickoloff, "The Historical Power of the Poor," 95-108; "Freedom as Gift and Task at Puebla," 156-159; and "Between Gift and Demand," 175-176.

- Richard A. Horsley, "Introduction: 'You Shall Not Bow Down and Serve Them,'" in Horsley, *Jesus and the Powers*, 1-15.

-Nancy Pineda-Madrid, "Latina Theology," in Pinn and Floyd-Thomas, 61-85.



[FALL READING PERIOD:
October 21-31]

NOV 1 – CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND THE NEW SOCIETY (84 pp)



In the reading for this week, Gutiérrez clarifies further his understanding of church and salvation, interpreting them together as distinctive “spiritual” or “sacramental” presences in history. The Horsley text continues to spell out the implications of this by reference to the Jesus movement struggling with Roman imperial powers and also by suggesting ways that contemporary followers in the way of Jesus might struggle with today’s U.S.-American imperial powers.

- Hebblethwaite, “Liberation Theology and the Roman Catholic Church,” in Rowland, 209-27,
- Gutiérrez, “The Church: Sacrament of History,” *TL*, 141-161.
- Horsley, “The Powers of Empire,” and “Heavenly Powers and People Power,” in Horsley, *Jesus and the Powers*, 17-41, 63-86.
- Robert Shore-Goss, “Gay and Lesbian Theologies,” in Pinn and Floyd-Thomas, 181-208.

NOV 8 - POVERTY, SOLIDARITY AND PROTEST (85pp)

This week sets in place a kind of “denouement” of Gutiérrez’s theology, bridging between “Poverty, Solidarity and Protest,” and introducing his key notion of the “preferential option for the poor.” What does that phrase mean? The Horsley readings continue to introduce ways that the Jesus movement, consonant with Gutiérrez’s theology, generates hope and power among repressed and excluded peoples.

- Gutiérrez, “Poverty, Solidarity and Protest,” in *TL*, 162-174; and “New Introduction,” xvii-xlvi.
- Gutiérrez in Nickoloff, “Preferential Option for the Poor,” 143-6.
- Horsley, “The Power of Hope,” “Jesus and the Struggle for Power,” in Horsley, *Jesus and the Powers*, 87-108, 109-29.



PART THREE –

LIBERATION THEOLOGY'S FUTURE

In this final part of the course we take up the question of liberation theology's future, which of course is bound up with the question of the continuing needs for liberation, economically, politically and religiously. This Part will allow us to examine these needs and, in the final two weeks take up the issues of how sex and gender issues, as well as contemporary Pentecostalism in Latin America, figure in the future of liberation theology.

NOV 15 LIBERATION THEOLOGY – WHITHER THE US CHRISTIAN THEOLOGIAN? (113 pp)

We not only finish the Horsley text in this week, thus providing, so I hope, a contemporary liberatory interpretation of the Jesus movement and its theology of "conflict, covenant and hope for the poor." This enables us to consider anew the social location of the U.S. theologian who may consider the challenges of at work in struggles of liberation today, taking our cues, perhaps, from the Valentín reading.

-Petrella, "The Material Context of the US Liberation Theologian: Poverty in the Midst of Plenty," in Petrella, *Beyond Liberation Theology: A Polemic*. SCM Press, 2008, pages 45-77

-Benjamín Valentín, "Hispanic Latino(a) Theology," in Pinn and Floyd-Thomas, 86-114

-Horsley, "Speaking Truth to Power," "The Power of the Crucifixion," and "Conclusion: Jesus and the Struggle with the Powers," in Horsley, *Jesus and the Powers: Covenant, Conflict and the Hope of the Poor*. Fortress Press, 2011, pages 155-78, 179-204, 205-211.

**NOV 29 – THEOLOGY – TOWARD A POLITICS OF LIBERATING
SEX AND GENDER (“SEXUATE BEING”)?**

Most critics insist that any future of liberation theology, especially from Latin America, must attend to women's and others' needs for liberation from sexual bondage, discrimination and gender injustice. Students are encouraged to read one of the following two books for this week. One is by Marcella Althaus-Reid who extends liberation theology “indecently,” as she writes with no apology, and proposes a comprehensive vision of the “Queer God,” one who who meets the needs of Latin American poor women and especially of those differently sexed and gendered in systems of compulsory and assumed hetero-normatively.

The second option you have is to read the book by Nancy Pineda-Madrid, a strong critique of Angelina, traditional atonement theory in light of the “femicides” (killing of women for being women) in the Mexican-U.S. border town of Ciudad Juárez. It is another witness to hope and the power of the poor amid repressive conditions of our present time.

Marcella Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God*. Complete.

OR

Nancy Pineda-Madrid, *Suffering and Salvation in Ciudad Juárez*. Complete.



As Latin American liberation theology went into what some have seen as a General decline in the middle to late 1980s, the rise of Pentecostalism, or “neo-” Pentecostalism sky-rocketed. One of the earliest leaders in liberation theology in Brazil, Richard Shaull, joins with Waldo Cesar, a Brazilian sociologist, to grapple with the meaning of Pentecostalism’s attraction amid a time of political oppression and need for liberation. What might be a liberating spirit for our times? What might the turn to Pentecostalism by the poor mean? Can this seemingly “least political” of spiritualities have political import – and of what sort?

—Cesar, Waldo, and Shaull, Richard. *Pentecostalism and the Future of the Christian Churches*. Complete.

ALL CLIP-ART in the syllabus is from Newsletters, pamphlets, and flyers of activist groups in Latin America or from groups in the United States working on Latin American issues.



CAPTIONS FOR SYLLABUS PHOTOGRAPHS

- Page 3 Ten-year old Gustavo Gutiérrez, soccer team photo from the Colegio San Luis de Barranco (Lima), 1938.
- Page 7 Gutiérrez at the funeral of Monseñor Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador, assassinated, the 24th of March, 1980.
- Page 11 photos from women’s marches against the killing of young women (“feminicide”) in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico (across from El Paso, TX). The “pink crosses” have been emblematic there for more than a decade of women’s mobilization of remembrance of their dead in order to transform their future. “Ni una más” (not one more). The pink crosses are throughout the city, often set at killing sites, at crossroads, and often plastered on telephone poles to encourage citizen remembrance and resistance.
- Page 13 (lower photo) Gutiérrez giving a lecture in Arequipa, Perú, 1966.

(upper photo) Gutiérrez gathered with parish children, Christ Redeemer Chapel (Lima).

The photos of Gutiérrez, above pages 3-7, are from Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Acordarse de los pobres: textos esenciales*. Lima: Fondo Editorial del Congreso del Perú, 2004. Andrés Gallego, selección y notas introductorias, y Rolando Ames, introducción.

