

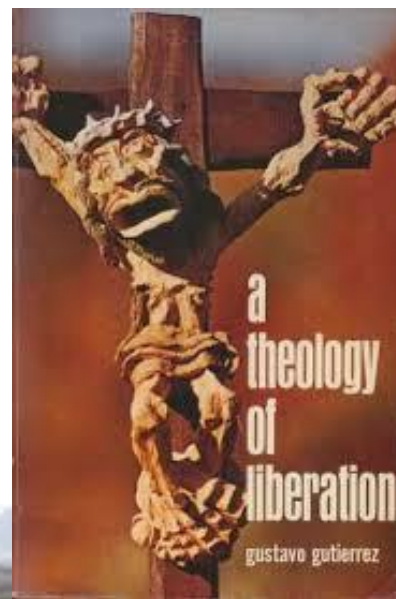
# THE LIBERATION THEOLOGY OF GUSTAVO GUTIÉRREZ

Professor: Mark Lewis Taylor

Teaching Assistant: Francisco Peláez-Díaz

Spring 2018 Class Times: Thursdays 2:00-4:50 pm

(at right, cover of Gutiérrez's 1<sup>st</sup> edition)







Sometimes,  
you have to feign dementia  
take a breath and  
look beneath the glare  
of fading eyes  
how the drone of centuries  
amassed  
leaps onto this absurd reality,  
so that you can go on.

- *Elisa Logan, Tegucigulpa  
Honduras*

(The above poster reads: "Continuing to seek them, until we find them," by COFADEH, that is Comité de las Familias de los Detenidos/Desaparecidos en Honduras, received by instructor in Lima, Peru, "IX Congreso de FEDEFAM," November 26-Dec. 2, 1989 – FEDEFAM, the acronym for the Federación Latinoamericana de Asociaciones de Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos, or in English, [Latin American Federation of Associations of Families of the Detained and Disappeared](#).)

## 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 today - for this year's course regarding recent developments in Mexico, Honduras, and elsewhere in Latin America.
4. To trace relations between Latin American struggles for liberation, on the one hand, to formation of Christian faith and practice in struggles *within* the United States, on the other.



## OUTCOMES

*By end of the term, course members will have shown evidence of achieving 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 capitalist exploitation.

---

## TEXTS

ALTHAUS-REID, Maria. *Indecent Theology: Theological Perversions in Sex, Gender and Politics*. Routledge, 2001. (**Required if** you choose this book for your panel presentation)

CHASTEEN, JOHN CHARLES. *Born in Blood & Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*. W. W. NORTON, 2011. (Recommended for background reading. See syllabus for weeks of Jan 26, Feb 2 and Feb 9.)

DE LEÓN, Jason. *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. University of California Press, 2015. (Strongly recommended since large amounts of the book will be assigned)

ELLACURIA, Ignacio. *Essays on History, Liberation and Salvation*. Edited by Michael Lee. Orbis Books, 2013. (**Required if** you choose this book for your panel presentation)

ELVIR, Lety, and ROOF, María. Eds. *Women's Poems of Protest and Resistance: Honduras 2009-2014*. Spanish-English Bilingual Editions. Casasola LLC, 2015. (**Required if** you choose this book for your panel presentation.)

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. (Strongly recommended, since significant portions will be assigned in the first part of the course and because it is a classic expression of how many Latin American see their history of colonization in relation to Europe and the U.S.)



## COURSE PROCEDURE

1. The Thursday Sessions. Course meeting times are in a three-hour block on Thursday afternoons from 2:00 p.m. to 4:50 p.m. This period will be used for the professor's and the teaching assistant's lectures, in class media presentations, guest lectures, occasional small group work, and the concluding panel presentations.
2. The Panels. The last three meetings of the class (April 5, April 12, and April 19) will involve major input from student-constituted panels. More information on this will be given later; but be prepared to sign up to be a panelist for one of these last three weeks. The key topics of these panels are listed in the Syllabus. Be ready with a first or second choice, since we'll want to space out students as evenly as possible.
3. 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. From time to time insights from the Spanish are illuminating.

## REQUIREMENTS

1. Faithful, weekly (and on-time) *attendance* and participation in courses and discussion. Searching the internet, emailing, texting and facebooking during classes – except for matters of family emergency - means you are not “attending.”
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. Submit a **Midterm “Structural Violence” Paper.** Discuss a scene of violence from the readings of the first half of the course, which you argue is a scene of *structural* violence. Drawing from readings on Peru, Mexico or Honduras, explain why the scene of violence is “structural.” Give some first account of whether and how you see Christian theology being relevant to *structural* violence. 6-8 pages double-spaced. **Due: Friday, March 16 at 5:00 pm. These midterms should be emailed to the Teaching Assistant, Francisco Peláez-Díaz, who will divide them for evaluation between him and Dr. Taylor.**
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 and which of the panel-books you may prefer to invest in. More detailed 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.



5. Submit a **Final “Structural Violence and Liberation Theology” Paper**. Continuing with the scene of structural violence selected for your midterm, develop and discuss further a liberation *theology’s* engagement with structural violence, by commenting on a core belief, perspective, symbol or doctrine in liberation theology. You may draw upon Gutiérrez’s liberation theology *or* liberation theology notions you find elsewhere in the course readings. It is not necessary to supplement your work with additional research and readings to be quoted in this paper. The main task is to think deeply about the structural violence studied in this class and to reflect on its implication for theology generally, and in particular for a theology that can contribute to liberating practice and experience. **Due for Seniors: May 4; due for all Masters students, May 7. These Final Papers must be uploaded to the Blackboard ‘Drop Box’ on May 4 or 7 at 4:30p.m.**

*(Recall: especially for final papers, any extension beyond the above date and time for final requires approval by Office of the Dean of Students. Contact there, Catherine Davis.)*

**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 will be that the Midterm Paper counts 30 percent of the grade, and the Final Paper 35 percent. Your panel presentation counts roughly 20 percent and general class attendance and participation 15 percent.

### **ON PROMOTING THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION & DIALOGUE**

Since one of the chief purposes of the course is to promote the capacity of its members to engage in theological reflection, students may be challenged by the diverse readings assigned. You are free to disagree with what you read, as do the instructors for this course, in different ways and concerning various authors. Nevertheless, do give patient attention even to those texts you disagree with. You may also be challenged in your discussion groups by instructors and by one another, both because your views vary from one another’s and because you need to challenge one another to provide good arguments for your positions. All views of all participants are to be treated with openness and respect.

In the spirit of such a class with these values, I call your attention especially to the following important points:

- (1) *Inclusive language* with respect to human beings is expected, and inclusive language in respect to God is encouraged.
- (2) Be aware that some *offensive terms* have a history of abuse toward groups who traditionally have occupied “minoritized” positions in official Western settings. These terms just should *not* be used – even when intended for allegedly “intellectual” or supposedly “neutral” or “descriptive” purposes. (Thus, the “n--- word” for people of color, immigrant groups, anyone else, *or* the “b---- word” for women or anyone else, and other similar words for





*any* group or person. These are all to be avoided. I say this not out of any liberal squeamishness to hear harsh words, but because those terms “perform” abuse, *whatever* may be your intentions. They just should not happen, especially in *this* institutional ethos where racial and gender/sexual violence remain, still, insufficiently addressed).

- (3) Your instructors are committed to doing everything they can to respond to, and interact creatively with, *class members with special needs*. Usually the Registrar and/or the Academic Affairs Office, or other administrators. S/he will be in touch with instructional staff about these matters.





## AGENDA

*This twelve-week course is divided into three parts, beginning 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. This is **Part One**. In this first part we focus primarily on the sites of Peru, Mexico, El Salvador and Honduras. **Part Two** will focus on the substantive theology of Gutiérrez, and finally in **Part Three** we will take up the wider implications of Gutiérrez's theology for contemporary and broader theological issues, using the format of student panels.*

### **PART ONE – THE U.S./LATIN AMERICA NEXUS Prolegomena for a Theology of Liberation**

*The three opening sessions of the course, Part One, are designed to give you a first introduction to the key tensions in Latin American liberation theology, by turning first to Gutiérrez's political and religious context in Peru, and then to other contexts of structural violence, popular resistance and hope in Latin America, in relation to which U.S. policy and power are also at work: Mexico, El Salvador and Honduras.*

#### **Jan 25 INTRODUCING GUTIÉRREZ & LIBERATION THEOLOGY (85 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 and 1990s Latin America. The Mexico material, closer to the U.S., enlarges our scope to the broader colonial/U.S. imperial matrix.*

#### **Latin American Site No. 1 – Gutiérrez's PERU** (In-class video, *The State of Fear: The Truth About Terrorism*)



1. Stephen Judd, MM., "Gustavo Gutiérrez and the Originality of the Peruvian Experience," in Marc H. Ellis and Otto Maduro, *The Future of Liberation Theology: Essays in Honor of Gustavo Gutiérrez*. Orbis, 1989, 65-75.







2. Eduardo 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).

**Latin American Site No. 2 – NORTHERN TRIANGLE (Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala)**

“Foreword” and “Preface” in Martinez, *A History of Violence*, xi-xxi, also in Martinez, “They State Against Chepe Furia,” and “The Lords of the Border,” 3-41, and “Part 2: Madness – “Bottomless Well,” 95-108.



**FEB 1      STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE IN LATIN AMERICA (129 pp)**

*This week we go deeper into the Mexico-U.S. connection with the aid of a brilliant 2011 study by Elana Zilberg, Space of Detention: The Making of a Transnational Gang Crisis between Los Angeles and San Salvador. This site of structural violence, as well as others, will be concrete reference points for our reflecting on Gutiérrez’s theology of liberation and on the possibilities of theologies of liberation today.*

**Latin American Site No. 2 – NORTHERN TRIANGLE (El Salvador & Honduras)**

Zilberg, *Space of Detention*, Introduction: Neoliberal Securityscapes, 1-24, and “Chronology: The Divided Ends of Peace,” 25-50.

Zilberg, *Space of Detention*, “One: Latino Looter – Law of Place,” 53-74.

**Latin American Site No. 3 – MEXICO AS “VERTICAL BORDER”**

Julien Mercille, “Violent Narco-Cartels or US Hegemony: The Political Economy of the ‘War on Drugs’ in Mexico,” *Third World Quarterly* Vol. 32, No. 9 (2011): 1637-1653.

Jason De León, “Introduction,” “This Hard Land: ‘Prevention through Deterrence’ and ‘Dangerous Ground’ (only through p. 44).”

**Feb 8**      **U.S.-LATIN AMERICAN INTER-STATE REGIME (91 pp)**

*Against the backdrop of European colonialism and structural violence in the U.S. imperial sphere, we focus the U.S./Latin American system further, especially regarding Central America, by turning our attention further to contemporary Honduras, another of the “Northern Triangle” countries, recently subjected to U.S.-backed coups in 2009 and 2016. We will read key chapters in Phillips’ Honduras in Dangerous Times, and then in Walter La Feber’s essential background history on U.S.-Honduras connections.*

**Latin American Site No. 4 – HONDURAS**

James J. Phillips, *Honduras in Dangerous Times: Resistance and Resilience*.



(1-13) “Encounters with Honduras: Resistance and Resilience”

(220-33) “The United States in Honduras: Intervention, Solidarity and Resistance”

(192-216) “A Spiritual Struggle”

(left, woman in Honduras, Jan 25, 2018. Report by [Rights Action](#))



Walter LaFeber. *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. W. W. Norton, 1993. These assigned readings from LaFeber, one of the finest U.S. foreign policy historians, tells a more detailed story of U.S. domination of Honduras, and the importance of that domination for hegemonic control over all Central America. On reserve only.

- (5-18) “Introduction: Overview of the System”
- (42-46) “Determining Who Rules at Home: Honduras”
- (178-85) “Honduras: The Transformation of a Banana Republic”
- (213-18) “Outside Alternatives: Mexico and Venezuela”
- (261-65) “Honduras: Main Girder in the Bridge”
- (310-12) “Honduras: Refitting the Aircraft Carrier”
- (330-33) “The *USS Honduras* to the Rescue”
- (362-68) “Conclusion”





## **PART TWO** –

### ***GUTIÉRREZ'S THEOLOGY***

*In this the heart of the course, we go more deeply into Gutiérrez's liberation theology, reading in his A Theology of Liberation. The titles of the major sections in this book by Gutiérrez are rendered in **red letters**. The numbered sections also refer to major units in Gutiérrez's A Theology of Liberation.*

#### **Feb 15 INTRODUCTION: THEOLOGY AND LIBERATING PRAXIS (107 pp)**

*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." Also, might there be differences between "ecclesial praxis" and "historical praxis" for Gutiérrez?*

- Gutiérrez, "**Original Introduction**," xiii-xv, in *A Theology of Liberation* [TL]
- "**Introduction to the Revised Edition: Expanding the View**," TL, xvii-xlvi.
- "**Part One: "Theology and Liberation**," TL, 1-25.
- "**Part Two: "Posing the Problem**," TL, 27-46.

#### **Feb 22 OPTIONS FOR THE CHURCHES (125)**

*The primary emphasis this week is the Gutiérrez theology, and understanding the options he sees before the Latin American churches.*

- Gutiérrez, "**Part 3: The Option Before the Latin American Church**," TL
- 6. The Process of Liberation in Latin America, 47-57.
- 7. The Church in the Process of Liberation, 58-71.
- 8. Statement of the Questions, 72-7.



**Mar 1 - EN COMUNIÓN DE OPCIÓN/ “IN THE COMMUNION OF THE OPTION” –  
THE PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR (100)**

*This week, I suggest we encounter the key theoretical/hermeneutical move of Gutiérrez, as well as his central and guiding theological move. This week the task is to understand the hermeneutical principle of, or “the preferential option of the poor.” What kind of option is it? Who takes or makes the option? Is it “exclusive?”*

-Gutiérrez, all selections below in Nickoloff, “Hermeneutical Principle Preferential Option for the Poor,” in Nickoloff, *Gustavo Gutiérrez: Essential Writings*.

- (79-91) “History is One”
- (91-5) “Encountering God in History”
- (95-108) “The Historical Power of the Poor”
- (108-11) “In a Foreign Land”
- (111-115) “The Evangelizing Potential of the Poor”
- (115-22) “Conflict in History”
- (122-27) “The Suffering of Others”
- (127-43) “The God Who Comes”
- (143-48) “The Preferential Option for the Poor”



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

Key Summary: Daniel G. Groody, “Foreword” by Matthew Ashley, “Introduction” by Daniel Groody, in Groody, *Gustavo Gutiérrez: Spiritual Writings*, 11-43.

**♪ SPRING BREAK ♪**

**Mar 15 - SALVATION AND CHRIST IN HISTORY & POLITICS (106)**

*On the basis of the hermeneutical principle of “the preferential option for the poor” a distinctive view of faith, salvation and Jesus as the Christ surfaces.*

- Gutiérrez, **Part 4: Section 1: Faith and the New Humanity**, in *TL*:

9. Liberation and Salvation

“Salvation: Central Theme of the Christian Ministry,” 81-6;

“Christ and Integral Liberation,” 97-105;



10. Encountering God in History,

“Conversion to the Neighbor,” 110-16;

“A Spirituality of Liberation,” 116-20.

11. Eschatology and Politics

“To Account for the Hope,” 123-26;

“The Political Dimension of the Gospel,” 126-35;

“Faith, Utopia and Political Action,” 135-40.

(Note: Many of the pages I have omitted, above, between page 81 and 140 of *A Theology of Liberation*, you already read last week, as they were excerpted into the Nickoloff book. But you might wish to read them again in Gutiérrez’s book this week, instead of skipping over them here, as my page assignments this week allow.)

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

**Mar 22 – CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND THE NEW SOCIETY (93 pp)**

*Gutiérrez turns to what the church’s new liberating community might look like, including a “sacramental” view of the church, and a re-reading of the meaning of the Eucharist. Alongside this view of sacramentality consider Ellacuría’s reading What is the significance of his notion of “the crucified people” for understanding the church as sacrament responding to social suffering.*

- Gutiérrez, “**Part 4: Section 2: The Christian Community and the New Society**” in *TL*:

12. The Church: Sacrament of History

“Universal Sacrament of Salvation,” 143-8;

“Eucharist and Human Fellowship,” 148-61.

- In Ignacio Ellacuría (right): *Essays on History, Liberation, and Salvation*:

“Ignacio Ellacuría: A View from the North,”

by Michael E. Lee (1-21), and by Ellacuría,

“The Crucified People: an Essay in Historical Soteriology” (195-224)



**Mar 29 - A SPIRITUALITY OF POVERTY? (94pp)**

*Finally, many of the themes addressed throughout the course and in Gutiérrez's A Theology of Liberation, culminate in his final chapter on the meaning of Poverty and Solidarity and in his one-page "Conclusion." (Read it carefully!) Then also, this week, Ellacuría summarizes a view of "Christian spirituality" that addresses and amplifies several proposals of Gutiérrez.*

-Gutiérrez,

- 13. Poverty, Solidarity and Protest" in *TL*,
- "Ambiguities in the Term "Poverty", 162-
- "Biblical Meaning of Poverty," 165-71;
- "An Attempt at Synthesis: Solidarity and Protest," 171-73.
- Conclusion, 174

-Ignacio Ellacuría, "Christian Spirituality," 275-84.



*Gutiérrez meets Pope Francis, September 2013*

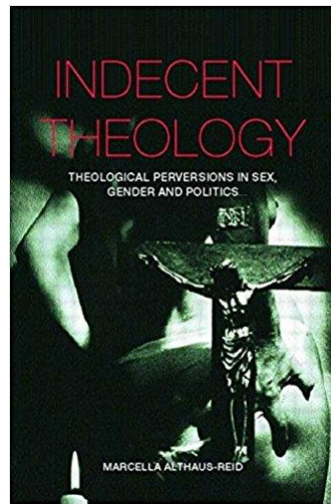
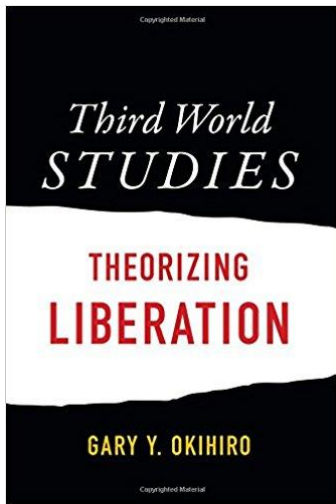




## PART THREE

### THE PANELS

#### Apr 5 – BROADENING LIBERATION THEOLOGY TODAY



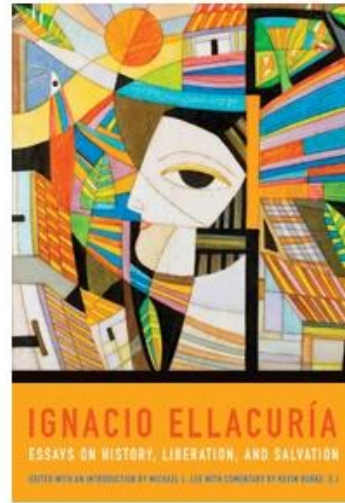
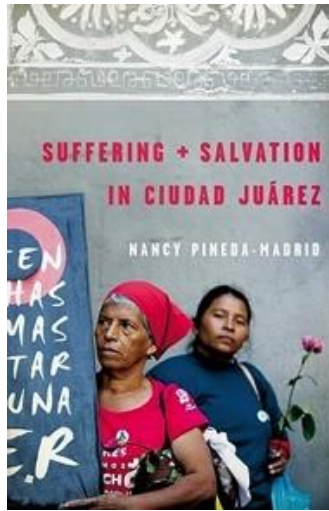
**2:00 – 3:20 p.m. Gary Y. Okihiro, *Third World Studies: Theorizing Liberation*. Duke University Press, 2016.**

All class members read Okihiro, “Introduction” and “Subjects,” pages 1-36. Panelists read all of this book if it is chosen for their panel presentation.

**3:30 – 4:50 p.m. Marcella Althaus-Reid, *Indecent Theology: Theological Perversions in Sex, Gender and Politics*. Routledge, 2001.**

All class members read Althaus-Reid, *Indecent Theology*, pages 1-21. Panelists read all of this book if it is selected for their panel presentation.

**APR 12 - DEEPENING LIBERATION THEOLOGY TODAY**



**2:00 – 3:20 p.m. Nancy Pineda-Madrid, *Suffering and Salvation in Ciudad Juárez* (Orbis Books, 2011).**

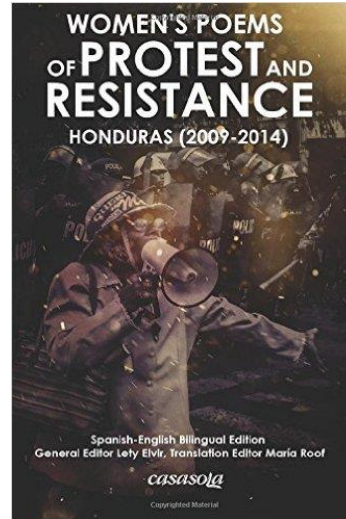
Everyone reads Pineda-Madrid, “Foreword” ix-x, and “Introduction” 1-8. Panelists read all of book.

**3:30 – 4:50 p.m. Ignacio Ellacuría, *Ignacio Ellacuría: Essays on History, Liberation and Salvation*. Ed. by Michael Lee (Orbis Books, 2013)**

Everyone reads Ellacuría, “The People of God and Liberation” 54-63. Panelists read all of book.

Over →

**APR 19 - FROM MEXICO AND HONDURAS – ADELANTE !**



**2:00 – 3:20 p.m. Seth Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States States* (University of California Press, 2013)**

Everyone reads Holmes, “Foreword: The Symbolic Violence of Primitive Accumulation in the United States” by Philippe Bourgeois, xi-xvii, and “Introduction” 1-7 by Holmes. Panelists read all of book.

**3:30 – 4:50 p.m. Lety Elvir, ed. *Women’s Poems of Protest and Resistance: Honduras, 2009-2014* (Casasola, 2015).**

Everyone reads “Introduction: ‘Poetry Written by Women and the Coup d’ État in Honduras, 2009” 27-40. Panelists read all of book.

**ALL CLIP-ART in the syllabus, unless more explicitly explained below, is from the instructor’s collection of newsletters, pamphlets, and flyers from activist groups in Latin America or from groups in the United States working in solidarity with activist communities in the Caribbean, Mexico, Central and South Americas.**

**CAPTIONS FOR SOME SPECIAL SYLLABUS PHOTOS & IMAGES**

Page 4 Young Gutiérrez giving a lecture in Arequipa, Perú, 1966.

Page 7 Gutiérrez gathered with parish children, Christ Redeemer Chapel (Lima).

Page 8 Ten-year old Gustavo Gutiérrez, soccer team photo from the Colegio San Luis de



Barranco (Lima), 1938.

Page 9 Map inset of “the Northern Triangle” area in Central America

Page 12 Gutiérrez at the funeral of Monseñor Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador, assassinated, the 24<sup>th</sup> of March, 1980.

**The photos of Gutiérrez, above pages 4, 7, 8, and 12,** 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.

**Images on syllabus cover, from top left and clockwise:** (a) U.S./Mexican border wall, (b) pink crosses planted in the earth of Ciudad Juárez, commemorating the feminicides of young women with their names on the crosses, (c) mothers and families of slain young women of Ciudad Juárez marching for justice, (d) School of the Americas Watch demonstrating against U.S.-backed military and police creating conditions of death across the Americas, and (e) masses attending the November 2016 vigil at Ft. Benning Georgia to protest U.S. training of repressive military and police regimes throughout Latin America, (f) red banners of protesting men and women of Honduras after the 2010 coup and electoral fraud that brought the next unconstitutional government, and (g) a photo of the many crosses, bearing written names of those unjustly slain in Latin America by U.S.-trained military (the small white crosses are shown stashed by activists into the chain-link fence around U.S. Ft. Benning, GA, one of the many places where such military units have been trained.