

## RELIGIOUS STUDIES 269A: LIBERATION THEOLOGY

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Leslie R. James, Ph.D.  
**SEMESTER:** Spring 2012  
**TIME:** 10:00-11:30 AM TR  
**CLASSROOM:** Julian Science 375  
**OFFICE:** 216 Emison Museum  
**OFFICE HOURS:** MW: 1:30-3:30 pm AM or by Appointment  
**Tel. #:** (765) 658-4887  
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### REQUIRED TEXTS:

Boff, Leonardo, Clodovis Boff. *Introducing Liberation Theology*. Trans. Paul Burns. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2011.

Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Commentary by John-Paul Sartre, Homi K. Bhabha. Trans. Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2004.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New Revised 20th-Anniversary Edition. New York: Continuum, 1999.

Harding, Vincent. *Hope and History: Why We Must Share the Story of the Movement*. Maryknoll, New York, 2009.

Mayson, Cedric. *Why Africa Matters*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010.

Books, articles, videos, and other resources as directed by the Instructor.

### I. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND PROCEDURES:

This course examines the encounter between Western Christian culture and the indigenous cultures of what is known as the Third World, gender, and other forms of liberation movements which fall within the liberationist paradigm. Liberation Theology can be conceptualized as a template within which Christian, and other faith systems, dialog with the conflicts and pains of human, and natural, existence, and propose solutions as to make and maintain life for all. In other words, Liberation Theology is critical reflection on the social challenges facing humankind that seeks to shape commitments that lead to social transformation. Varieties of Liberation Theology include: Latin American and Caribbean, African American, African, feminist/gender, cultural, environmental/ecological. The course also deals with issues such as: explanation of the emergence of the liberationist paradigm, common perspectives shared by liberationist movements, relations between liberationist movements and the Judeo-

Christian tradition, the ecumenical, inter-religious, cross-cultural, and the global nature and significance of the liberation paradigm.

The hope is that students will appreciate the role of religion in social transformation, conflict and human struggle, reconciliation and resolution, democratization and the struggle against domination and hegemony, the construction of civil society, and the relevance of emancipatory discourse/s and praxis in the twenty-first century and beyond. The overall challenge of the course is to stimulate students to think differently, develop alternative visions of reality, and to recognize the correlation between oppression and the struggle for freedom in the modern world. Students should be empowered to recognize the power of religion in the making and re-making of the global order, and its importance in the life of humankind.

The image of the table is used in this course as a symbol, or metaphor, to invite all to participate in discussions, to represent the marginalized and invisible, to break the culture of silence in which the voice of many are excluded, and to bridge the divide between the classroom and the world. The major sections of the syllabus are designed to elaborate on the course's learning objectives.

Instruction will consist of four basic components: (1) assigned readings; (2) lectures; (3) class discussions, exercises, videos, et al (4) writing assignments, course paper, class presentation, and exams as scheduled on the syllabus. Reading assignments are to be completed prior to the class period for which they are assigned. Class discussions and other activities will be based on the assumption that contents of readings are known. Class dialogues and exercises are designed to develop student's insights and to broaden their horizon of the communities and contexts that manifest varieties of Liberation. Each student is strongly encouraged to participate fully in class dialogues. Through these various learning components it is expected that students will understand the emergence of religious thought from the "underside" of history, to generate her/his own religious worldviews/structures, to take a critical approach to religious worldviews, to define freedom in historically engaged ways, and to ask profound/radical questions that challenge the student to rethink previously held assumptions.

## **II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING POLICY:**

1. Regular attendance and class participation are expected. Absences will be governed according to the University attendance policy. (See current Student Handbook). University policy requires that advance notice be given only when an absence due to medical reasons will result in a student's inability to fulfill academic responsibilities such as papers and examinations. Notification is to be given by calling the departmental or instructor's office. Irregular attendance will result in the lowering of course grade.

2. The course grade will be assigned as follows: Class Participation=15%, Exams=50% [aggregate of all exams], Final Paper=15%, Group Presentation=20%. Class participation includes engagement in class discussions, interest shown in classes/course, quality of comments made in class, evidence of reading assignments, and responses to written exercises/short papers assigned in class. Exams are as indicated in the syllabus. You are required to do all course requirements and assignments.

3. Students must scrupulously observe DePauw University policy regarding academic integrity (plagiarism, etc.). This is a serious matter and requires students's attention and careful consideration. See current Student Handbook on this matter. Students must also bear in mind DePauw University academic expectations.

4. Students' conversations/dialogues/discussions with the Instructor beyond prescribed class times are critical to their overall performance in course. They are an integral to the Instructor's pedagogy. Students are strongly advised to meet with Instructor at the commencement of the semester to discuss the course. In addition students are required to keep set times for conferences with the Instructor and be co-operative in working with peers on collaborative projects such as group presentations.

5. Assignments are identified in the syllabus; others will be announced in class. Assignments are due on dates specified at the beginning of the class period. Late submission of assignments will result in the reduction of grade. You are required to pay attention to and respect dates specified in the syllabus as well as official dates in the DePauw calendar. Computer and other problems that may arise at the due date for assignments (papers, etc.) will not be considered acceptable for late submission of work.

6. You are always welcome to make an appointment with Instructor to discuss problems you might have understanding any part of the course. This is not a substitute for you to do readings and reflect on them critically. It is critical that you address such areas in a timely fashion.

7. Pay attention to the widespread presence of religion in the public space. You will find much evidence of religion in the media, movies, in the public realm, and other spaces of contemporary life. In light of this course, reflect on the religious phenomena in these domains. Note the issues of conflict, their interpretation, approaches to dealing with them, and the motivations that underlie those issues. Ongoing dialogue between the classroom and the world will help you focus and define your papers and group presentations.

### **III. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**1. Research Paper:** Each student is required to submit a research paper, according to the terms specified and the date stipulated. The paper will be five (5) pages long, plus a one (1) page of bibliography made up of at least ten (10) scholarly sources. The paper must be typed, double-spaced, using any major citation style (MLA, APA, Chicago, et al) on regular bond paper. One-inch (1") margin on left, right, and bottom sides; one-and-a-half inch (1.5") margin on the topside. Paper, including bibliography must be typed in 12pt font size. Sources listed in the bibliography must be cited in proper format. Type your name and the assignment due date at the top right hand corner of the first page. Do not use a title page! **Pages must be numbered and stapled together!**

The research paper must be on any topic related to specific section/topic/aspect of the course. The topic, focus, title (and subtitle) must be clear and well defined, selected from the field and issues dealt with in **the first seven (7) weeks of the course, January**

**31/February 2-March 13-15, 2012.** It must be clearly situated within the liberation theology paradigm as defined by the course and emphasized by the Instructor. The Liberation Theology paradigm is historically, contextually, and socially located in time. Paper title will be centered in the upper portion of the first page of the paper below name of author, course title, Instructor's name, and date due.

**Students are required to prepare and submit a paper proposal to the Instructor for his review prior to meeting with him for conference on the proposal.** This procedure is preliminary to the Instructor's approval of the paper. The typed proposal must give (1) a tentative title and subtitle of the paper, (2) a brief description of the topic to be explored, (3) the main thesis to be made in the paper and its supporting arguments, (4) a brief conclusion, and (5) a bibliography. Remember that the bibliography, placed on a separate page, must have at least ten (10) sources. You are required to give clear evidence that you have used the sources in your paper.

The Instructor's approval is required before start of formal work on the paper. A paper will not be accepted from you, on due date or thereafter, if you do not meet with the Instructor to discuss your paper and have it approved. Observe deadlines. Students must follow any other guidelines the Instructor gives.

Use of the Internet in academic work requires critical and responsible use. Confine your use of Website references in bibliography to reputable and respected academic sites such as *JSTOR*. For further guidelines on the use of the Internet in doing research read, Charles Lipson, *Doing Honest Work in College: How To Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 11-13. You are permitted to use a maximum of four (4) different Internet sources to compile your bibliography. In the final analysis, your bibliography must be essentially made up of written, or literary, sources drawn from scholarly academic journals such as *The Journal of the American Academy of Religions*, scholarly textbooks, and articles directly related to the focus of your paper.

Students must scrupulously observe DePauw University policy regarding academic integrity (plagiarism, etc.). This is a serious matter and requires students' attention and careful consideration. See current Student Handbook on this matter. Bear in mind that the academic expectations of DePauw University. For further guidance on the issue of cyber plagiarism/plagiarism read, Charles Lipson, *Doing Honest Work in College: How To Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 42-53.

Take advantage of all available resources at DePauw, including the Academic Resources Center (ARC), located at Asbury Hall 115, to produce your work. Services include the W-Center (Writing), the S-Center (Speech), and the Q-Center (Quantitative Reasoning). The W-Center should be contacted well in advance of the paper's due date to maximize its assistance in producing the final draft of the paper. Bear in mind the extent of the ARC's responsibilities in writing papers. In the final analysis, you are responsible for what you have written. DePauw's Roy O. West Library, including the Inter Library Loan (ILL) facility and the Media Center are excellent resources to help you do quality work. Reserve facilities well in advance of the time you need them. **Paper Proposal Date: March 13, 2012. Due Date of Paper: April 12, 2012.**

**2. Group Presentation:** Students will be divided into four (4) groups to do presentations. The group presentation is a collaborative project in which class members appropriate significant aspects the course, relate them to real world situations in critical, creative, and imaginative ways. Focus the group presentation from week eight (8), **March 20-22, 2012** to week twelve (12), **April 24-26, 2012**. This does not mean that insights gained prior to that week cannot be used to develop your project. It is important to see the interconnectedness of all aspects of the course. The project offers the opportunity for members of the class to collaborate with each other and to relate insights from readings and the classroom with the real world. After the groups are defined, and meet to define their projects, observe the following procedures to develop your project:

(1). Each group will make an appointment to meet with the Instructor to discuss and have its presentation proposal, based on a specific theme in Liberation Theology, approved. After approval by the Instructor, each group will develop its proposal into a presentation to be delivered to the class on the date listed at the bottom of this section and in the "Schedule of Classes," of the syllabus. The deadline for submission of group proposals and to meet with the Instructor is **April 24, 2012**. **Presentation dates: (1) May 3, 2012: 1 & 2, (2) May 8, 2012: 3 & 4.**

(2). Each group is also required to identify a particular case study to correspond with their group presentation. This case study is an extra-classroom field study, project (real world situation) to ground the presentation in reality. Group members are required to visit related sites regularly (bi-weekly) during the course and to study how religious tradition, faith and action, education, praxis and reflection, are integrated into the project or activity, and relate their findings to the group presentation. Examples can range from prisons, crisis centers, church/mosque/synagogue, community outreach center, conflict resolution center, refugee center, legal aid clinic, recycling/environmental project, and environmental parks. The goal is to identify some institution, space or agency that is embedded in the conflicts, pains, problems, sufferings and struggles of humankind and the world, that is "grounded" in concrete situations and contexts, to see how through action and reflection those involved in a particular "cause" are engaged in the struggle to create a new humanity, environment, society, culture and world for all. You are required to critically evaluate the relationship between your case study and Liberation Theology as social transformation.

(3). A typed outline to describe the group's work/project must be submitted at the beginning of the presentation. Each presentation will be at least thirty (30) minutes long, followed by a ten (10) minute period of class discussion to allow other members of the class to respond to the presentation, ask questions, and make comments. Groups are highly encouraged to use technology to produce, develop, and present their projects. The following criteria will be used in evaluating presentations:

1. Clear statement of the title and focus of the presentation
2. Relevance (meaning, significance) of the topic to the course.
3. Meeting with Instructor to submit proposal and discuss presentation.
4. Clear demonstration of the conflict nature of subject.

5. Formal group outline of the presentation submitted at the beginning of the presentation on the date assigned.
6. Evidence of quality preparation and knowledge of the subject dealt with
7. Organization, development, and method of presentation
8. Quality of presentation, coordination between presenters and leading discussion with other class members.
9. Type and quality of material and other resources used in presentation
10. Overall quality of the presentation, delivery, clarity, exposition and coherence in presentation, including introduction and conclusion/summary.

You are encouraged to use the S Center at DePauw to prepare their presentation. The S center is located in the Academic Resources Center (ARC), Asbury Hall 115.

**3. Expectations for Class Discussion:** Dialogue is a critical component of this course. The Instructor will facilitate the dialogical process of the course. Various liberation theologies arose from conversations, discussions, and debates between human beings as they encountered each other, and as they reflected on their place and status in the modern world. Through study of the various texts that emerged from those conversations you enter into the pain and problems of contemporary existence and are challenged to construct your responses to those problems. Your willingness to engage course material, to pursue dialogue, rather than avoid it, will enrich the class experience and open new horizons of understanding and imagination. You must be prepared to fulfill various assigned roles in discussions throughout the course as requested and to meet with Instructor for preparation, when needed.

Preparation is essential to your participation in this course. Readings are fundamental to this process. **Liberation Theology emerged out of real life situations, out of the pains and conflicts of human beings in various situations throughout the world. As it re-imagines the world, it is a profound expression of the desire for revitalization in religious traditions that can lead to the renewal of religious traditions, and the birth of New Religious Movements (NRMs). Consequently, you are expected to be familiar with issues in the media, arts, events on campus, and developments in today's world. They will form part of the class discussions.**

**4. Syllabus:** The syllabus is a trajectory or map to plot the movement of the course. Read your syllabus carefully at the commencement of the semester. Failure to read the syllabus initially and throughout the course can result in your failure to know what is expected of you, how you are responsible to contribute to the life of the course, and integrate the different themes and sections of the course.

### **5. DePauw 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations.**

As DePauw University celebrates the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its founding, it is appropriate that students in this Liberation Theology course reflect on the contribution of religion to social transformation. It is worthwhile to reflect on their legacy and what it means to make a difference in the world.

## **7. Students with Special Requirements:**

DePauw University is committed to providing equal access to academic programs and University administered activities and reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities, in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act and Amendments (ADAAA). Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability or learning challenge is strongly encouraged to contact Pamela Roberts, Coordinator of Academic Success and Student Disability Services, for further information on how to receive accommodations and support. Academic Success and Student Disability Services is located in Harrison Hall 302 A, telephone 765-658-6267.

The student is responsible to share the letter of accommodation with faculty and staff members within the first two weeks of class or within one week of receipt of the letter. Accommodations will not be implemented until the faculty member has received the official letter. Accommodations are not retroactive. The student is responsible to discuss implementation of accommodations with each faculty and staff member who receives it.

### **SCHEDULE OF CLASSES**

#### **PART I: INTRODUCTION, DEFINITION, AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

##### **Week 1:**

**Jan 31-Feb. 2: Introduction to the Course: Liberation (Theology) and Conflict: Alternative Visions**

##### **Class Preparation:**

##### **Readings:**

1. Boff, Leonardo, Clodovis Boff. *Introducing Liberation Theology*. Chaps. 1-3, 4, pp. 1-42, 90-95.
2. Dussel, Enrique. "History," in Enrique Dussell, *Philosophy of Liberation*. Trans. From the Spanish by Aquilina Martinez, Christine Morkovsky (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1990): 1-15.

##### **Week 2:**

**Feb. 7-9: Religion and Conflict Theory**

##### **I. Liberation and the Human Crisis**

**Class Preparation:**

**Readings:**

1. Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Vii-xli,xliii-lxii, Chaps. 1-2, pp. 1-62, 63-96.

**II. Liberation and the Human Crisis**

**Class Preparation:**

**Readings:**

1. Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Chap. 3, pp. 97-144.

**Week 3:**

**Feb. 14-16:**

**Liberation and the Human Crisis**

**Class Preparation:**

**Readings:**

1. Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Chaps. 4, pp. 145-180.

**II. Liberation and the Human Crisis**

**Class Preparation:**

**Readings:**

1. Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Chap. 5, pp. 181-233, 235-239, 241-251.

**Week 4:**

**Feb. 21-23:**

**Liberation Pedagogy and the Foundation of Liberation  
Theology**

1. **Pedagogy of the Oppressed & The “Banking” Concept of Education**

**Class Preparation:**

**Readings:**

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. pp.11-27, 29-34,35-40, Chaps. 1-2, pp. 43-69, 71-86.

**II. Dialogics: Education as the Practice of Freedom  
Antialogics and Dialogics: Opposing Theories of Cultural  
Action**

**Readings:**

Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Chaps. 3-4, pp. 87-124, 125-183.

**PART 2: LIBERATION AND CONFLICT: VARIETIES O LIBERATION  
THEOLOGY**

**Week 5:**

**Feb. 28-Mar. 3: 1. Gustavo Gutiérrez**

**Class Preparation:**

**Readings:**

Gustavo Gutiérrez. *A Theology of Liberation*. pp. xiii-xv, xvii-xlvi, Chaps. 1-2, pp. 1, 3-12, 13-25.

**2. Leonardo and Clodovis Boff**

Boff, Leonardo, Clodovis Boff. *Introducing Liberation Theology*. Chaps. 4-6, pp. 43-89.

**Week 6:**

**Mar. 6-8: Liberation in World Religious Traditions.**

**Class Preparation:**

**Readings:**

1. Irfan A. Omar, "Islam" in Miguel de La Torre, *The Hope of Liberation in World Religions* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2008): 91-112.
2. Tavivat Puntarigivat, "Buddhism" in Miguel de La Torre, *The Hope of Liberation in World Religions* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2008): 131-154.
3. Mutombo Nkulu-N'Sengha, "Liberation According to the Bumuntu Paradigm" of Ancestral Religions," in Miguel de La Torre, *The Hope of Liberation in World Religions* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2008): 217-238.
4. Tini Tinker, "American Indians Religious Traditions," Miguel de La Torre, *The Hope of Liberation in World Religions* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2008): 257-273.

**EXAM 1: MARCH 8, 2012**

**Week 7:**

**Mar. 13-15: Liberation in the American Context**

**Class Preparation:**

**Readings:**

Harding, Vincent. *Hope and History: Why We Must Share the Story of the Movement*. Foreword, Preface, Introduction, Chaps. 1-6, ix-xii, xiii-xvi, pp. 1-103.

**PAPER PROPOSAL DEADLINE: MARCH 13, 2012**

**Week 8:**

**Mar. 20-22: Liberation in the American Context**

**Class Preparation:**

**Readings:**

Harding, Vincent. *Hope and History: Why We Must Share the Story of the Movement*. Chaps. 7-13, pp. 104-203, Acknowledgements, 205-208.

**SPRING RECESS: MARCH 24-APRIL 1, 2012**

**Week 9:**

**Apr. 3-5: Feminist Perspectives: Women at the Center and Women at the Margins**

**Class Preparation:**

**Readings:**

1. Ursula King, "Gender and Religion: An Overview," in Lindsay Jones, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Second Edition (New York: Macmillan, 2005): 3296-3310.

2. Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan, "Eyes on the Prize: Womanist Reflections," in Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan, *Refiner's Fire: A Religious Engagement with Violence* (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2001): 1-16.

3. Alice Walker, "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens" in Gayraud S. Wilmore and James H. Cone, *Black Theology: A Documentary History, 1966-1979* (New York: Orbis, 1979): 434-442.

4. Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, "Praxis and Lived-Experience in *Mujerista* Theology" in Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, *En La Lucha (In the Struggle): Elaborating Theology* (Minneapolis: Minnesota, 2004): 176-194.

5. Sallie McFague, "God as Mother" in *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989): 97-123.

**Week 10:**

**Apr. 10-12: Liberation in the African Context**

**Class Preparation:**

**Readings:**

Mayson, Cedric. *Why Africa Matters*. Introduction, Chaps. 1-5, 1-5, 7-94.

**Week 11:**

**Apr. 17-19: Liberation in the African Context**

**Class Preparation:**

**Readings:**

Mayson, Cedric. *Why Africa Matters*. Chaps. 6-10, Conclusion, pp. 95-196, 197-198.

**Week 12:**

**Apr. 24-26: Liberation Theology, Identity, and Community: LBGT Issues**

**Class Preparation:**

**Readings:**

Wilcox, Melissa M. *Coming Out in Christianity: Religion, Identity, and Community*. ix-xii, 1-34, Part 1: Identity, Chaps. 1-2, pp. 1-34, 37-78.

**APRIL 24, 2012: PRESENTATION PROPOSAL DEADLINE**

**Week 13:**

**May 1-3: Liberation in the Caribbean Context**

**Class Preparation**

**Readings:**

Anthony Bogues, "Get Up, Stand Up: The Redemptive Poetics of Bob Marley" in *Black Heretics, Black Prophets* (New York, London: Routledge, 2003): 187-205.

**MAY 3, 2012: GROUP PRESENTATIONS 1 & 2**

**Week 14:**

**May 8-10: MAY 8, 2012: GROUP PRESENTATIONS 3&4**

**MAY 10, 2012: LAST DAY OF CLASSES: COURSE REVIEW**

**FINAL EXAM: TUESDAY, MAY 15, 2012:1:00-4:00 pm.**

