

LATIN AMERICAN LIBERATION THEOLOGIES

Religion 350
Spring Semester, 2004
TR 8:00-9:20
SC #204

Joseph L. Price
Platner #112
Tu: 10:00-12:00
W: 1:00-4:00

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In the last few decades of the twentieth century, laypersons and theologians in Latin America initiated a theological revolution that became known as “Liberation Theology.” Unlike many previous theologies that assumed universal applicability, the liberation theologies that emerged in Latin America were tied inextricably to their social and political contexts. The embedded character of Latin American liberation theologies in specific socio-political contexts means, most significantly, that liberation theology is concerned with power and its goal is not the articulation of truth but the pursuit of justice.

The purpose of this course is to introduce the study of the church as a religious institution in selected Latin American countries, to examine the interplay between religion and politics in those countries, and to investigate how the principle of justice has become a theological concern. The course is paired with “Latin American Political Systems” in order to facilitate greater understanding of the interaction between political systems and religious movements and between political ideologies and theologies.

TEXTS: Robert McAfee Brown, *Liberation Theology: An Introductory Guide*
Jose Miranda, *Communism in the Bible*
Phillip Berryman, *The Religious Roots of Rebellion*
Jon Sobrino, *Witnesses to the Kingdom*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance and Participation: Attendance at all regularly scheduled class meetings is required. Class participation includes the quality of contributions that students make to class meetings, and it incorporates classroom manners, such as showing respect for each other, and being alert and attentive. More than three absences will result in the lowering of your grade and, perhaps, failure of the course. Four class meetings are scheduled at times other than 8:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

- Wednesday, Feb. 11, 6:00 p.m. in the Shannon Center: Francisco Letelier’s exhibition opening.
- Tuesday, March 2, 7:00 p.m. in Hoover 100: viewing of *The Mission*.
- Thursday, April 8, class will begin at 7:30 a.m. in Deihl 118: viewing of *Romero*.
- Sunday morning, May 2, 8:15 a.m.: departure for a field trip to Dolores Mission in Boyle Heights.

Readings: Completion of assigned reading in texts and on-line before class is required for adequate participation. Updated links to readings on websites will be posted on the course home page at www.my.whittier.edu.

Quizzes: Routinely, quizzes will be given in class on required readings. No make up quizzes will be given because of tardiness or absence.

Exams: There will be two exams: a Mid-Term Exam on March 16, and a Final Exam on

May 13. No make-up exams will be given without the prior consent of the instructor.

Research Paper: Suggested topics and guidelines for the Research Paper, will be distributed. The paper is due on Friday, April 30, at 5:00 p.m. Late papers will be penalized one letter step (e.g., B>B-) for each day late. No paper will be accepted after May 6. Students in the pair will be given the option of writing a single, longer paper to meet the requirements of both courses.

Accommodations: Any student who, because of a disabling condition, may require some special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make the necessary accommodations. Students should present appropriate verification from Learning Support Services Office. No requirement exists that accommodations be made prior to completion of this approved College process.

Plagiarism and Other Forms of Cheating: Any student who commits plagiarism on the paper assignment or who commits some other form of cheating on tests or quizzes will fail the course and will be subject to other sanctions identified in the section on “Academic Honesty” in the *Student Handbook*.

GRADING:	Class Participation	10% of the final course grade
	Quizzes	10% of the final course grade
	Mid-Term Exam	20% of the final course grade
	Final Exam	30% of the final course grade
	Research Paper	30% of the final course grade

DAILY SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION

Feb. 5	Introduction: Situating Ourselves www.landreform.org/boff2.htm	Brown, 1-18
Feb. 10	Biblical Roots: Christianity as Communism	Brown, 19-67
Feb. 11 6-9 p.m.	Francisco Letelier, “Light Among Shadows” Exhibition Opening, Shannon Center	
Feb. 12	Biblical Roots: Why Communism?	Brown, 69-127

CATHOLICISM IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Mar. 30	Rebellion and Religion in El Salvador	Berryman, 91-161
Apr. 1	Rebellion and Religion in El Salvador	Sobrino, 11-97
Apr. 6	Rebellion and Religion in El Salvador Paper Topic & Bibliography Due	Sobrino, 101-163
Apr. 8 7:30 a.m. Deihl 118	<i>Romero</i> www.religion-online.org/cgi-bin/researchd.dll/showarticle?item_id=887	
Apr. 13	Rebellion and Religion in El Salvador	Sobrino, 167-224
Apr. 15	Rebellion and Religion in Nicaragua	Berryman, 51-89
Apr. 20	Rebellion and Religion in Nicaragua	Berryman, 226-276
Apr. 22	Rebellion and Religion in Nicaragua	Berryman, 220-225
Apr. 27 Deihl 118	The Theological Art of Solentiname	
Apr. 29	Research Day: No Class	
Apr. 30	Paper Due in Platner #112 by 5:00 p.m.	
May 2 8:15 a.m. Mendenhall	Field Trip to Dolores Mission	

THE REVOLUTION OF LIBERATION THEOLOGY

May 4	Whither Liberation Theology www.religion-online.org/cgi-bin/researchd.dll/showarticle?item_id=820 www.religion-online.org/cgi-bin/researchd.dll/showarticle?item_id=874	Berryman, 281-330
May 6	Becoming the Church of the Poor	Berryman, 331-374
May 11	Sanctuary Movement & Samaritans www.religion-online.org/cgi-bin/researchd.dll/showchapter?chapter_id=2190 www.borderlinks.org/bl/aboutus/our_story.htm	Berryman, 375-398

May 13

Final Judgment: 8:00-10:00