

The Episcopal Theological School at Claremont
EP134: Contemporary Theologies
Spring Semester 2018
Instructor: Michael J. McGrath, Ph.D.
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Course Description:

Using the notion of *praxis* (i.e., the integration of theory and action) as a guiding theme, this course will examine doctrinal issues concerning God, Christ and the Holy Spirit from the perspectives of Latin American and feminist liberation theology, for the purpose of comparing these perspectives, which represent the radical wing of contemporary theology, with the theological perspectives of liberalism and neo-orthodoxy/neo-evangelicalism, and for the purpose of bringing the doctrinal issues of liberation theology to bear on the practical matters of Christian living, particularly matters relating to social and economic life, spirituality and liturgy.

Texts:

Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is* (Herder & Herder)

Catherine Mowry LaCugna (ed.), *Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective* (Harper)

Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gaia & God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (Harper)

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet* (Continuum)

Jon Sobrino, *Jesus The Liberator: A Historical-Theological Reading of Jesus of Nazareth* (Orbis)

Jon Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator: A View from the Victims* (Orbis)

Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Ellacuría (ed.), *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology* (Orbis)

Dorothee Sölle, *Thinking About God: An Introduction to Theology* (TPI)

Learning Objectives:

- Identify and understand the method and basic concepts of the post-1970 tradition of liberation theology, particularly Latin American and feminist theology
- Compare and understand the differences in perspective between liberation theology and present-day liberal, neo-orthodox, and evangelical theology
- Identify and understand the challenges and contributions of postmodernism to systematic theology
- Articulate these understandings in the form of two written papers

Grading: Based on class participation and two take-home examinations (each 10-12 pages in length, the first responding to questions central to the course, the second doing a liberation theology)

Course Outline:

Jan 19 Introduction to the Course

Theology: Task, Sources, Method

Jan 26 Sölle, chs. 1-4; Sobrino (ed.), chs. 1-2; LaCugna (ed.), Intro, chs.1-2

"I believe in God, the Father almighty..."

Feb 9 Johnson, pp. 1-187

Feb 23 Johnson, pp. 189-273; LaCugna (ed.), ch.4; Sobrino (ed.), ch. 4

"...creator of heaven and earth."

March 9 Sölle, ch. 5; Ruether, *Gaia & God*, parts one, two, and four
Critical Responses from Liberalism and Neo-evangelicalism
Take-home Exam

"I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord...was crucified, died, and was buried...on the third day he rose again."

March 23 Sölle, ch. 10; Sobrino, *Jesus The Liberator*, pp. 1-104, 135-179
Exam Due

April 6 Sölle, ch. 11; Sobrino, *Jesus The Liberator*, pp. 180-192, 195-273; *Christ the Liberator*, pp. 11-110

April 13 Schüssler Fiorenza, pp. 1-96

April 27 Schüssler Fiorenza, pp. 97-190

"I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy, catholic Church...the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen."

May 11 Sobrino (ed.), chs. 8, 14, 16; Sölle, chs. 12-13; LaCugna (ed.), ch. 10
Critical Responses from Liberalism and Neo-evangelicalism
Exam Due: Postmark May 25, 2018

