AZUSA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY
HAGGARD SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

THEOLOGIES OF LIBERATION
THEO 480
Course Instruction Plan

Professor: Craig Keen                   Spring 2008
Office: Duke 242                3 Units
Times of Meeting: TR 2:45 – 4:10 p.m.
Place of Meeting: Duke 123

Azusa Pacific University Mission Statement: Azusa Pacific University is an evangelical Christian community of disciples and scholars who seek to advance the work of God in the world through academic excellence in liberal arts and professional programs of higher education that encourage students to develop a Christian perspective of truth and life.

Course Description: This course explores the rise of theological movements of social/political/economic liberation. It invites students to consider ways theology has been practiced recently among those outside the European mainstream, particularly among the oppressed and marginalized. It considers their critiques of, and novel contributions to, traditional Christian theology. Among the many liberation theologies from which this course draws are those that have emerged among and speak to the Latin American poor, African American, women, and other marginalized groups throughout the world. Whenever possible, the course includes an experiential learning component in which students visit and dialogue with individuals, families, and intentional communities (i.e., communities that gather to intentionally promote practices consonant with the kinds of liberation explored in this course) currently involved in liberationist approaches to theology and social change.

Course Eschata:
Students are asked to work thoughtfully in this course in the light of a certain “end.” It is expected that such work will yield some degree of understanding of . . .
1. The concrete and particular patterns of interaction that are at work in theology.
2. The dynamics of prayer and worship that constitute theology.
3. The mystery that plays at the heart of every Christian thought.
4. The history of Jesus as the beginning, end, and native soil of doctrine.
5. The historical tissue and bodily significance of theology.
6. The significance of social place in human thought and life.
7. The difference between the hunger that gives life and the hunger that takes life.
8. The plight of the marginalized in the world.
9. The trinitary structure of theological thinking.
10. The scripture that emerges at the source of theological formulation.
11. The church as a uniquely holy public region of action and passion.

Student Learning Outcomes:
By the end of the course students are to demonstrate that they have reached the following teloi. By the end of the course students are to . . .
1. Articulate ideas that have come to have particular importance in the intellectual history of the church.
2. Lay out reasons why the church has taken a stand in favor of these ideas.
3. Articulate ideas of particular importance within contemporary theological discourse.
4. Lay out reasons why these ideas have become important.
5. Synthesize these historic and contemporary ideas into a coherent pattern of ideas.
6. Read substantive theological texts with significant understanding and bring that understanding to written and oral discourse.

7. Gain facility in the use of a variety of texts—such as the church’s scriptures, traditions, peculiar modes of thought, and one’s own life-history—in order to think, write, and speak theologically.

8. Write an informed and well-organized research paper using a standard research manual.¹

**Required Textbooks:**


**Course Procedure and Requirements:**

1. Theologies of liberation have arisen largely in the last half century among marginalized persons nurtured by the church in widely differing social, political, and economic milieus. What they have had in common is a recognition that the declarations of Jesus, “you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:32), and of Paul, “for freedom Christ has set us free” (Galatians 5:1), have failed to be fulfilled among them by the ecclesiastical practices and theological ideologies dominated by modern European culture. Those theologies of liberation are thus not at their heart the constructions of Western theologians. They are multivalent phenomena that take shape as Black, Latin American, feminist, South African, Asian, and as various analogous theological movements in many parts of the world. They have particularly strongly protested the complicity of the Western church in the suffering that has emerged from systematic, institutionalized injustice, though without simply dismissing all Western theology. What is dismissed is the presumption of European thinkers to have access to and to be in a position to impose trans-historical answers to all the world’s questions. It is among our tasks in this course to learn in certain ways to think against our own habits of thought and to learn to think with theologians of liberation, as they give heed to the word God has to speak to particular people in particular moments of suffering and injustice. Among our texts are essays written by Western theologians who have taken the call to liberation seriously.

2. Our texts will guide us. The volume edited by Groody is devoted to one of the most important convictions especially of Latin American liberation theology, viz. “the preferential option for the poor.” The preferential option maintains that “theological reflection begins from the perspective of those who are poor, those who are marginalized from mainstream society, who have no influence or voice in the socioeconomic and political processes that so profoundly shape their lives and condemn them to dehumanizing misery” (Groody, “Introduction,” 5). The essays in this volume, written by Black, feminist, African, Latin American, Asian, and other liberation theologians as well as more traditional European and European-American theologians, all respond to the plight of the poor and point us again and again to them. This book will provide us with an entry to the energy of the thought and practice of theological liberation—in an era that some regard as having left liberation

¹The course exam, class presentations, informal class participation, and paper will be used to evaluate items 1 – 7; the paper will be used also to evaluate item 8.
theology in its dust. This and our other volumes will show that rumors of liberation theology’s death have been greatly exaggerated. Two of our texts, the one by Rivera and the one by Joh, are written from a “postcolonial” point of view. They embody the concerns of various streams of liberation theology (Latin American, Asian, feminist, et al.), but within our contemporary, self-consciously “postmodern” and “global” context. Finally, the text by Bieler and Schottroff will invite us to think ecclesial worship as a compassionate, liberative act of a people gathered to imagine the world differently and perform a future other than the one we have been trained to expect. All of these texts will call into question the dominance of “the West” in the light of the work of a God who is no respecter of this world’s principalities and powers. So many perspectives come to words in these texts that it would be impossible for any of us to agree with them all. It will be expected that serious disagreements will emerge over the weeks of our course. That is a good thing. However, it is an even better thing to listen closely especially when what a writer says seems simply wrong. It may be that we are the ones who are being called to change.

3. The objectives of the course will be met quite well, if one spends one’s time this semester giving thoughtful and prayerful care to the issues raised in assigned readings and in class discussion. Our texts do their work very well. They are not just books. They are devoted to God’s call for life. The point of reading them is less to achieve some abstract “academic” goal than that we all might come to live a little more than we would have otherwise and that we might carry that life with us as we journey to those to whom the love of God in Christ has already and in particular gone.

4. This course will spend its time exploring ideas. It will be assumed that every student has read carefully—prior to class time—everything assigned to be read for that day. It will always be helpful, and sometimes very helpful, to re-read those assignments after class discussion. This will, of course, require discipline and a considerable investment of time. Yet the subject matter of this course calls for no less. Every student will be expected to spend at least an average of 6 hours of study for this course outside of class each week in addition to the hours spent in preparation for the exam, presentations, and other special assignments. (If the material is especially difficult for one, then more time, perhaps much more time is to be devoted to study.) The professor is available to help the student outside of class as well.

5. Every student is strongly encouraged to be prepared by prior study and careful thought to enter into class discussion by asking questions, making comments, and otherwise discussing the ideas under examination. Not only does such public dialogue tend to improve the quality of one’s education, give evidence of one’s preparedness for class and understanding of the course’s issues, it also adds an important social dimension to the course which makes our work together more significant and vital. This class is understood from the beginning to be for its students, to be addressed to your issues, to be responsive to your questions. It is particularly important, therefore, that no one coast, but that everyone hear and speak responsively to the discourse that happens in every class session. Because of the importance of open intellectual interchange for the life of this course, class participation will be analyzed as part of the final evaluation of students’ work.

6. There will be class presentations.
   a. Most of our class sessions will be devoted specifically to the discussion of texts we are all to have read. Many of these discussions will be “group presentations” led by class members—with the assistance of the professor.
b. Each presentation will be evaluated according to how well the following is accomplished:
   1. The presentation group is to demonstrate a good understanding of the material under consideration.
   2. The presentation group is to convey ideas clearly and coherently.
   3. The presentation group is to respond well to class questions and comments, engaging the class, evoking questions and comments over the assigned material.
   4. The presentation group is to distribute electronically a thorough outline that covers the assigned material exhaustively (so that the oral presentation need not).\(^2\)

c. Each presenter is to provide the professor on the day of presentation with a report of the amount of time he or she spent working on the presentation alone, the amount of time spent with group members, and how well group members worked together. This report will also contribute to the determination of one’s grade for the presentation.\(^3\)

d. A presentation group is strongly encouraged to discuss presentation plans with the professor prior to her or his first day of presentation.

e. Each student is to give three presentations: one over a portion of Groody, one over Joh, and one over Bieler and Schottroff.

f. The presentations are to deal with the material indicated below:

   January 17: Tamez and Page (Groody 41 – 73): “Poverty, Poetry, and Scripture”
   January 22: Daley and Sobrino (Groody 77 – 116): “Poverty, Patristics and Martyrdom”
   January 24: Tracy and Ashley (Groody 119 – 154): “Poverty, Politics, and Apocalyptic Mysticism”
   January 31: Aquino, Copeland, and Hilkert (Groody 191 – 235): “Poverty, Race, and Gender”
   February 5: Floristán and Maldonado (Groody 239 – 268): “Poverty, Liturgy, and Popular Religiosity”
   February 7: Pieris and Signer (Groody 271 – 301): “Poverty, Religions, and Identity”
   February 28: Joh (ix – 18)

\(^2\) An outline is to be at least 1750 words in length.
\(^3\) A presenter is expected to have spent c. 10 hours (including reading time) getting ready for a presentation.
March 4: Joh (19 – 48)
March 6: Joh (49 – 90)
March 11: Joh (91 – 128)
March 27: Bieler and Schottroff (vii – 25)
April 1: Bieler and Schottroff (25 – 48)
April 3: Bieler and Schottroff (49 – 74)
April 8: Bieler and Schottroff (74 – 100)
April 10: Bieler and Schottroff (100 – 126)
April 15: Bieler and Schottroff (127 – 155)
April 17: Bieler and Schottroff (157 – 172)
April 22: Bieler and Schottroff (172 – 196)

7. N.B. All of these blocks of texts are to be read by all students. Indeed the day of presentation each student—including the one presenting—is to indicate in writing whether or not she or he has studied (i.e. closely read at least once) the material covered by the presentation. Absence from class on the day of a presentation or failure to report having studied the material covered by the presentation will reduce one’s own presentation average by five percentage points. A later report of having “caught up” in reading a day’s assignment will restore three of the five points lost that day. Points will not be restored for those who miss presentation sessions without acceptable reasons.

8. There will be a final examination, covering all the work we have done this semester. It will be an essay examination, chiefly over our texts. Students will be asked to write one continuous, coherent essay. The examination prompt will be complex, beginning with a passage from an assigned text and including a series of items from our work this term. The components of the examination prompt will be made available in portions over the course of a few days before the exam. The entire examination prompt will be sent to you by the evening before the final examination period. The date and time of the exam are: April 29 (12:15 – 2:15 p.m.).

9. Each student is to write a paper. Each paper is to analyze and explain some doctrinal aspect of a significant monograph in the broad field of liberation/political theology. That is, each paper is to concentrate on the way a prominent theologian has addressed a set of political issues while addressing a particular teaching of the church (Christology, soteriology,

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4 The phrase “political theology” is broader than the phrase “liberation theology.” Political theologians may or may not understand themselves as liberation theologians and often are situated in more traditional European theological contexts. For example, Jürgen Moltmann is a political theologian, while James Cone is a liberation theologian. One might look at The Cambridge Companion to Political Theology to get some sense of prominent liberation and political theologians.
ecclesiology, or any of a great number of other doctrines). Each paper is to be typed following a standard form and style manual (Turabian, MLA, etc.), frequently cite its sources, especially the monograph being examined (in footnotes or parenthetical citations—but please no endnotes), be carefully written and rewritten, avoid such gender-exclusive terms as the “generic” use of “man,” “he,” “him,” etc., include a works cited page, and be at least 2000 words in length, etc. These papers are due in electronic form by 11:59 p.m., Saturday, March 1.

10. Grades will be determined by the professor as seems fitting, using quantifiable and non-quantifiable factors. However, the following scale will be used as guidance: 90 – 100: A; 80 – 89: B; 70 – 79: C; 60 – 69: D; 0 – 59: F. Other, less quantitative factors will be considered as well. A student who misses class more than three times, should expect to be evaluated by the following scale, without considering any other factors: 95 – 100: A; 85 – 94: B; 75 – 84: C; 65 – 74: D; 0 – 64: F. (Three “tardies” may be taken to be equivalent to one absence.)

11. The exam is not to be taken late and the paper is not to be turned in late except under quite extraordinary circumstances (hospitalization, death in the family, etc.). Whenever it is possible, the student is to report to the professor well in advance any such extraordinary circumstances that might affect the student’s compliance with the schedule of the course. If a student cannot do the work for this course when it is scheduled to be done, that student should assume that her work will not be able to be done at all. If some complication qualifies as inadequate for full exception to the prohibition of late work, but is yet adequate for some exception, the work will be accepted, but the grade recorded for it will be reduced. Of course, it is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the professor to complete any work for the course missed due to an absence, but allowed to be completed late.

12. Contributions of assignments to the quantifiable portion of the course grade:
   a. Final exam: 30%.
   b. Paper: 25%.
   c. Presentations: 30%.
   d. Informal class participation: 15%.

13. Any student in this course who has a disability that might prevent her from fully demonstrating her abilities should meet with an advisor in the Learning Enrichment Center as soon as possible to initiate disability verification and discuss accommodations that might be necessary to ensure your full participation in the successful completion of course requirements.

14. Schedule:
   a. January 8 (T):
      Overview of the course.
      Have read Groody 1 – 14
   b. January 10 (R):
      Gutiérrez
      Have read Groody 17 – 38
   c. January 15 (T):
      Gutiérrez
      Have read Groody 17 – 38

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5 Pluses and minuses will be determined within these larger categories.
6 Pluses and minuses, again, will be determined within these larger categories.
d. January 17 (R):
Group presentation over Tamez and Page
Have read Groody 41 – 73

e. January 22 (T):
Group presentation over Daley and Sobrino
Have read Groody 77 – 116

f. January 24 (R):
Group presentation over Tracy and Ashley
Have read Groody 119 – 154

g. January 29 (T):
Group presentation over Elizondo and Kalilombe
Have read Groody 157 – 187

h. January 31 (R):
Group presentation over Aquino, Copeland, and Hilkert
Have read Groody 191 – 235

i. February 5 (T):
Group presentation over Floristán and Maldonado
Have read Groody 239 – 268

j. February 7 (R):
Group presentation over Pieris and Signer
Have read Groody 271 – 301

k. February 12 (T):
Where are we?

l. February 14 (R):
Rivera
Have read Rivera ix – 38

m. February 19 (T):
Rivera
Have read Rivera 39 – 66

n. February 21 (R)
Rivera
Have read Rivera 66 – 97

o. February 26 (T):
Rivera
Have read Rivera 99 – 140

p. February 28 (R):
Group presentation over Joh
Have read Job ix – 18

q. March 1 (S), by 11:59 p.m.:
Paper due

r. March 4 (T):
Group presentation over Joh
Have read Job 19 – 48
John Wright lecturing on campus

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7 Attending John Wright’s APU public lecture will cancel one class absence.
s. March 6 (R):
Group presentation over Joh
*Have read Job 49 – 90*

t. March 11 (T):
Group presentation over Joh
*Have read Job 91 – 128*

No class (professor at WTS meeting, followed by Easter Break)

v. March 25 (T):
Where are we?

w. March 27 (R):
Group presentation over Bieler and Schottroff
*Have read Bieler and Schottroff vii – 25*

x. April 1 (T):
Group presentation over Bieler and Schottroff
*Have read Bieler and Schottroff 25 – 48*

y. April 3 (R):
Group presentation over Bieler and Schottroff
*Have read Bieler and Schottroff 49 – 74*

z. April 8 (T):
Group presentation over Bieler and Schottroff
*Have read Bieler and Schottroff 74 – 100*

a’. April 10 (R):
Group presentation over Bieler and Schottroff
*Have read Bieler and Schottroff 100 – 126*

b’. April 15 (T):
Group presentation over Bieler and Schottroff
*Have read Bieler and Schottroff 127 – 155*

c’. April 17 (R):
Group presentation over Bieler and Schottroff
*Have read Bieler and Schottroff 157 – 172*

d’. April 22 (T):
Group presentation over Bieler and Schottroff
*Have read Bieler and Schottroff 172 – 196*

e’. April 24 (R):
Where are we?

f’. April 29 (T):
*Exam (12:15 – 2:15 p.m.)*

14. **Professor contact information:**
Office: Duke 242
APU telephone extension: (626-815-6000) 5635
Email: ckeen@apu.edu
Home telephone number: 626-815-2855
Cell telephone number: 626-755-4173
Informal consultations MWF by appointment.

15. **Addenda:**
a. **THEO Desired Faith Integration Outcome:** All in all, students will be asked to
demonstrate that they have given thoughtful consideration to certain current and
historical issues in the light of the church’s scriptures and traditions. As they do so it is expected that they will demonstrate that they understand that informed and disciplined Christian faith is multiform: it is personal, social, spiritual, historical, doctrinal, biblical, practical, and takes shape in the network of relations that makes up the life of the church. Students will come to greater clarity concerning the personal and social relevance and spiritual richness that informed and disciplined theological discourse may bring to their lives among others in the time and space in which they live. This is coherent with the university-wide student learning goals that graduates should articulate a Christian view of truth and life; should apply scriptural reasoning to problems; should appreciate, understand, and love the church; should practice love for all persons, appreciating personal and cultural differences, demonstrating truth-telling and grace in their relationships; and articulate the importance of fellowship between persons—locally, and globally.

b. THEO Desired Learning Outcomes:

1. Undergraduate students will demonstrate an ability to give thoughtful consideration to the issues of the past and the present in the light of the church's Scriptures and traditions.

2. Graduates should demonstrate a practice of continual intellectual growth through personal scholarship and development.

It is our desire that students will demonstrate growth in the ability to think critically about the historical, doctrinal, biblical and practical aspects of the Christian faith, including appreciation, understanding, and valuing the Church. Students will grow into a greater awareness of the personal and social relevance and spiritual richness that informed, disciplined theological reflection can bring to their Christian existence and their own impact upon the world in which they live. This is an application of the university-wide student learning goals that graduates should be able to articulate a Christian worldview of truth and life; should be able to apply biblically-based ethical reasoning skills to problems; should appreciate, understand, and value the Church; should practice a respect for the worth of all persons, with appreciation of individual and cultural differences, demonstrating truth-telling and grace in their relationships; and should be able to articulate the importance of extending genuine community to all peoples locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.

c. From APU’s “Academic Integrity” policy statement: “The mission of Azusa Pacific University includes cultivating in each student not only the academic skills that are required for a university degree, but also the characteristics of academic integrity that are integral to a sound Christian education. It is therefore part of the mission of the university to nurture in each student a sense of moral responsibility consistent with the biblical teachings of honesty and accountability. Furthermore, a breach of academic integrity is viewed not merely as a private matter between the student and an instructor but rather as an act which is fundamentally inconsistent with the purpose and mission of the entire university. A complete copy of the Academic Integrity Policy is available in the Office of Student Life, the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs, and online.” Expectations for this course regarding academic integrity are consistent with those outlined in the academic integrity policy. Consequences for violations of academic
integrity in this course are consistent with those outlined in the academic integrity policy.
Theo 480 Theologies of Liberation
Craig Keen, Professor
Spring 2008

1. Name: ____________________________________________
(Please print or type)

2. APU box no. ______________________________ Email: ________________________

3. Phone no. (       ) ___________________________ (        ) ______________________

4. Home address: ___________________________________________________________
   Zip
   Home phone: (       ) ___________________________

   □ I am a commuter, please phone me if class is suddenly canceled.

5. Major: ___________________________ Why did you choose this major? _____________
   __________________________________________________________________________

6. Previous courses taken in theology or church history: ___________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

7. Previous courses taken in bible: _____________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

8. Previous courses taken in philosophy: _________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

9. Present standing: ___Sr. ___Jr. ___Soph. ___Frosh Grad. Date ______________

10. Career plans: _____________________________________________________________

11. Is there some particular question you would like me to answer during this course? _________
   __________________________________________________________________________

12. Is there anything you would like me to know about you? ___________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

(You may continue on the back of this page, if you’d like.)