**Dr. Kate Ward**

**Draft Syllabus for Theo 4270, The Many Faces of US Catholicism (MCC ESSV2, Discovery Tier—Crossing Boundaries)**

**Fall 2022**

*The Many Faces of U.S. Catholicism* will focus on U.S. theologies from the margins—ways of understanding God, human nature, and Christian ethics that originate within particular, historically marginalized U.S. communities. We will encounter fundamental theological topics such as Jesus, church community, and ethics from the perspective of African American, Latino/a, and Native American Catholic theologies. Given the diversity of material in the course, all students will encounter perspectives new to them and will be encouraged to reflect on the experience of learning theology with “outsider” eyes. Since our course material prioritizes experience as a source of theological reflection, so will our assignments, which will include composing Wikipedia entries on key figures and concepts within U.S. theologies from the margins as well as reflecting on the theology encountered during a visit to a Catholic Mass associated with a non-dominant culture. This class fulfills MCC requirements for ESSV2 and the Discovery Tier theme of Crossing Boundaries. Prereq: Theo 1001 or 1001H.

# Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete the work of this course will be able to:

1. Knowledgeably discuss key theological concepts including God, Jesus Christ, theological anthropology, salvation, Church and social justice as they are understood in African American, Latinx, and Native American Catholic traditions. This includes demonstrating understanding of the existence of diversity within particular culturally rooted traditions of thought.
2. Encounter diverse social systems and values through an experiential visit to a Catholic Mass associated with a Catholic community that is marginalized in the White-dominant U.S. Catholic Church, and discuss how the unique theological perspectives of the community are reflected in inculturated worship.
3. Communicate their knowledge of theologies from the margins in various written and oral genres, including reflection papers, class discussion, and a Wikipedia article on a key theological figure or concept.
4. Using theological perspectives as lenses, reflect on their own positions in social systems and think about how they, personally, can contribute to the creation of conditions of equality and inclusivity.

# Required Texts

Bryan Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, Orbis, 2010

Orlando Espín, *The Faith of the People: Theological Reflections on Popular Catholicism*, Orbis, 1997

*The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Latino/a Theology* [hopefully to be offered online through Raynor]

All other readings provided by professor on D2L

# Course Outline

**Introduction: Theology and Culture / History of U.S. Catholicism**

**Week 1:** Clemens Sedmak, *Doing Local Theology* (ch. 1, 4)*;* Julie Byrne, “Roman Catholics and the American Mainstream in the Twentieth Century;” “Roman Catholic,” 298-309 in Stuart Matlin, *How to be a Perfect Stranger: The Essential Religious Etiquette Handbook* (preparing for Mass visits.).

**Week 2:** Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church* ch. 1; Orlando Espín, *The Faith of the People*, ch. 2; George Tinker, “Historic Pain and the Political Present: Pointing to a Healthy Future,” in *American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty*

**Unit 2: African-American Liberation Theologies**

**Week 3:** “What Catholics Need to Know about Critical Race Theory,” Gloria Purvis and Vincent Rougeau, *The Gloria Purvis Podcast;*Bryan Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, ch. 2

**Week 4:** Massingale, *Racial Justice*, ch. 3-5

**Week 5:** M. Shawn Copeland, “White Supremacy and Anti-Black Logics in the Making of U.S. Catholicism,” and Katie Walker Grimes, “Black Exceptionalism: Anti-Blackness Supremacy in the Afterlife of Slavery,” both in *Anti-Blackness and Christian Ethics;* Margaret Pfeil, “Can a White U.S. Catholic Opt for the Poor?” in *Interrupting White Privilege*.

**Week 6:** “We’ve Come This Far by Faith: Black Catholics and Their Church,” Diana L. Hayes; “Called to be Leaven: Reflections on African American Catholic Spirituality,” Cyprian Davis, OSB; and “Gonna Move When the Spirit Say Move”: A Black Spirituality of Resilience and Resistance,” Vanessa White; in *Black Catholic Studies Reader*

**Unit 3: Latin@ (o/a/x) U.S. Theologies**

**Week 7:** Nichole Flores, “When Discourse Breaks Down: Race and Aesthetic Solidarity in the U.S. Catholic Church,” in *Polarization in the Catholic Church*, eds. Konieczny, Camosy and Bruce; Rubén Rosario Rodríguez, “Sources and *en conjunto* methodologies of Latino/a theologizing” and Carmen M. Nanko-Fernández, “Lo Cotidiano as Locus Theologicus,” in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Latino/a Theology;* Orlando Espín, *The Faith of the People*, intro and ch. 1

**Week 8:** Class session on composing and editing Wikipedia entries;

Orlando Espín, *The Faith of the People*, ch. 3-4

**Week 9:** Orlando Espín, *The Faith of the People*, ch. 5-6

**Week 10:** Elizondo, “The Galilee Principle,” ch. 7 in *Galilean Journey*; Neomi DeAnda, “Jesus the Christ,” and Jorge A. Aquino, “*Mestizaje*: The Latina/o Religious Imaginary in the North American Racial Crucible,” in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Latino/a Theology*

**Week 11:**Carmen M. Nanko-Fernández, “Preferential Option for the Poor,” Victor Carmona, “Theologizing Immigration,” and MT Dávila, “Latino/a Ethics,” in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Latino/a Theology*

**Unit 4: Native American Catholic Theology**

**Week 12:** George Tinker, “Christology and Colonialism: Jesus, Corn Mother, and Conquest,” in *American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty*; Clara Sue Kidwell, Homer Noley, and George Tinker, *A Native American Theology*, ch. 2-3, “Creation” and “Deity”

**Week 13:** Damian Costello, “Black Elk’s Vision of Waníkiya: The Ghost Dance, Catholic Sacraments, and Lakota Ontology.” *Journal of NAIITS* 16 (2018): 40–56; “Walking the Good Red Road: Nicholas Black Elk’s Journey to Sainthood” (documentary); “Saint Kateri and Native American Catholics” (PBS.org).

# Assignments

**30% Wikipedia Entry (Learning Outcomes 1, 3)**

“Black Catholic theological scholarship must originate from a stance of engagement and commitment.” –Bryan N. Massingale[[1]](#footnote-1)

“Theology done *en conjunto* implies mutual accountability between the Latino/a theologian and *la comunidad*.” –Rubén Rosario Rodríguez[[2]](#footnote-2)

Theology from the margins is not a simple academic exercise, but rather a process of placing knowledge and understanding at the service of communities struggling for liberation. As a class, we will take action to share what we have learned and address the underrepresentation and erasure of African American, Latinx, and Native American Catholic figures and theologies by writing or significantly revising Wikipedia articles on course-related topics. Every student will choose a unique figure or theological concept from a list provided by the professor and will research and write a suitable-for-publication Wikipedia article on their subject. We will learn about Wikipedia’s genre and best research and writing practices in class.

**30% Mass visit paper (Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4)**

Students will attend a Catholic Mass associated with a Catholic community that is marginalized in the White-dominant U.S. Catholic Church (African-American/Black Catholic, Latinx/Chicano/Mexican American Catholic, or Native American Catholic communities.) I will provide a list of parishes in Milwaukee and Chicagoland as well as recommendations for finding an appropriate parish should you want to visit one in your own hometown. You are responsible for choosing the Mass you will attend and getting yourself there (plenty of Milwaukee options can be accessed via public transit.) After your visit, you will write a sourced paper discussing how the distinct theological perspectives of the community are reflected in inculturated worship. Consistent with this course’s Discovery theme of Crossing Boundaries, you will also reflect on your own experience as a cultural “outsider.” This paper does not require additional research, but you should reference a range of our course readings and cite them appropriately. A rubric will be available and we will discuss how to be a guest at Mass for those who may not know what to expect.

**30% Course Journal** (Learning Outcomes 1, 3, 4)

You will complete a series of weekly course journal entries on D2L. These will show your own understanding of the readings and course discussion and incorporate your own reflection (informed opinion) on the course material. Journal entries may cover material from one or both classes in a week and are due before class on the second class meeting day of every week to help keep you on track with your course reading.

The course journal will be graded on a specs grading basis. This means that if you complete a certain number of course journal entries (as described below) to the specifications given, you will automatically receive the letter grade mentioned below for the course journal portion of your final grade. Specifications may include answering all the suggested questions and incorporating feedback on previous entries. The D2L setup allows you to enter text, but you might want to compose your journal entry in a Word doc or email before pasting it into D2L, since D2L may not save automatically.

To earn an A on this portion of your grade, you will complete 11 course journal entries; to earn B, complete 9; to earn C, complete 7; to earn D or less, complete 6 or less. In other words, to earn an A, you will turn in your journals weekly, skipping up to three weeks.

**10% Class Participation**

In this class, all persons are expected to participate in meaningful and challenging ways. This course is designed to be highly interactive and collaborative. You will be best set up to achieve your learning goals for the course if you attend all the class sessions and participate on a regular basis. Participation includes, at a minimum, contributing to whole class and small group discussions, bringing observations from the reading to class discussion (“one sentence,” “present point/sticking point/striking point,” “consolation/desolation/clarification”) and listening respectfully to instructors and peers. Participation can also look like sharing notes with fellow students, visiting office hours, sending me interesting news related to our class, and other ways of engaging with the class community and material. **I do not want you to come to class if you feel sick**, so I am not explicitly “counting” attendance for your grade. That said, I will keep track of attendance and, if I am concerned, may reach out to you to see if I can offer any support. I will also monitor your participation and will give you a temporary participation grade at midterm as formative feedback.

1. Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 160. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Rosario-Rodríguez, “Sources and En Conjunto Methodologies of Latino/a Theologizing,” 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)