

GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: **Fall 2009**
Instructor: Bryan N. Massingale
Course #: THEO 8618
Course Title: **Liberation Ethics**

Content:

Liberation theologies are reflections upon the experience of God revealed in the struggle for justice from a stance of solidarity with the victims of injustice. Yet this seminar is not a course on "liberation theologies" in se. Rather, presuming this theological approach, the seminar explores the ethical dimensions and implications of liberationist theological reflection. The overarching questions of the seminar are: What are the contributions and challenges to Christian moral discourse, analysis, and reflection which emerge from the theologies of liberation and their objective to struggle against human oppression, exploitation, and injustice? How does the "option for the poor" inform, challenge, and reorient Christian ethical analysis and praxis? Attention will be paid to both the commonality and diversity present in this theological movement. We will also consider the question of the adequacy of the ethical reflections and analyses which stem from this school of thought. The final part of the semester is devoted to the presentation and discussion of participants' research papers and/or the professor's current research.

Format:

In keeping with the expectations of a doctoral seminar, after the first two weeks, I will do little formal lecturing. I may take the beginning or the end of a session for a "mini-lecture" to either set the context for the topic, or deal with organizational matters. Otherwise, the "focus presenter" will begin by reading his/her paper, with the members of the seminar entering into a discussion of the ideas, insights, and questions that arise out of the assigned readings (the moderator facilitating). I will interject for points of clarification/emphasis, or to call us back to the topic at hand.

Assignments and/or Examinations:

- Depending upon class size, 3-4 presentations of the readings.
- Critical Book Review
- Research Paper
- Regular attendance and informed, respectful participation
- The usual ton of reading in a graduate seminar

Language Pre-requisites:

- Facility in English is desirable; otherwise the command of those languages needed for one's research project.

Department of Theology

Required Texts:

- Patricia McAuliffe, *Fundamental Ethics: A Liberationist Approach*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1993.
- Jon Sobrino, *Where Is God?* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003.
- Ivan Petrella, *Beyond Liberation Theology: A Polemic*.
- Traci West, *Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women's Lives Matter*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.
- Other Texts to be Determined.

Optional texts:

- To be Determined.