

**Saint Paul School of Theology**  
**TH448 Liberation Theology in Global Contexts**  
**Fall 2006**

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<b>Office Hours</b>	By appointment anytime or during posted office hours, including Tuesday and Wednesday, 12:30-2:00 p.m.

**Class Meeting:** Tuesday, 8:00-10:50 a.m.  
 Kansas-Winger Building Room 309

**Course Description:**

*Catalog Description:* Informed by literature and social sciences, the survey of global liberation theologies establishes particular social, cultural, political, economic, and historical contexts for theology across the world. The course explores central doctrines of liberation theologies in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. In addition to theological and contextual issues, the course emphasizes the relevance of liberation theologies to constructive approaches to ministry.

*Purpose:* The purpose of the course is to prepare students for the global demands of theology and ministry. The course examines how politics, church, and theology intersect when justice issues are at stake. While the course creates greater sensitivity to issues in other contexts, the content is relevant to the ever more diverse citizenry of the United States. The Saint Paul mission and values statement interprets the mission of the seminary as a response to God's call "to set at liberty those who are oppressed," and in terms of commitments to "thorough-going praxis" and "a global outlook." The course intends to equip students and the church in keeping with the seminary's core values.

Prerequisite: THL301 Introduction to Systematic Theology. Semester Credit Hours: 3.

## Course Teaching-Learning Objectives

1. The priority in this course is teaching and learning about how theology develops in global contexts as a response to injustice and oppression. Because theology is embedded in experience and cultures, this course examines how contemporary theological perspectives are sociohistorical constructions related to specific political, economic, social, and cultural contexts.
2. The sociohistorical, political, and cultural influences on theology create contexts where diverse theological expressions arise. This challenges us to develop an empathetic understanding of contexts and theologies that may not be our own and to recognize that Christianity is neither abstracted from culture nor limited to one “correct” form or expression in the eyes of religious scholarship.
3. Teaching and learning lead to praxis. One outcome is recognition of how theological worldviews shape the way we live, how we engage ministry/Christian vocation, and how we relate to God and the world.
4. Teaching and learning theology begins with understanding method (how scholars investigate topics and draw conclusions), sources (what information scholars consult to form new ideas), and language (how scholars express ideas). Students should familiarize themselves with scholarly methods in theology, which equip them to be life-long learners and public theologians.
5. Teaching and learning involve critical thinking, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis. One pedagogical strategy for appropriating these skills is reading texts and writing assignments with awareness of perspectives marginalized by class, gender, race, theology, and sexual orientation.
6. Good scholarship requires work toward excellent written and oral expression. This course will require each student to learn how to pose theological questions, formulate theses, advance arguments, and draw relevant conclusions.
7. One presupposition of this course is that learning is not competitive, but collaborative. A goal of the course is to learn how to participate in scholarly conversations that support learning for all students involved in the course. Students must be responsibly prepared to assist the learning process. Students are encouraged to find ways to collaborate in class discussions and on written assignments. The principle behind the learning objective is that ministry is a collaborative profession.

## Required Texts

Isabel Allende, *The House of the Spirits*

Kwame Bediako, *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience*

Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*

Choan-Seng Song, *Third-Eye Theology: Theology in Formation in Asian Settings*

In addition to the required texts above, the course reading list includes the following chapters selected from texts in liberation theology:

Luz Beatriz Arellano, "Women's Experience of God in Emerging Spirituality," pages 318-338 from *Feminist Theology from the Third World: A Reader*, ed. Ursula King

Ivone Gebara and María Clara Bingemer, "Mary—Mother of God, Mother of the Poor," pages 275-281 from *Feminist Theology from the Third World: A Reader*, ed. Ursula King

Leonardo Boff, "Ecology, Politics, Theology, and Mysticism," pages 9-54 from *Ecology and Liberation: A New Paradigm*

Marianne Katoppo, "The Concept of God and the Spirit from the Feminist Perspective," pages 244-250 from *Feminist Theology from the Third World: A Reader*, ed. Ursula King

Chung Hyun Kyung, "To Be Human Is to Be Created in God's Image," pages 251-258 from *Feminist Theology from the Third World: A Reader*, ed. Ursula King

Kuribayashi Teruo, "Recovering Jesus for Outcasts in Japan," pages 11-26 from *Frontiers in Asian Christian Theology*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah

Teresa M. Hinga, "Jesus Christ and the Liberation of Women in Africa," pages 183-194 from *The Will to Arise: Women, Tradition, and the Church in Africa*, ed. Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Musimbi R. Kanyoro

Anne Nachisale Musopole, "Sexuality and Religion in Matriarchal Society," pages 195-205 from *The Will to Arise: Women, Tradition, and the Church in Africa*, ed. Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Musimbi R. Kanyoro

Bénézet Bujo, excerpt, pages 75-92 from *African Theology in Its Social Context*

**Course Schedule: August 28-December 15, 2006**

August 29

Topic: Course Introduction

September 5

Topic: Oppression and the Role of Experience in Theology

Required Reading: Allende, *The House of the Spirits*

September 12

Topic: Oppression and the Role of Experience in Theology

Required Reading: Allende, *The House of the Spirits*

September 19

Topic: Latin American Liberation Theology

Required Reading: Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*

September 26

Topic: Latin American Liberation Theology

Required Reading: Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*

October 3

Topic: Latin American Liberation Theology

Required Reading: Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*

Further Reading: Arellano, "Women's Experience of God in Emerging Spirituality"

Gebara and Bingemer, "Mary—Mother of God, Mother of the Poor"

Boff, "Ecology, Politics, Theology, and Mysticism"

Due: Reading Summary and Presentation

October 10

Topic: Asian Liberation Theology

Required Reading: Song, *Third-Eye Theology*

October 17

Research and Writing Day

No Class Meeting

October 24

Reading Week

No Class Meeting

October 31

Topic: Asian Liberation Theology

Required Reading: Song, *Third-Eye Theology*

November 7

Topic: Asian Liberation Theology  
Required Reading: Song, *Third Eye Theology*

November 14

Topic: Asian Liberation Theology  
Required Reading: Song, *Third-Eye Theology*  
Further Reading: Katoppo, "The Concept of God and the Spirit from the Feminist Perspective"  
Chung, "To Be Human Is to Be Created in God's Image"  
Teruo, "Recovering Jesus for Outcasts in Japan"  
Due: Reading Summary and Presentation

November 21

Thanksgiving Break  
No Class Meeting

November 28

Topic: African Liberation Theology  
Required Reading: Bediako, *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa*

December 5

Topic: African Liberation Theology  
Required Reading: Bediako, *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa*

December 12

Topic: African Liberation Theology  
Required Reading: Bediako, *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa*  
Further Reading: Hinga, "Jesus Christ and the Liberation of Women"  
Musopole, "Sexuality and Religion in Matriarchal Society"  
Bujo, excerpt  
Due: Class Participation Self-Evaluation Work Sheet  
Reading Summary and Presentation

## Course Requirements

1. *Class Participation.* Class participation is expected of each student and is critical for the success of the collaborative work of the course. By class participation, I mean that each student must attend class regularly and engage in discussions. Students must attempt seriously all required assignments, and the expectation is that all students are capable of completing and interpreting texts. This does not mean that students fully understand material, but that they are familiar with the texts and know which passages are puzzling. Class participation allows students to raise questions and to achieve some understanding of course content. Good class participation includes active listening to and support of other students. In addition, good class participation means completing oral and written assignments on time in order to meet obligations to other students' learning. At the end of the semester, students assess the quality of their class participation and assign themselves a letter grade using a self-evaluation work sheet, which makes explicit the criteria for good class participation. The instructor also assigns a class participation grade. The Class Participation Self-Evaluation Work Sheet (attached to the syllabus) is due Wednesday, December 12.
2. *Reading Summary and Presentation.* Each continent where liberation theology is written is a complex and multidimensional place where many contexts and circumstances affect theological development. In order for this course to provide a meaningful and responsible introduction to liberation theology, the reading list is ambitious. Therefore, students and the instructor must develop a system for summarizing additional reading assignments. Collaboration gives individual students exposure to diverse topics, while class presentations and discussion engage all students in a range of issues. On October 3, November 7, and December 12, students assigned to specific readings develop a two-page summary of their reading assignments, which are sent in Word documents to the instructor who will email copies to all members of the class. The summary may not exceed two pages, but must include summary of one main point of the article and attention to one specific issue for discussion in class (roughly one page for each part). The summary requires typed, double-spaced manuscripts with careful use of parenthetical references to the reading. Note that a number of students may present on the same article, so each paper should contribute a unique issue or question for discussion.
3. *Exploratory Research Paper.* A research paper exploring one doctrine from a liberation theology outside the U.S., which is not covered in class, enables students to explore further theological options. The typed, double-spaced paper should be 18-20 pages in length, including footnotes/endnotes, title page, and bibliography (following the format established in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual of Style for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, sixth edition). The instructor prefers that the papers be submitted on disk or as an email attachment in Word software. Papers are due no later than November 14, but students assign themselves both a deadline and topic in consultation with the instructor.

Professorial Idiosyncrasies: (1) Please do not submit written work in binders or folders—a single staple in the upper left-hand corner of any printed paper is preferred. (2) Consider submitting any printed drafts of papers on the unused side of scratch paper or printed on both sides of a clean sheet of paper. (3) For ease in electronic distribution of papers, use **Microsoft Word** as the preferred software in order to assure that all students and the instructor can open the files.

## **Inclusive Language**

In both oral and written contributions to the course, students are expected to be conscious of the power of language in theology. Inclusive language attends to all kinds of diversity (e.g., age, class, disability, gender, nationality, religion, race/ethnicity), but the course in liberation theology will most often require consideration of gendered language related to gender, race, and class for both persons and God. Students are especially accountable to reflect the language of other authors' writing as part of the content of their theology.

## **Grading**

Criteria for grading follow.

Students in consultation with the instructor determine how grading will be assessed. At the end of the term, students receive letter grades in accordance with policies and descriptions outlined in the current catalog.

Class Participation		_____ %
Self-evaluation	_____ %	
Instructor evaluation	_____ %	
Reading Summary and Presentation		_____ %
Exploratory Research Paper		_____ %

## **Student Responsibilities**

Students must abide by policies established in the Saint Paul handbook and catalog. Pay special attention to the policies on Integrity of Work Submitted and Class Attendance. The instructor reserves the option to fail a student for a single instance of plagiarism. The professor reserves the option to fail a student strictly for habitual absence or tardiness.

As encouragement to take responsibility for their learning, students are invited to communicate with the instructor. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of illness, if you have emergency information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with the professor as soon as possible. Please consult with the instructor for any assistance with your learning and class attendance.

## **Professor's Responsibilities**

My job is to teach with integrity the scholarship representative of my field, to see that students learn as much as possible, and to create a comfortable environment for learning. These goals cannot be accomplished without genuine attention to unique strengths, experiences, and expectations that both the professor and students bring to the classroom. My goal is to provide encouragement and support for your learning. Sometimes flexible procedures and learning options are necessary to facilitate the kind of teaching and learning that should occur. I am anxious to hear what energizes you, what disappoints you, where you disagree, and what helps you learn. PLEASE SEE ME IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR SPECIFIC NEEDS.

## **Learning-Disabling Conditions**

Saint Paul faculty are committed to facilitating the learning of students capable of graduate-level seminary work. Any student who has a condition that may prevent full demonstration of his/her abilities (e.g., difficulty seeing or hearing, dyslexia, or other learning disabilities) should contact the office of the Dean of Students immediately to discuss evaluation and documentation of learning needs, alternative learning strategies that have worked for the student in the past, and mutually accountable accommodations to ensure the student's full participation and evaluation in the course. Students with documented learning disabilities must consult the Saint Paul School of Theology Handbook and comply with institutional guidelines and policies. Similarly, mental or physical conditions must be documented and discussed with the Dean of Students, who may arrange accommodations, and all handbook guidelines and policies apply.

## Criteria for Evaluating Course Work

Regardless of whether you write a paper, answer an essay question, voice an oral presentation, or create any original project, the academic context requires that certain minimal requirements characterize your work. While there are subjective components in the grading process, most professors are concerned that you become well educated in four basic qualities of excellent academic work:

1. ***Demonstration of an empathetic understanding of the content of text and resources.*** Your topic should not only be well researched in the library, through interviews and observations, and/or from assigned readings and class discussions, but you should be able to provide a fair description and a clear understanding of texts and resources. This is apparent in the ability to describe and discuss precisely and accurately what an author has written or a speaker has said. Evaluation, response, and critique follow accurate representation of another's ideas—earn the privilege of criticizing a viewpoint by showing that you really understand it.
2. ***Clear critical thinking that provides appropriate specific evidence for conclusions.*** Use the most precise historical, empirical, or contemporary data or information to support the claims of your thesis and paragraphs. Conclusions follow from and are supported by evidence. Be sure that your evidence is relevant, accurate, and detailed. Adherence to clear critical thinking, relevant and accurate evidence, and logical organization constitute sound arguments. Even creative writing requires logical relationships among ideas to assist your readers in following the plot or main point.
3. ***Creativity that moves beyond reporting someone else's ideas.*** Your creative addition to academic discourse might include questioning, evaluating, applying, criticizing (positively or negatively), developing, or responding. You might see a connection between two or more ideas. You might see information from a unique perspective. The minimal requirement of academic work is correctly repeating what is read or discussed. Excellent work moves beyond repetition to unique insights, organization, correlations, and theses. Work to find your own scholarly and professional voice.
4. ***Flawless grammar, spelling, and form.*** Excellent written work is conscious of proofreading and good communication. Oral presentations are equally accountable for careful expression. A brilliant thesis can be lost in a paper or project that obscures its ideas with careless communication. Your readers and listeners should not have to guess what you mean—help them by speaking and writing well.



**Class Participation Self-Evaluation Work Sheet**  
**Saint Paul School of Theology**  
**Fall 2006**

**Nancy R. Howell**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Course:** THL448 Liberation Theology in Global Contexts

Circle the number that best describes your class participation in each category if 1 is excellent, 2 is very good, 3 is average, 4 is satisfactory, and 5 is poor.

Preparation

I conscientiously attempted reading assignments.	1 2 3 4 5
I reflected seriously on reading assignments.	1 2 3 4 5
I worked to bring depth to comments and questions by preparing more than superficially for class.	1 2 3 4 5
I prepared written assignments and presentations on time and when the syllabus or my self-assigned deadlines required them.	1 2 3 4 5
I checked spelling, grammar, quotations, and footnotes/endnotes before submitting writing work.	1 2 3 4 5

Class

I attended class weekly.	1 2 3 4 5
I always attended class on time.	1 2 3 4 5
I contributed to class discussions.	1 2 3 4 5
When I talked in class, I remained focused on the topic of class discussion.	1 2 3 4 5
I listened respectfully to comments and questions raised by other students.	1 2 3 4 5
I brought my questions to class or to the professor.	1 2 3 4 5
I expressed disagreements constructively.	1 2 3 4 5
I shared my responsibilities for successful class sessions.	1 2 3 4 5
I supported other students' efforts in class discussions or assignments.	1 2 3 4 5

Attitude

I remained involved and engaged in the course.	1 2 3 4 5
I was constructive in relationships with others.	1 2 3 4 5
I put extra effort into the course—such as study groups/partners, library research, recommended or supplemental reading.	1 2 3 4 5
I contributed my share of the work in collaborative writing or projects.	1 2 3 4 5
I made appointments with the professor when I needed assistance or wanted to discuss the course.	1 2 3 4 5
I took responsibility for my learning.	1 2 3 4 5
My understanding of theology has grown.	1 2 3 4 5
My understanding of ministry has grown.	1 2 3 4 5

I assign myself the following letter grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Enter A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, or F in the blank.)

Please submit any additional reflections on class participation that should affect your grade in writing on the back of this page. This work sheet is intended to assist you in thinking about the quality of your participation in class. Any interpretations, additions, or connections of criteria should be included in your additional (and optional) reflections.