

WE '01
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Chaminade University of Honolulu
Winter Term
January 13 – March 17
Schofield Barracks

Course: Religion 30810 **Christian Responsibility**

Examines the ethical implications of the Christian faith for the individual and community. Particular emphasis will be on the Liberation Theology movement and the analysis of John Paul II's messages on the dignity of the human person in community and the rights and responsibilities of the human person.

Time: Saturday mornings 8:00 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.

Instructor: Fritz Fritschel

Communications: Telephone: 545-2636

Email: fritlang@hgea.org

Textbook: **The Density of the Present**
Gustavo Gutierrez, Orbis Books, 1999.

Gustavo Gutierrez: An Introduction to Liberation Theology
Robert McAfee Brown Orbis Books, 1990.

Introduction and Description:

The course analyzes critically the implications of the Christian faith for personal and social ethics. Particular attention will be given to the nature and impact of Liberation Theology in the formation of an ethic in recent decades. The class will learn the method of this theological approach by practicing aspects of it within the class. In accord with the approach of this movement, the class will have an opportunity to contribute to the agenda and content of the course within the parameters of Liberation theology.

Students will learn of the history and development of Liberation theology, examine particular themes associated with the movement, become familiar with critiques of the thought. Select issues of ethical concern will be examined. Attention will also be given to select Papal Encyclicals that are relevant to the development of a personal and social ethic.

Requirements:

The grading will be based on:

1. Class attendance
2. Class participation
3. Assignments: Four short papers will be assigned on topics related to the thought and history of Liberation Theology. The papers are to be 2-3 pages in length. These papers will be due on the 3rd, 4th, 7th and 9th weeks of the course.
4. Exams: There will be two exams. The first one will be on the 5th week of class. The final exam will be on the 10th week of class.
5. Class presentation: Members of the class will prepare and present in class a report on an aspect of Liberation theology. Suggested topics or areas will be suggested in class.

Students' work will be evaluated on the basis of the knowledge of the subject matter, ability to apply the knowledge, clarity and coherency of presentation, and the ability to analyze and review critically issues.

Class Objectives:

To understand the background and development of Liberation theology, especially with its impact upon ethical practices.

To apply the method and analysis of Liberation theology to a particular area or concern in ethical life.

To evaluate the role and impact of Liberation theology in relation to other ethical approaches within the Christian tradition.

To analyze Encyclical statements in the light of the approach and perspective of Liberation theology.

To evaluate the influence and prospect of the ethical positions held in general by Liberation theology in light of current conditions in the world.

To become familiar with the biography of at least one person associated with the general movement of Liberation theology.

Class Format:

Class periods will attempt to create a setting for cooperative understanding, analysis and criticism associated with a Christian ethic. The class time will include mini-lectures, video viewing, small group discussions, guest lectures, student presentations. The exchange of ideas and perspectives will be strongly encouraged. There is no expectation or requirement that agreement be reached on issues; however, mutual understanding and respect are necessary. Clarity of presentation and adequate support of one's own position, as relative as those terms are, should be the aim. Students are expected to participate actively in class activities.