

Contemporary Christology (21-803)
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
Fall 2014 – Wednesdays 9:15-12:15 – Main 211

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I. Course description:

The purpose of this seminar is to focus on Christologies written in the last 25 years. We will aim both for a certain breadth (although we are handicapped by only using English-language sources) and also for depth. You might compare what we will do in the seminar to diving for pearls in many different types of water. We will find that the waters and the diving styles differ; and yet all of the theologians in question are, each in his or her own way, very similar to the merchant in Jesus' parable about the pearl of great price (Mt 13,45), who knew that the stakes were high. Christology is indeed a serious and passionate matter for theologians: today as much as it was when Jesus asked the question from which we take our departure: Who do *you* say that I am?

II. Objectives:

The student will...

1. Develop a sense of the contours of contemporary conversations on Christology.
2. Analyze the sources used by contemporary works of Christology draw.
3. Compare contemporary Christological approaches.
4. Develop his/her own Christology further than heretofore.
5. Confront his/her own Christological obstacles and challenges

III. Expectations:

1. Punctual and regular attendance at all class sessions. The student is expected to be present in class (physically and mentally). Two absences from a full class session will result in a substantial lowering of the grade; three will lead to a failing grade. Partial absences due to tardiness or early departures will count towards missing a full class session.
2. Plagiarism is not tolerated; cf. the section in the Handbook on how plagiarism is handled at Garrett-Evangelical; it is grounds for academic dismissal.
3. The use of inclusive language for God and for humanity is required. Rather than "God himself," for instance, students should write "God godself" and rather than "mankind," a student should use "humankind."
4. A student should not ask for an extension unless he or she is severely ill (incapacitated) or is confronted with another such dire circumstance (death in the family, hospitalization of a child, divorce). Requests for extensions are strongly discouraged. Church duties are not considered reasons for granting extensions.
5. Electronic gadgets of any kind (including dictionaries, e-readers, computers, cell phones, or anything else that connects you to the "grid") are to be turned off during class. The Christology classroom will be a space for contemplation and dialogue, not for multitasking. If you have electronic versions of your books, rely on your notes during class discussion.

IV. Requirements:

1. The kind of careful reading and note-taking that allows for a thorough grasp of the material to be discussed
2. Ten weekly reflections of 3-5 pp. critically exploring themes from the readings for the week and raising questions worthy of discussion or of further investigation by the group. They will be due on all sessions except September 3, October 15 and 22.
3. Two 20-minute oral presentations exploring one of the sources on which one theologian we are reading that day relies, thus providing the rest of the seminar with insight. Bring one-page précis of your presentation to distribute among seminar members. Beyond the presentations, Be prepared to lead the seminar discussion at all times, as we will take turns doing this.
4. A 7-8 page (Master's level) or 9-10 page (doctoral level), double-spaced analysis of the Christological themes in an artifact of popular culture (film, novel, TV series, poetry, lyrics, artwork). The paper should describe the artifact in 1-3 pages and devote the rest of the space to analyzing and evaluating its implicit and explicit Christological themes. Due October 22.
5. A final paper exploring Christological themes that emerge from the seminar. It could compare themes in two of our authors, further dig into a theme from a given author, trace transversal themes across interstices, develop the themes seen in the cultural artifact, etc. Reference should be made to at least five of the books we've read for class. For Master's level students the paper should be about 4,000-6,000 words and for doctoral students 6,000-8,000 words, including footnotes. Follow Turabian style and use footnotes (i.e. humanities and not social sciences citation practices). Include title page, table of contents and bibliography. Please check with the instructor about the topic and tentative working hypothesis before embarking upon the project. Due December 10.

GRADING RUBRIC FOR FINAL PAPER

1. Presentation	1 2 3 4 5
(clarity of prose, spelling competence, sentences are complete and grammatical, paragraphs flow logically, title page with relevant title, table of contents, subtitles, bibliography, footnotes, etc.)	
2. Clear statement of thesis	1 2 3 4 5
(the main "point" of the paper is clearly stated in the beginning)	
3. Internal coherence with thesis	1 2 3 4 5
(the paper actually makes the point(s) suggested in the title and the thesis; the body of the paper flows logically and clearly)	
4. Description of Sources	1 2 3 4 5
(the student describes fairly, in her or his own words, the position of the theorists cited)	

5. Relevance and/or comprehensiveness of sources 1 2 3 4 5
 (breadth of the relevant sources used in composing the essay)
6. Critical Engagement with Sources 1 2 3 4 5
 (whether a student's work has taken the step *beyond mere description* and critically engaged with the sources she or he has drawn upon by subjecting them to a critical theological analysis)
7. Development of Position and a Coherent Theme 1 2 3 4 5
 (not only if a student has critically assessed the sources and arguments present in an essay, but also if he or she has done this through the development of her or his own coherent position)
8. Adherence to instructions 1 2 3 4 5
 (did the student actually carry out the instructions in the syllabus as to nature of the assignment, page length, questions to be answered, etc.?)
9. Conclusion 1 2 3 4 5
 (the paper uses the conclusion to tie up loose ends; it does not simply restate the thesis)

V. Grading:

The final grade will be calculated in the following fashion:

Class participation (including oral presentations):	20 %
Analysis of cultural artifact	20%
Weekly reflection papers:	30 %
Final paper:	30 %

VI. Grade equivalencies:

A	95-100
A-	91-94
B+	88-90
B	83-87
B-	80-82
C+	75-79
C	70-74
C-	66-69
D+	62-65
D	58-61
D-	51-57
F	0-50

VII. Outline of the seminar:

1. Introductory Considerations

- 1.1. Jane Barter Moulaison, *Thinking Christ: Christology and Contemporary Critics*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012).
- 1.2. Don Schweitzer, *Contemporary Christologies: A Fortress Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010).

2. Approaches to Christology by Biblical Scholars

- 2.1. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet. Critical Issues in Feminist Christology* (New York: Continuum, 1994).
- 2.2. Amy Jill-Levine, *The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (New York: HarperOne, 2007).

3. Variations on *theologia crucis et resurrectionis*

- 3.1. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).
- 3.2. Jon Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator: A View from the Victims* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2001).
- 3.3. Douglas John Hall, *The Cross in Our Context: Jesus and the Suffering World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).
- 3.4. Vítor Westhelle, *The Scandalous God. The Use and Abuse of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006).
- 3.5. Anna Mercedes, *Power For: Feminism and Christ's Self-Giving* (New York: T & T Clark, 2011).
- 3.6. Arnfríður Gudmundsdóttir, *Meeting God on the Cross: Christ, the Cross, and the Feminist Critique* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).
- 3.7. James Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2013).

4. Beyond the "Standard White Jesus"

- 4.1. Kelly Brown Douglas, *The Black Christ* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993).
- 4.2. M. Thomas Thangaraj, *The Crucified Guru. An Experiment in Cross-Cultural Christology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994).
- 4.3. Joerg Rieger, *Christ and Empire. From Paul to Postcolonial Times* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007).
- 4.4. Sammy Alfaro, *Divino Compañero: Toward a Hispanic Pentecostal Theology* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010).
- 4.5. Wendy Farley, *Gathering Those Driven Away: A Theology of Incarnation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011).

VIII. Semester Reading Schedule:

1. **September 3** – Barter Moulaison and Schweitzer
2. **September 10** – Schüssler Fiorenza and Levine
3. **September 17** - Moltmann
4. **September 24** – Sobrino
5. **October 1** – Hall and Westhelle
6. **October 8** – Mercedes and Gudmundsdóttir
7. **October 15** – Reading/film-watching day (we will not meet)
8. **October 22** – Cone. Due: Analysis of cultural “artifact” (hard copy in class).
9. **October 29** – Brown Douglas
10. **November 3** - Rieger
11. **November 12** - Thangaraj
12. **November 19** - Alfaro
13. **November 26 (Thanksgiving Break)**
14. **December 3** - Farley
15. **December 10: Final Paper Due** (upload to Moodle by 11:55 p.m. CST).

IX. Required bibliography:

Alfaro, Sammy. *Divino Compañero: Toward a Hispanic Pentecostal Theology* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010). ISBN-10: 1606086995. \$18.00 at Amazon.com

Barter Moulaison, Jane. *Thinking Christ: Christology and Contemporary Critics*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012). ISBN-10: 0800698738 \$22.50 at Amazon.com

Brown Douglas, Kelly. *The Black Christ*, Orbis, Maryknoll, 1993. ISBN: 0883449390. \$17.90 at Amazon.com.

Cone, James. *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2013). ISBN: 1626980055. \$19.35 at Amazon.com.

Gudmundsdóttir, Arnfrídur. *Meeting God on the Cross: Christ, the Cross, and the Feminist Critique* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). ISBN-10: 0195397967. \$29.00 at Amazon.com

Farley, Wendy. *Gathering Those Driven Away: A Theology of Incarnation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011). ISBN-10: 066423321X. \$27.00 at Amazon.com.

Hall, Douglas John. *The Cross in Our Context: Jesus and the Suffering World*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003. ISBN-10: 0800635817 \$18.90 at Amazon.com

Levine, Amy Jill. *The Misunderstood Jew. The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*. New York: HarperOne, 2007. ISBN-10: 0061137782. \$12.48 at Amazon.com

Moltmann, Jürgen. *The Way of Jesus Christ*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995. ISBN-10: 0800628268. \$18.38 at Amazon.com.

Mercedes, Anna. *Power For: Feminism and Christ's Self-Giving* (New York: T & T Clark, 2011). ISBN-10: 0567303454. \$30.46 at Amazon.com.

Rieger, Joerg. *Christ and Empire. From Paul to Postcolonial Times*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007. ISBN-10: 0800620380. \$20.09 at Amazon.com.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet. Critical Issues in Feminist Christology*. New York, 1994. ISBN: 0826406718. \$4.02 at Amazon.com (used).

Schweitzer, Don. *Contemporary Christologies: A Fortress Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010). ISBN-10: 0800664639. \$21.60 at Amazon.com

Thangaraj, M. Thomas. *The Crucified Guru. An Experiment in Cross-Cultural Christology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994). ISBN-10: 0687100089. \$19.79 at Amazon.com

Sobrino, Jon. *Christ the Liberator: A View from the Victims*. New York, Orbis, 2001. ISBN: 1570753725. \$28.45 at Amazon.com.

Westhelle, Vítor. *The Scandalous God. The Use and Abuse of the Cross*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006. ISBN-10: 0800638956. \$18.59 at Amazon.com.

X. For further reading:

Amaladoss, Michael. *The Asian Jesus*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 2006.

Borg, Marcus. *Jesus. Uncovering the Life, Teachings and Relevance of a Religious Revolutionary*. New York: Harper Collins, 2008.

Delio, Ilia. *Christ in Evolution*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 2008.

Fackre, Gabriel. *Christology in context*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2006.

Grant, Jacquelyn. *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response*. Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1989.

Goss, Robert E. *Queering Christ. Beyond Jesus Acted Up*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2002.

Gunton, Colin. *The Actuality of Atonement. A Study of Metaphor, Rationality and the Christian Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.

Joh, Anne. *Heart of the Cross. A Postcolonial Christology*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006.

Kasper, Walter. *Jesus the Christ*. New York: Paulist Press, 1976.

Kim, Grace Ji Sum. *The Grace of Sophia: A Korean North-American Woman's Christology*. New York: Pilgrim Press, 2002.

Macquarrie, John. *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought*. Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1990.

O'Collins, Gerald. *Christology. A Biblical, Historical and Systematic Study of Jesus*. Oxford:

- Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Peelman, Achiel. *Christ is a Native American*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1995.
- Ray, Darby. *Deceiving the Devil. Atonement, Abuse and Ransom*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1998.
- Schreiter, Robert J. (ed.). *Faces of Jesus in Africa*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991.
- Schwager, Raymund. *Jesus in the Drama of Salvation. Toward a Biblical Doctrine of Redemption*. Freiburg: Herder & Herder, 1999.
- Stinton, Diane B. *Jesus of Africa: Voices of Contemporary African Christology*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 2004.
- Sugirtharajah, R.S. (ed.). *Asian Faces of Jesus*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993.
- Taylor, Mark L. *The Executed God. The Way of the Cross in Lockdown America*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001.
- Terrell, JoAnne Marie. *Power in the Blood. The Cross in African American Experience*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1998.
- Thompson, Deanna. *Crossing the Divide. Luther, Feminism and the Cross*. Minneapolis, Fortress, 2004.
- Vena, Osvaldo. *Jesus, Disciple of the Kingdom. Mark's Christology for a Community in Crisis*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014.
- Weaver, Denny. *The Nonviolent Atonement*. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2001.