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# ST 501 Method and Praxis in Theology

Zaida Maldonado Perez

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## **Method and Praxis in Theology**

Asbury Theological Seminary  
ST501  
Spring 2003 Th 2:30-5:15  
Dr. Zaida Maldonado Pérez

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### **COURSE OVERVIEW:**

“Why am I doing what I am doing the way I am doing it (and not another way)?” In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Anselm of Canterbury expressed the desire to deepen his knowledge and therefore also his relationship to God as “faith seeking understanding.” Others have stated it by asking, “what would Jesus do?” or, “how can I be faithful in this time and place?” All of these questions have a key common denominator--a conscious effort to understand our faith in order to better our service and our relationship to God, to our communities, to the world. This conscious effort demands that we explore the variety of methods that have often led to very different responses to the same question. These responses, articulated in the corpus of Christian doctrine, reflect the differing theologies that not only vie for our attention but point to the role of reflection, understanding and judgment in the task of theology. In this sense, the title of our course may be somewhat misleading as it suggests that there might be one method or praxis in theology. Our readings covering a variety of topics and methods in the Christian faith will prove that this is not the case. Though questions may remain the same, our differing contexts and historical situations may call for a reexamination of previous responses and often, a reformulation of the very questions themselves.

In short, the task of theology is not a finished process. It is our calling as leaders and ministers to attend to this process with the utmost diligence and prayer.

As stated in the catalog, this is an introductory course that will help prepare you for all course offerings in theology.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

(These objectives are taken from the core course description and are normative for the Wilmore and Orlando campuses)

Upon completion of this course, the student will have an introductory knowledge of critical theological method, enabling them to:

1. Describe how classical Greek\Roman philosophy influenced the manner in which the Early Christian Apologists and the Early Church Fathers did theology;
2. Articulate the impact of the Enlightenment upon modern theology, particularly the influence of Kant's philosophy and its contribution to such movements as liberalism, existentialism, and neo-orthodoxy.

3. Describe the rise of the modern historical consciousness, particularly the relation between critical history and Christian faith;
4. Understand the significance of the transition from premodern to modern and postmodern thought, with special reference to the shift from ontology (premodern) to epistemology (modern) to hermeneutics (postmodern);
5. Identify the key points in the transition from modern to postmodern paradigms, especially hermeneutical phenomenology, postliberalism, and deconstructionism;
6. Articulate the influence of postmodern science upon theological method;
7. Appreciate Wesley's methodical use of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience;
8. Apply critical theological method to the effective practice of Christian ministry in the postmodern age.

### **Course Texts:**

1. Stone, Howard. W. and James O. Duke. *How to Think Theologically*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.
2. A Theological Dictionary(ies) of choice.

### **Recommended reading:**

Core, Deborah. *The Seminary Student Writes*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000.  
(This little book will be worth your while!)

**NOTE: All other assigned readings are on reserve in the library.**

**The following abbreviations are used throughout the syllabus.**

- ANF *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A. D. 325*. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. New York: Christian Literature Co., 1886-97. Reprint: Eerdmans.
- LEV *Lift Every Voice: Constructing Christian Theologies from the Underside*. Edited by Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite and Mary Potter Engel. San Francisco: Harper, 1990.
- RCT *Readings in Christian Theology*. By Perer C. Hodgson and Robert H. King. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985.

### **Bibliography:**

- Baxter, Margaret. *The Formation of the Christian Scriptures*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988.
- Bingemer, Maria Clara. "A Post-Christian and Postmodern Christianity." In *Liberation theologies, Postmodernity, and the Americas*. Edited by David Bastone, Eduardo Mendieta, Lois Ann Lorentsen, et al. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York: Macmillan Press, 1967.
- Bultman, Rudolf. "The Problem of Hermeneutics." In *Rudolf Bultmann: Interpreting Faith For the Modern Era*. Edited by Roger A. Johnson. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.
- Clement of Alexandria. "The Rich Man's Salvation." In *Documents in Early Christian Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Crews, Frederick C. *The Pooh Perplex: A Student Casebook*. Great Britain: Robin Clark, 1979.
- Eisland, L. Nancy. *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.

- Goizueta, Roberto. "In Defense of Reason." In *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology*. Vol. 3.3 (1996) 16-26.
- González, Justo L. *Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Scripture, Tradition, Experience, and Imagination: A Redefinition." In *The Ties that Bind: African American and Hispanic American/Latino/a Theologies in Dialogue*. Edited by Anthony B. Pinn and Benjamin Valentin, New York: Continuum, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Metamodern Aliens in Postmodern Jerusalem." In *Hispanic/Latino Theology: Challenge and Promise*. Edited by Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz and Fernando F. Segovia, Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996.
- González, Justo L. and Zaida Maldonado Perez. *Introduction to Christian Theology*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2002.
- Hodgson, Peter C. and Robert H. King. *Readings in Christian Theology*. Philadelphia: Fortress P, 1985.
- Hopkins, Dwight. N. "Postmodernity, Black Theology and Liberation and the U.S. A.: Michel Foucault and James H. Cone." In *Postmodernity and the Americas*. Edited by David Bastone, Eduardo Mendiete, Lois Ann Lorentsen, et al. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Isasi-Díaz, Ada María. *En La Lucha: A Hispanic Women's Liberation Theology*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals and, What is the Enlightenment*. New York: Macmillan, 1990.
- Kaufman, Gordon D. *Systematic Theology: A Historicist Perspective*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968.
- Morse, Christopher. *Not Every Spirit: A Dogmatics of Christian Disbelief*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994.
- Musurillo, Herbert Anthony, Translator. "The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas." In *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1972.
- Origen. *On First Principles*. Translated by G. W. Butterworth. New York: Harper & Row. 1966. See also ANF.
- Pelagius. "Letter to Demetrius; On Human Freedom; Original Sin." In *Documents of the Christian Church*. Edited by Henry Bettenson. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Pui-Lan, Kwok. "Discovery the Bible in the Non-Biblical World." In *Lift Every Voice: Constructing Christian Theologies from the Underside*. Edited by Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite and Mary Potter Engel. San Francisco: Harper, 1990.
- Ringe, Sharon. "Reading from Context to Context: Contributions of a Feminist Hermeneutic to Theologies of Liberation." In *Lift Every Voice: Constructing Christian Theologies from the Underside*. Edited by Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite and Mary Potter Engel. San Francisco: Harper, 1990.
- Schleiermacher, Friedrich. "First Speech" (from "Speeches on Religion to the Cultured among its Despisers"). In *Friedrich Schleiermacher: Pionner of Modern Theology*. Edited by Keith W. Elements, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.
- Villafañe, Eldin. *Seek the Peace of the City: Reflections on Urban Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995.
- Young-Chan, Ro. "Symbol, Myth, and Ritual: The Method of the Minjung." In *Lift Every Voice: Constructing Christian Theologies from the Underside*. Edited by Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite and Mary Potter Engel. San Francisco: Harper, 1990.

**Method in Theology**  
**Modules, Aims, Assignments**  
Asbury Theological Seminary  
Zaida Maldonado Pérez, Professor

**ST501**  
**Spring 03**

**SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE TASK OF THEOLOGY**

**Module 1**

What is *theology*? What is *method* in theology? How and why are these important? What is the difference between *faith* and *theology*?

At the conclusion of this module you will be able to:

- Discuss various definitions for “theology”
- Articulate own definition/understanding of “theology”
- Define “method” in theology
- Articulate the difference between “faith” and “theology” (e.g. the limits of theology)
- Articulate the impact and significance of the discipline of theology in the development of Christian thought (e.g. functions of “theology”)
- Articulate the impact and significance of method in theology

**Module 1**  
**Class 1/ Introduction**  
Feb. 13, 2003

Establish groups for the final presentation.

**Module 1 (cont.)**  
**Assignment 1 / Class 2**

**Due:** Feb. 20, 2003

**Readings:**

1. Stone, Howard. W. and James O. Duke. *How to Think Theologically*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996. Pages 1-24
2. Mueller, J.J. *What is Theology?* Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1988. Pages 11-15
3. Anselm of Canterbury. “Proslogion.” In *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A. D. 325*. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. New York: Christian Literature Co., 1886-97. Reprint: Eerdmans.

*Note:* the above will subsequently be referred to as ANF.

4. Theological Dictionaries
5. Core, Deborah. "Using Inclusive Language." In *The Seminary Student Writes*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000. Appendix 1, pages 107-112

### **Written:**

Using the information/class discussion on the meaning and significance of "theology" and "method" in theology and the above readings, go over what you wrote in class and reassess your answer.

- a. After giving this deliberative thought, do the following:  
Be ready to discuss what you would change or expand upon in your answer and why.  
Your answers on the meaning and significance of theology will be used for class discussion.
- b. After reading Mueller's metaphor on the meaning of "theology," create your own metaphor.  
Try to use analogies out of your own experience, context, culture. Keep the metaphor to **one page**. Be ready to explain your metaphor in class. (Note: object illustrations are welcome but must be accompanied by a written explanation). Metaphors will be shared with each other via email after discussing them in class.

**Weighting:** 10 points

### Module 1 (cont.) Assignment 2 / Class 3

**Due:** Feb. 27, 2003

### **Readings:**

Stone, Howard. W. and James O. Duke. *How to Think Theologically*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996. Pages 25-37  
Kaufman, Gordon D. "The Christian Revelation," in *Systematic Theology: A Historicist Perspective*, pp. 41-56

### **For reflection and class discussion:**

- a. "In as much as theology has to do with faith seeking understanding, the theologian aims to attain the most complete and accurate understanding possible" (Stone and Duke 34). Consider the four common tests of adequacy stated by Stone and Duke (Christian appropriateness, intelligibility, moral integrity, and validity). What questions do these raise for you? Would you add another? Why?
- b. Apply the four criteria for assessing the adequacy of a position to the following case. Be ready to discuss your results. (Forthcoming)

### ***Extra Credit***

- c. According to Anselm (1033-1109), “The believer does not seek to understand, that [s/]he may believe, but [s/]he believes that [s/]he may understand; for unless [s/]he believed [s/]he would not understand.” After reading Kaufman (including any other useful sources) What might this statement mean for the theologian? What is the role of revelation and how does this influence the meaning and role of faith in theology? What does it mean for method and praxis?

Two to three pages. Note: This is due *before* class and will be shared as part of class discussion.

**Weighting:** 10 points

#### Module 2

What is *theory*? What is praxis? What is the difference between the *premodern* definition of praxis and the *modern* notion of “practice”? What is the relationship between theory and praxis? *Reflection* and action? How are these important?

At the conclusion of this module you will be able to:

- Define “theory”
- Explain the difference between the premodern definition of “praxis” and the modern notion of “practice”
- Explain the significance of this difference
- Identify the theological (and historical) significance for arguments on the role and relationship between reflection/action

#### Module 2 Assignment 3 / Class 4

**Due:** March 6, 2003

#### **Readings:**

Roberts, Deotis J. “Black Theological Reflection on Praxis” and “Black Church Theology and Ministry-An Unfinished Agenda.” In *The Prophethood of Black Believers: An African American Political Theology for Ministry*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994. Pages 138-146.

Gustavo Gutierrez, “Toward a Theology of Liberation” (July 1968). In *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*. Edited by Alfred T. Hennelly. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990. Pages 62-65.

Villafane, Eldin. “An Evangelical Call to Social Spirituality: Confronting Evil in Urban Society.” In *Seek the Peace of the City: Reflections on Urban Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995. Pages 12-28.

**For reflection and class discussion:**

*Read the quotations below and be ready to discuss the following:*

- *What questions do you bring to the quotes cited below?*
- *How are they similar, different?*
- *How might they complement each other?*
- *How are you in agreement or disagreement with what they state?*

**Quotations:**

“The truth cannot be understood in a metaphysical way; this is “idealism.” The truth must be realized in history and in practice. Action is truth. Consequently, even the ideas that are used for action are, in the last analysis, interchangeable. The only decisive thing is praxis. Orthopraxis becomes the only true orthodoxy” (374) Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, “Liberation Theology” (March 1984). In *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*. Edited by Alfred T. Hennelly,

“A distinction should be made between *praxis* and *practice*. Practice of ministry is the doing of things as they relate to ministry. Things such as preaching, counseling, community organizing, and administration contain elements of ministerial practice or functioning. Praxis involves the doing of these skills, but it adds theological reflection upon what is being done, why it is done, how it is done, and what could be done., It marries action (doing) with reflection (being). The action must seek to transform the world, and theological reflection must be done to understand and shape the acting process. The problem many of us face is that we often emphasize one at the expense of the other” (130).

“[We] must be cognizant that “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rules [*archai*], against the authorities [*exousiai*], against the powers of this dark world [*kosmokratores*]” (Eph. 6:12)” (20). Both quotes from: *Seek the Peace of the City: Reflections on Urban Ministry* by Eldin Villafane. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995.

“In *mujerista* theology praxis is critical reflective action based on an analysis of historical reality perceived through the lens of an option for and a commitment to the liberation of Latinas....[It] is always understood as liberative praxis. In defining praxis as critical reflective action—reflective as different from mechanical, routine action—*mujerista* theology seeks to emphasize that the reflection part does not follow action nor is it “at the service of action.” Both action and reflection become inseparable moments though neither is reduced to the other.” In *En La Lucha: A Hispanic Women’s Liberation Theology* by Ada María Isasi-Díaz, Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993. Pp. 167-168

## SECTION TWO

### THE THEOLOGICAL TASK: ITS METHODS AND SOURCES

#### Module 3

Christianity, “the true philosophy?”: The development of Christian theology and its systematization: The role of reason.

What are some of the key historical, cultural, intellectual influences?

Introduction to the significance of *reason/philosophy* in theology.

How did classical Greek\Roman philosophy influence the manner in which the church did/does theology?

Impact of *scholasticism*, enlightenment and modernity on method in theology.

What is *ontology*?(premodern)  
*Epistemology*? (modern)

At the conclusion of this module you will be able to:

- Give some examples of the influence and role of reason/philosophy in (method) in theology (from the early church, scholasticism, Enlightenment, Modernity)
- Discuss three differing views argued by three different theologians on the role of reason/philosophy in theology (Wesley being one of these)
- Define epistemology
- Define/argue own position on the role of philosophy/reason in theology

#### Module 3 Assignment 4 / Class 5

**Due:** March 13, 2003

#### **Readings:**

1. *How to Think Theologically*. Pages 38-54
2. Tertullian, “The Prescription Against Heretics,” chs. VII-XV in ANF, Vol. 3
3. Justin Martyr, chs. I-III and VII (Greek apologist of 2<sup>nd</sup> c.) in ANF, Vol. 1
4. Wesley: Sermon 70: “The case of Reason Impartially Considered”  
(Note: Readings 2-4 are public domain and photocopies are on Reserve)

**For reflection and class discussion::**

- *How are their views different, similar?*
- *How do you see their views impacting their method in theology?*
- *How does their method impact their outcome?*
- *How do these inform, critique your theology and praxis?*

**Module 3 (cont.)**

**Assignment 5 / Class 6**

**Due:** March 20, 2003

**Readings:**

1. Anselm of Canterbury, excerpts from “Why God Became Man” and,
2. Peter Abelard (1079-1142), excerpts from “Exposition of the Epistles to the Romans.”  
Both readings are found in Placher, William C. *Readings in the History of Christian Theology: From its Beginnings to the Eve of the Reformation*. Vol 1. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988. Pages 147-151
3. Kant, Immanuel. “What is the Enlightenment.” In *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals and, What is the Enlightenment*. New York: Macmillan, 1990.
5. Roberto Goizueta. “In Defense of Reason,” in *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology* (JHLT) Vol. 3:3 (1996). Pages 15-26

**For reflection and class discussion::**

*Analyze and compare the arguments of Anselm and Abelard.*

- *Outline their arguments. Then, be ready to discuss:*
- *Where do they begin their arguments? And,*
- *Why? What is at stake for both of them?*
- *What are the roles of reason and scripture (tradition, experience) play their arguments? How do they use these to enhance their arguments?*
- *How are their views different, similar?*
- *Consider the times and your context; What might they be leaving out or assuming?*
- *Explain how their differing arguments (e.g. who is God and what does God require?) might influence praxis.*
- *Where do you stand in relation to these and why? Be specific.*

**Written:**

A full, three-page paper answering the above questions. Note: The outlines will not count as part of the three pages but are included in the 10 points).

**Weighting:** 15 points

#### Module 4

*Dime con quién andas ty te diré quién eres\*:*

The Role of context/experience and tradition in method in theology

What is perspectivism?

At the conclusion of this module you will be able to:

- Explain the importance of experience/context in the task of theology
- Give various examples of the role of experience in the development of various theological methods/views
- Explore how your own context/experience(s) influence your theology, method and praxis
- Explore how your tradition influences your theology, method and praxis
- Define “perspectivism” and its influence

#### Module 4 Assignment 6 / Class 7

**Due:** March 27, 2003

**Readings:** Choose readings from a or b and read c.

- a. *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability* by Nancy Eisland, chs. 2, 5, 6, Pp. 31-48, 89-119.
- b. (Includes two readings)  
Clement of Alexandria’s “The Rich Man’s Salvation 11-17, in *Documents in Early Christian Thought*, pp. 203-206 and *The Cost of Discipleship* by D. Bonhoeffer, pp. 11-35, 45-60
- c. Schleiermacher: his First Speech from “Speeches on Religion to the Cultured Among its Despisers,” pp. 67-76

**For reflection and class discussion:**

- *How do you understand the role of reason and experience in theology?*
- *Which resources (i.e. reason, scripture, experience, tradition—the quadrilateral of authority) are being used by the author(s)? Which of these are given primacy? Why? How does this influence the author’s argument?*
- *What are the similarities/differences in the paired readings (b)?*
- *How might the poor and working class respond to Clement’s argument? Are they given a voice?*
- *What questions would you bring to the texts?*
- *How do these readings impact your praxis?*

**Written:**

A two-page paper describing:

- a. Your social, political, economic, gendered, culture racial/ethnic, educational, context/background. (½ page)

- b. A particular experience that you feel has helped to define who you are (be brief, concentrating on its impact). (½ page)
- c. your “worldview.” You can include such things as your understanding of who we are, why we are on this earth, why there are economic disparities, etc. (One page)
- d. The third part of this exercise will be done in class.

**Weighting:** 3 points

### Module 5

How do you read a text?  
What makes it  
authoritative?

The relationship between  
experience and  
*hermeneutics*.

How these influence the  
way we do theology?

At the conclusion of this module you will be able to:

- Define “hermeneutics”
- Distinguish between the varying forms of hermeneutics and their significance in theology

## READING WEEK (4/7-12)

### Module 5 Assignment 7 / Class 8

**Due:** April 3, 2003

#### Readings:

1. “The Significance of a Minority Perspective,” in *Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective*. Pages 21-30.
2. “Reading from Context to Context: Contributions of a Feminist Hermeneutic to Theologies of Liberation” by Sharon Ringe, in *Lift Every Voice (LEV)*. Pages 282-290.
3. “Gutierrez: Orthopraxis, Not Orthodoxy,” in *RCT*. Pages 388-393
4. “Symbol, Myth, and Ritual: The Method of the Minjung,” by Young-Chan Ro in *LEV*. Pages 41-48
5. “Tests of Doctrinal faithfulness” in *Not Every Spirit* by C. Morse pp. 45-52

#### For reflection and class discussion:

- *What are the different hermeneutical (interpretative) tools being used?*
- *How does experience relate to perspective in the readings? And,*

- *How does their experience and perspective influence their praxis? Are they congruent?*
- *What questions do you bring to the texts?*
- *How do these readings and perspectives inform your own praxis?*

## Module 5 (cont.)

### Assignment 8 / Class 9

**Due:** April 17, 2003

#### **Readings:**

1. *How to Think Theologically*. Pages 76-88.  
All of the readings below are in *RCT*
2. Augustine: Free Will and Sin, pp. 176-180
3. Luther: Sin and Grace, pp. 180-185
4. Tennant: Difficulties In The Classic Doctrine, pp.185-189
5. Kierkegaard: Sin as Despair, pp. 189-192
6. Niebuhr: The Pride of Power, pp.192-196
7. Ricoeur: Paradox of the Servile Will, pp.196-199
8. Farrer: Beyond Augustinian Theodicy, pp.199-204

#### **For reflection and class discussion:**

*Analyze and compare the arguments in the assigned readings.*

- *“What is the basic problem with the human condition?”*
- *What are the different interpretations of “sin”?*
- *What is the proposed solution to that problem?*
- *What are the components in the readings below that lead to different interpretations?*
- *How are these components important for your method and praxis?*

#### **Written:**

Write a one to two-page response to the following questions:

- *Consider/Analyze the arguments in readings 2-8: How do you think each author arrived at their conclusion? How do they make their argument? What are the components (e.g. context, hermeneutical tools, epistemology, methods)? How are these arranged? And, how does this make a difference? Be specific.*
- *How are these components, methods, important for your own context and praxis?*

**Note:** Compare and contrast the readings in relation to the above questions.

**Weighting:** 12 points

#### **Extra Credit :**

Add the following to the above readings and assignment:

- a. Read: (Marx reading is forthcoming) and,
- b. Respond to the following questions:

Analyze and compare the arguments in all of the readings.

- How does Marx/Freud define the “human condition?”
- What are the proposed solutions?
- What is being assumed?
- How might their arguments critique/inform the above definitions of sin?
- How might the Christian “solution” to sin critique/inform Marx’ solution? (Be sure to define what you understand as the Christian “solution.”)
- How would you propose living out this solution?

**Weighting:** 10 points (for a total of 20 points with above assignment)

### SECTION THREE POSTMODERNITY AND THE THEOLOGICAL ENDEAVOR

#### Module 6

What is *postmodernity*?

What is it saying about theology and method in theology?

At the conclusion of this module you will be able to:

- Discuss the significance of postmodern thought on theology
- Examine varying views (feminist, ethnic/racial) on postmodern thought
- Articulate own position and views regarding postmodern thought and its influence on theology and praxis

#### Module 6 Assignment 9 / Class 10

**Due:** April 24, 2003

#### **Readings:**

- Both readings below are in: *Liberation Theologies, Postmodernity, and the Americas*
1. “A Post-Christian and Postmodern Christianity” Pages 83-94.
  2. “Postmodernity, Black Theology and Liberation in the U.S.A.: Michel Foucault and James H. Cone” Pages 205-221.
  3. “Metamodern Aliens in Postmodern Jerusalem,” by J. L. González in *Hispanic/Latino Theology*. Pages 340-350.

**For reflection and class discussion:**

- *How do your readings define postmodernism?*
- *How are the arguments and perspectives (feminist, ethnic/racial) on postmodern thought and theology similar, different?*
- *What does González mean by “metamodern?”*
- *Discuss the key differences between premodern, modern, and postmodern thought.*
- *What are the arguments above saying (directly or indirectly) about method in theology? About praxis?*
- *What might your own position and views be regarding postmodern thought and its influence on theology and praxis?*

**Written:**

Answer the following:

- How do your readings define postmodernism? Compare and contrast the readings.
- Outline the key differences between premodern, modern, and postmodern thought.
- What are the pros and cons of each of these?
- What might your own position and views be regarding postmodern thought and its influence on theology and praxis?

**Weighting:** 15 points

**Class 11**

**Due:** May 1, 2003

Group presentations (Groups 1, 2, 3)

**Class 12**

**Due:** May 8, 2003

Group presentations (Groups 4, 5, 6)

**Class 13**

**Due:** May 15, 2003

Group presentations (Group 7)

## REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESMENT

**Method in Theology,  
Asbury Theological Seminary  
Zaida Maldonado Pérez, Professor**

**ST501  
Spring 03**

### ASSIGNMENTS:

Information on the assignments and due dates are included in the syllabus. Please refer to these. Also, please note opportunities for extra credit within the syllabus.

#### **Group work:**

Groups will consist of 5 persons each (for a total of 35 students). Each presentation will include information on:

1. *context*, 2. *content*, 3. *method*, a 4. *critique* (including from a Wesleyan perspective or own tradition) and 5. *importance for ministry (application)*.

#### **Presentations:**

Group members will participate fully in the preparation and presentation of the assignment. You will be graded on the quality of your presentation and creativity. This means:

- You located the author within a particular **context** (E.g. socio-political times, issue, “school of thought,” movement)
- You articulated the **content** intelligibly, clearly. This is otherwise called an “abstract,” see below for more information.\*
- You are able to analyze the author’s **method** and how it relates to his argument/conclusion
- You are able to **critique** the argument (e.g. look for flaws in the argument; note what questions are assumed or not asked; what voices are missing and, how does this affect the argument or thesis?) Feel free to consult other sources for help.
- You are able to articulate the critique from a **Wesleyan** (or own tradition) perspective (Include where the group agreed or disagreed and why.)
- You are able to **apply** what you have learned to your praxis (this may include using it to reflect on your group experience)
- Your presentation was **original, engaging, creative**
- **Note:** See below under “grading” for more general expectations for grading

#### **\*ABSTRACT** (summary of content):

(The following is adapted from the previous work of Drs. Joy, Seamands and Chilcote)

- Summarize what the author says in your own words and symbols.
- Do not add personal commentary or evaluate the content of the material.
- Include as many of the author’s key concepts and ideas as needed for clarity.
- Be comprehensive yet concise.
- Be stylistically correct, coherent and clear.
- Quotations should be minimal, if at all. However, when you do quote directly from the source,
- Use explicit and visible quotation marks and state the source in the end/footnote

## GROUP PROCESS AND DYNAMICS

**Note:** Although you will be evaluated as a group, *each member will have an opportunity to comment on each other's contribution to the work.* I expect each member to be *fully engaged* in the process. Begin by:

- reintroducing yourselves and exchanging pertinent information (emails, etc.)
- discussing strengths with each other and seeing how to build on them (e.g. distribution of work)
- establishing 'fairness criteria' for the group so that when issues arise, you already have a process for resolving these (e.g. try out the method proposed by Stone and Duke in *How to Think Theologically* discussed in class!). As much as possible, try working things out amongst yourselves. This will be a critical part of your learning--especially as you engage in ministry!! This too relates to method (the criteria, principles by which you engage each other.

**Note: The 'fairness criteria' is part of the assignment and I will ask each group to share their own with the rest of the class (be ready to state what you base it on). The criteria can be revised, with group consensus, as needed.**

## FORMAT FOR ALL ASSIGNMENTS:

- All papers should be **double-spaced, typed, with one-inch margins and 12 font.**
- Papers are due on the day assigned and, in most cases, will be used for class discussion
- Quotations should be clearly marked and sources must be noted in end/footnotes
- No folders or binders please
- Final papers will be returned to your student box unless you provide a stamped envelope

## GRADING

Grading must reflect graduate level work. This implies competency in such areas as\*:

- ◆ focus on the subject at hand
- ◆ discovery of data
- ◆ ability to question, analyze, integrate, to reconsider and synthesize
- ◆ capacity to integrate old and new data
- ◆ depth and maturity of knowledge
- ◆ skills to make growth in ministry possible
- ◆ originality and creativity

(\*From FH)

All work is expected on time and as completed as indicated in the assignment. Extensions are not given except for the kind of medical and family emergencies that merit the Dean's approval. An extension implies lateness without penalty. **Note:** It is your responsibility to communicate with me if you need an extension *before* the due date of an assignment. Otherwise, I will have no recourse but to penalize you for your late work. Reflection papers will not be accepted after they have been discussed in class. A late Final Paper will have an automatic grade deduction and will not be accepted after the end of the semester (unless you have applied for an extension). A letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done, with incomplete work counted as "F."

- A (95-) Exceptional work: outstanding or surpassing achievement of course objectives
- A- (90-94) Fine work

- B+ (87-89) Good, solid work: substantial achievement of course objectives
- B (83-86) Good work
- B- (80-82) Verging between good and acceptable.
- C+ (77-79) Acceptable work: essential achievement of course objectives
- C (73-76) Acceptable work; significant gaps
- C- (70-72) Serious gaps in achievement of course objectives
- D+ (67-69) Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives
- D (63-66) Barely acceptable
- F Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives.

Things that might potentially result in a reduction in total score:

Poor or non-engagement with material	Poor analysis of material
Presentation of a weak conclusion or argument	Misspellings
Lack of, or poor use of dialogue between authors	Poor syntax
Answering a different question	Lack of inclusive language

### Participation:

Discussions are an important part of this course. They provide opportunities for further theological reflection and conversation at the communal level and across denominational lines. Students are expected to a) *be present at each class and*, b) *read the assigned material and come prepared to discuss it.* **Active involvement in class will be taken into account in determining final grades.**

### Attendance:

More than one unexcused absence will affect the student's grade and can lead to failing the course. Excused absences refer to unavoidable emergencies that do not include delinquency or attending to church work or other employment.

### Inclusive Language:

Students are urged to use inclusive language wherever possible both in their oral and written work/participation. This guideline is intended to help sensitize the Asbury Theological Seminary community and to provide help in moving beyond our present habits to more just expressions (FH).

### Academic Integrity:

The standards of conduct that are articulated in the Asbury Theological Seminary's Student Handbook concerning academic matters are important to the integrity of our community and the high ethical standards we expect of those who are preparing for Christian ministry. Abuse of these policies will be handled as stipulated in the handbook.

### Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the presenting of another's ideas or writings as one's own; this includes both written and oral discourse presentations. Response to plagiarism may include requiring an assignment to be redone, automatic failure of a course or, in some extreme cases, recommended dismissal from the Seminary (FH). Please make sure any borrowed material is properly documented.

