One cannot correctly understand the black religious experience without an affirmation of deep faith informed by profound doubt. Suffering naturally gives rise to doubt. How can one believe in God in the face of such horrendous suffering as slavery, segregation, and the lynching tree? Under these circumstances, doubt is not a denial but an integral part of faith.

Inevitably, every semester one of my students will ask me how I would physically describe Jesus. They really want me to comment on the color of his skin. Is it white? Black? Olive tone? I always respond in the same fashion: when I attempt to picture the incarnation, I envision Jesus as an old black Latina woman with AIDS. Why? The most disdained by society is the form the Deity takes. Because of racism, sexism, ageism, and society’s fear of AIDS, such a person is normatively avoided, ignored, and shunned.

Any religion that professes to be concerned with the souls of men and is not concerned with the slums that damn them, the economic conditions that strangle them, and the social conditions that cripple them is a dry-as-dust religion.

In every historical example, missionaries pave the way for other colonizers and capitalists, and often, are themselves the colonizers and capitalists, with intention to dispossess and accumulate whatever they can, including but not limited to souls, land, labor: there are no missionaries with good intentions.

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1 This syllabus is tentative. Dr. Pegoda reserves the right to change any part of the course requirements, policies, deadlines, topics, etc. Students are responsible for keeping track of changes. Exceptions to policies detained in this syllabus are not provided for students who add the class late. I go by “Dr. Pegoda,” “Professor Pegoda,” or “Professor.” “Mr. Pegoda” is always unacceptable. Please read the following, if interested, for information on why professors use such titles: https://DrAJP.com/2017/03/04/11-reasons-why-i-go-by-dr-pegoda-in-the-classroom-and-professionally-depending-on-the-circumstances/

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Welcome

Please note that I care about you. Everything in this course is designed to help you learn. You can trust me to have your best interests at heart. If you start early and plan, read the required readings, participate in discussions, communicate with me, study actively and deeply, follow the instructions, and demonstrate critical thinking, for example, you will have no problem earning a high grade. Students who make good-faith efforts to complete course assessments and who participate and learn are (almost) guaranteed to pass the class. This course is challenging, but manageable and rewarding, if you apply yourself. You are paying thousands for your education, take advantage of any advice, feedback, and perspectives provided or desired.

Communication is vital. I will post announcements often (such will be delivered to a student's email address on file with the University and will be archived in Blackboard) and will be active throughout the class. Communication from you is important too, especially when struggling or when life happens, even more so for a fully-online class. Please email me to discuss individual/private matters or to send a draft assessments. In case of a rare situation where UH email is unavailable, students may reach me at AJP@andrewpegoda.com. But, please do not email to ask for extra credit or to ask a general question that can quickly be answered by posting/looking in the Blackboard questions thread, by looking at the syllabus, or by looking at Blackboard Announcements. For emails, include your full name and class/section in the body of messages. Emails will be answered within 48 hours (excluding weekends and holidays)—if you have not received a reply within that amount of time, please resend. You are also welcomed to follow me on Twitter, Facebook, Wordpress, etc. If you receive a personal email from me, a prompt reply is appreciated.

Course Description

Theologies from the Margins: Gender, Race, and Sexuality (in the catalog as Selected Topics in Religious Studies: Readings in Political Theology) focuses primarily on the comparative study of feminist, womanist, queer, and other non-normative Christian liberation theologies. We will examine the circumstances under which these interpretations have developed and the sources of and authors of such alternative theologies. We will also examine the everyday uses of such feminist, womanist, and queer thought as applied to Christian theisms, as well as how people and institutions have responded to these challenges and critiques. We will briefly look at Islam and its impact on a queer woman. We will also look at atheism and minorities. In the process of the aforementioned, we will constantly consider intersectionality and intertextuality. This course is not concerned with any “strength” or “weakness” or “accuracy” or “inaccuracy” vis-à-vis any theism (or atheism), except where such directly relates to understanding and analyzing liberations and theologies for minorities. This course does not require any prior knowledge of (any) religion, of Religious Studies, of United States History, or of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

This course is designed for students seeking major, minor, or elective credit in Religious Studies; in History; in Women’s, Gender, Sexuality Studies; in Women’s Studies, or in GLBT Studies. Because this is an upper-level course, students will delve into a narrower field of study than introductory courses. As such, this course fosters students’ understandings of world religions, their primary texts, and their influence on human behavior and affairs; understandings of scholarly secondary texts; understandings of human agency; understandings of human institutions, organizations, and interactions; and understandings of socially constructed identities and the study of such, especially in terms of intersectionality and positionality, of gender and sexuality, and of privilege and oppression.
Students will attain—through lectures, discussions, and primary and secondary texts (e.g., fiction and nonfiction, alphabetic and non-alphabetic)—and demonstrate—through a variety of written assessments—knowledge about how minorities in the United States have used, adapted, and created Christian theologies. This course is designed to provide students opportunities to enhance their comprehension abilities, their communication abilities, and their multi-cultural critical thinking abilities.

More specifically, by the end of the semester, students will have honed the ability to:

- read and analyze primary and secondary texts;
- define, analyze, and differentiate between Feminist, Womanist, and Queer Theologies and discuss the corresponding histories, purposes, hopes, and fears;
- complete independent critical thinking/challenge projects based on theologies from the margins;
- successfully communicate in online forums while discussing complex, controversial issues;
- think about gender, race, and sexuality, as relates to liberation and oppressive theologies, minorities, histories, as well as utilize the ideas associated with major concepts;
- think about gender, race, and sexuality, as relates to liberation and oppressive theologies, minorities, histories, as well as utilize the ideas associated with major concepts;
- understand/analyze and discuss the intersections of citizenship, class, race, religion, sex/gender, sexuality, and (dis)ability and their function in a multicultural, global society, as well as representations of such;
- understand and discuss the importance of supporting/making statements (whether fact, opinion/subjective, or relative) backed by evidence; how time, place, and point-of-view result in numerous (and valid) perspectives; and the skill of asking complex, yet thoughtful—even unanswerable—questions and the value of “it depends” responses; and
- understand/appreciate and discuss “the learning worth crying about” (Dr. Wesch); the role of failure in learning (Professor Tuttle); the decision of “becom[ing] an active owner of your education” (Dr. Diaz de Sabates); and the “the emotional demands of college” (Dr. Pegoda).2

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**Assigned Texts and Supplies**

- Patrick S. Cheng, *Radical Love: An Introduction to Queer Theology* (≈140 pages)
- Anne M. Clifford, *Introducing Feminist Theology* (≈275 pages)
- Miguel A. De La Torre, *Reading the Bible from the Margins* (≈208 pages)
- Samra Habib, *We Have Always Been Here: A Queer Muslim Memoir* (≈240 pages)
- Deborah Jian Lee, *Rescuing Jesus: How People of Color, Women, and Queer Christians are Reclaiming Evangelicalism* (≈270 pages)
- Stephanie Y. Mitchem, *Introducing Womanist Theology* (≈160 pages)
- Texts posted in Blackboard

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**Course Requirements**

1. **Time and Dedication:** Given this is an online 10-week (compared to a regular 16-week semester) summer course, students should be prepared to devote an average of **10-13 hours per week** to **reading, writing, researching**, and **thinking** to this class.

2. **Computer Literacy and Blackboard:** Students enrolled in this class must be highly proficient with computers. Do not use this class to learn how to use computers for the very first time! (It has happened!) Students must immediately familiarize themselves with the Blackboard shell for this class—the online hub for this class—and log-in at least four separate days each week until they finish the class. Students must have access to a reliable, relatively new computer (not only an iPhone, Blackberry, etc.) with reliable, high-speed Internet access. Do not use the Blackboard App. Do not use Internet Explorer. As needed, students must know how to find, copy, rename, and delete files; create and save documents in different formats; disable popup blockers; add browser extensions and plug-ins; run anti-spyware software; update Java settings; etc. Students must avoid waiting until the last minute (please be at least several days ahead!) and must have a backup plan or two (more and more locations provide free WiFi, including the University of Houston campus). Deadlines will not be extended due to power outages, computer problems, technical difficulties with Blackboard, etc. when students wait until the last minute. Students should also use Dropbox, OneDrive, GoogleDrive, or a similar service for backups—students who use such will never have to worry about computers dying or eating files. Students must also have a working email in case Dr. Pegoda reaches out to them. Keep an eye out for times with Blackboard is down for maintenance, too. The professor is not able to provide technical support to students. For technical support, please visit: [http://www.uh.edu/blackboard/support/](http://www.uh.edu/blackboard/support/).

3. **Reading:** Students are expected to ‘read’ all assigned texts. All required books are on reserve at the UH M.D. Anderson Library, too.

4. **Behavior:** Students are always responsible for knowing and following common sense. Given the veil of anonymity provided by computers, online discussions sometimes get particularly heated. Passion is wonderful, as is informed disagreement; name-calling, harassment, or any other kind of disrespectful behavior, however, will not be tolerated. Standards for this course are much higher than those on Facebook or other social media websites. Students engaged in any inappropriate interpersonal behaviors, **as determined by Dr. Pegoda**, will be subject to administrative withdrawal from this course (or failure in this course if the withdrawal deadline has passed), to grade penalties, and/or to other actions as seen fit by Dr. Pegoda.

5. **Written Work**\(^3\): Small assessments—eight module reflection posts and online participation posts. Major assessments—the challenges project and the cumulative final exam. Unless otherwise announced due dates are always 11:59 PM CST on the specified day. Work is only “submitted” when submitted to the appropriate Blackboard dropbox/discussion board and in the appropriate format. Please note that late work/makeup work is not allowed for any assessments. Start early.\(^4\)

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\(^3\) Any writing students complete in this class is fair game for later class discussions or examples, this semester or in another semester—student anonymity will be maintained.

\(^4\) Occasional opportunities for extra credit are typically offered. Students can also receive extra credit for attending relevant events on campus and writing an appropriate response within three days. Only students who complete course requirements are eligible. Students with any academic dishonesty violations have any earned extra credit voided.
All assessments must show incremental understandings of course concepts. Likewise, when reviewing graded work, students should apply any comment in any specific place to the entire assessment and to all future assessments. All assessments must use sentences and normative capitalization, punctuation, grammar. Assessments must follow formality and “correctness,” as discussed in “Guide to Writing in Dr. Pegoda’s Classes.”

6. **Participation**: Online participation is required. Students are required to make a total of fifty participation posts. Each post is worth up to two points. Students can make additional posts and earn up to 20 extra credit points. Roughly half of participation posts should come from module replies and half from student q/a, professor q/a, and/or interesting finds threads.

7. **Academic Integrity**: Students at institutions of higher learning must abide by the absolute highest standards of academic honesty. Any form of cheating or plagiarism—or the appearance of such—violate Dr. Pegoda’s and the University of Houston’s policies. Violations usually result in an automatic, irreversible “F” for the class and a report with Academic Affairs. For extended specifics, see the University of Houston Student Handbook and the handout, “Guide to Writing in Dr. Pegoda’s Classes,” especially the course academic honesty pledge. All such policies will be strictly enforced. Students who complete their own work, who clearly acknowledge the origin of all information, who follow all instructions, who ask questions, and who visit with Dr. Pegoda when needed will have nothing to worry about. This also means don’t manipulate fonts/margins, don’t recycle papers, don’t buy papers, don’t get help from other people, don’t upload or sell your paper, etc. This course uses plagiarism detection software and other resources to ensure academic integrity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weighted Value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module Reflections</td>
<td>Saturdays 11:59 PM</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges Project</td>
<td>August 9</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>August 9</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students will not receive “number grades.” Given our system, grading symbols have approximate numerical values. Students are always encouraged to ask clear, specific questions about grades but only after 24 hours upon seeing any grade or feedback and only with the understanding that grades are not up for negotiation. Conversations, ideally face-to-face, will focus on future improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Symbol Approximations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For major assessments:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A+, 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+,, 77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-, 91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-, 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For small assessments:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+, 98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>√, 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>√-, 74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For all work:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHI = Not Handed In = 0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Class Grading Scale

Each student’s overall performance and improvement are manually reviewed before issuing a semester grade. Students who request/demand that they be “given” a higher grade, will have their semester grade lowered by five points.

90-92, A-  93-100, A
80-82, B-  83-86, B   87-89, B+
70-72, C-  73-76, C   77-79, C+
60-62, D-  63-66, D   67-69, D+

Below 60, academic dishonesty, excessive absences, or failure to complete at least 60% of “small assessments” or any “major assessment,” F.

Incompletes are only considered when students have extreme and documented emergencies at the end of the semester, have been passing, and are unable to complete the course for reasons beyond their control.

Withdrawals are possible prior to deadlines. Students should always speak with Dr. Pegoda before dropping. The Texas Legislature says that undergraduates may only drop six classes their entire career. Students with emergency situations may also have options, for example, with a Medical Withdrawal, which does not count toward the six. For information, contact provost@uh.edu.

Accommodations

In compliance with federal policy, the Center for Students with DisABILITIES (CSD) provides “reasonable and necessary” accommodations for qualified students. Students who want to know more about should visit the CSD (Building #568), 713.743.5400 (voice), 713.749.1527 (TTY), or www.uh.edu/csd.

Specifically, as a queer, crip, feminist educator, Dr. Pegoda is committed to creating equitable opportunities and will attempt to provide reasonable academic accommodations to students who request and require them. Students must first register with the CSD and then present documentation during the first week of class or as soon as a disability arises. Students are responsible for providing paperwork and handling communication between the professor and the CSD, as well as reminding the professor about accommodations.

However, Dr. Pegoda encourages all students to communicate about any difficulties. Granting extra time on an out-of-class assessment before the deadline is usually possible. Most “accommodations” can be made easily. Dr. Pegoda also understands that the Medical Industrial Complex and the flawed “Medical Model of Disability” do not always make healthcare accessible or comfortable and can frequently find ways to help.
Important Notes About Course Content

All course texts have educational merits, which might include it doing something well, bad, new, or different. There should be no implied or assumed agreement between any text and Dr. Pegoda.

We will consistently discuss ableism, ageism, classism, colonialism, ethnocentrism, imperialism, racism, and sexism, as well as rape and suicide. Class content may include offensive content, language, or nudity. “Trigger warnings,” per se, will not be provided, as they make assumptions about what will or will not “trigger” those for whom such disclaimers are intended to consider. Students who are triggered by certain content should discuss this with Dr. Pegoda. Always operate under the expectation that disclaimers/trigger warnings are always in effect. Our reactions to such “taboo” and explicit content will vary by age, experience, interest, and other such intersectionalities and will provoke anger or disgust or curiosity or sadness and other feelings. Discussing these feelings (and learning from them) in a respectful, open-minded way is vital.

Students should also remember that they will further and further understand and appreciate course content, as well as the methods and theories with which scholars study and share knowledge, as they continue to learn, discover, research, and internalize academic knowledge. In our collective space, a “brave space,” not a “safe space,” we will be sometimes be challenged and a tad uncomfortable while learning from each other.

Gender and Violence

The University of Houston System is very concerned about any type of violence—including harassment or stalking in-person or online, hazing, or rape—that might have occurred to or between members of the University community. The federal Title IX requires that faculty who become aware of a student who has experienced any such form of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or relationship violence report such information to the Title IV Coordinator, Dr. Richard Anthony Baker. Students with questions about this may speak with Dr. Pegoda. They may also speak with Dr. Baker at 713.743.8835 or at eos@uh.edu. The Women and Gender Resource Center's Ms. Ashley Griffin is a confidential resource and can be reached at 713.743.1076 or at agriffin3@uh.edu.

Counseling and Psychological Services & Basic Needs Statement

CAPS can help students with managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling happier. Students may reach CAPS by visiting www.uh.edu/caps or by calling 713.743.5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if they or someone they know is in crisis. No appointments are necessary for the “Let’s Talk” program: a drop-in consultation service at locations around campus.

In addition, the following information might be useful: UHPD/Emergency Number 713.743.3333 (students are advised NOT to call 911 while on campus—instead call the UHPD—the response will be quicker); Student Health Center 713.743.5151; LGBTQ Resource Center 832.843.6191; Center for Diversity and Inclusion 713.743.6047; Cougars in Recovery 713.743.5862; UH Wellness 713.743.5430; Dean of Students 832.842.6183; Trevor Lifeline 866.488.7386 or
http://www.thetrevorproject.org/pages/get-help-now. If students would like to “talk” with someone but would prefer to text, visit: https://www.crisistextline.org/texting-in.

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students at 832.842.6183. Furthermore, students are encouraged to notify the professor, if comfortable. Students who find themselves in an emergency financial situation might have the option of borrowing $500 from the Dean of Student’s office with interest at a rate of 1% per month. All students in need of food may visit the free on-campus food pantry in Farish Hall 128.

The Writing Center and Other Support Services

The University of Houston Writing Center provides individual consultations for students working on all types of writing. Whether it is the first semester or the last, meeting with an expert student writer can provide another perspective on papers or projects and in navigating the writing process from brainstorming to perfecting a final draft and any state in between. You can make an appointment by visiting www.uh.edu/writingcenter or by calling 713.743.3016. For help on the mechanics of papers (grammar, punctuation, etc.), visit LAUNCH in CV N109.

Course Outline

See Blackboard for module specifics—each module includes articles, videos, and/or podcasts, in addition to book readings. Each module also has graded discussion board posts and participation opportunities. Students are welcome to work ahead but must complete work in the order assigned and by the due date.

**Module 1:** Due 6/8, 11:59 PM—Introductions: What are theologies from the margins?

**Module 2:** Due 6/15, 11:59 PM—Minorities, Majorities, and Religion Today.

**Module 3:** Due 6/22, 11:59 PM—(Re)Interpreting the Bible.

**Module 4:** Due 6/29, 11:59 PM—Feminist Theologies.

**Module 5:** Due 7/6, 11:59 PM—Womanist Theologies.

**Module 6:** Due 7/13, 11:59 PM—Queer Theologies.

**Module 7:** Due 7/20, 11:59 PM—Islam and Life on the Margins of Gender, Race, and Sexuality.

**Module 8:** Due 7/27, 11:59 PM—Other Theologies, Theisms, and Atheisms.

Challenges Project: Due 8/9, 11:59 PM

Final Exam: Due 8/9, 11:59 PM

Important University Dates:

6/3: Opening of Summer 2019 Semester; 6/4: Last day to add a class; 6/6 Official Reporting Day—last day to drop/withdraw without receiving a grade; 7/16 Last day to drop/withdraw with a “W”; 8/6: Last day of classes; 8/7-8/9: Final exam periods; 8/9: Closing of semester; 8/12: Professor grades due
Please complete FIVE of the following challenges. Start early! Try to at least complete one challenge every other week. When finished this project should be submitted as one portfolio-style file (pdf is a good file format). Organize the contents in a clear, logical fashion. Your submission should also include an extended statement (probably 2-3 pages or longer) that summarizes the overall contents, that analyzes your overall project and learning, and that explains the significance (i.e., why are your experiences and findings important?).

Talking to Strangers Go out into the world. Meet a stranger (anyone will work). Hear their story about religions/theologies and oppressions. Take a portrait of the two of you, if possible. Explain what best represents their experiences and views. Step outside your comfort zone and try to meet someone different from you – of a different age, background, or walk of life. Your reflection should not be a story about how you met.

Get Creative Write a poem or short story or even make a painting or sculpture inspired by or reflecting the themes of theologies from the margins. Originality is key. This should not be your personal ideas, per se, but something that honors the ideas of feminist, womanist, and/or queer theologies. Explain your thought-processes.

Fieldwork of the Familiar Your challenge is to do fieldwork in your own culture, find the strange in the familiar, and produce a compelling response with photos, if possible. In particular, if you attend some kind of theological services, re-examine them in light of your new knowledge. This could also work if you participate in some kind of activist or political group. In lieu of a service or group of some kind, re-examine conversations about religion or oppression and minorities among pop culture, family, or friends. What do you see with your new eyes?

Word-Weaving Your challenge is to invent a word, phrase, or metaphor related to or inspired by course topics that you think would make the world a better place and then try to spread it among your friends and social media. What happened?

Make An Archive Talk to people who follow feminist, womanist, and/or queer theologies in their everyday life. Ask them to teach you. Think about theory vs. praxis. Get a portrait, if possible. OR talk to various minorities and collect their experiences and thoughts on oppression and religion. Listen and learn. What did they teach you? What can you do to honor them?

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1 Adapted from and inspired by Dr. Michael Wesch (Kansas State University) and his Anth101.com project.
Relax and Think Go outside without your computer or phone or anything else “modern” for one hour (or longer). Take a big blanket, lay down, and look up. Think about sexism, racism, queerphobia, etc. Think about theological interpretations and experiences. What comes to your mind?

Get Uncomfortable Your challenge is to do at least two hours of fieldwork, immersing yourself in a cross-cultural or sub-cultural experience—a place, event, or activity that makes you uncomfortable—as long as its related to course topics (e.g., a church with a female or queer minister, a pride parade, a feminist convention – it doesn’t count if it’s something you have already done/would do anyway). Do “fieldwork” and write up a “thick description” of your experience.²

Make Others Uncomfortable Your challenge is to stir up “trouble” on your social media channels. Make some noises and post articles, thoughts, quotations, etc. that will make people really think and respond. What are their reactions to theologies from the margins?

Other Encounters Your challenge is to understand and empathize with somebody as totally different from you as possible—preferably with differences that are especially difficult for you to understand. This could be someone that might be opposed to liberation theologies, for example. What is their story? What do you actually have in common?

Teach Others Your challenge is to make an 8-12 minute YouTube video/podcast teaching others about what you believe to be the most important topics related to some combination of course topics.

Your Manifesto Your challenge is to reflect on what you have learned and write a manifesto for your life. This document should outline a vision for your highest goals for yourself, your future, and for how you will contribute to life on earth. How do theologies from the margin impact this manifesto?

² Thick Description, as described by Dr. Chris Endy: A concept borrowed from cultural anthropologists, particularly Clifford Geertz, and used in contrast to “thin description.” A thin description is a straightforward description of an event or text. A thick description attempts to uncover the ambiguities, coded meanings, or subtle gendered or racialized messages that can lurk behind a word choice, a ritual act, or a material artifact. When you see thick description, you are most likely encountering a cultural approach. Warning: “Thick description” is NOT the same as detailed description. Just because a historian goes into extensive detail on an event or text does not mean that this historian is using thick description. Thick description requires that the scholar explicitly analyze the deeper cultural codes and meanings behind an event or text.
Module 1: Introductions

Welcome to the first module! This module is designed to give everyone time to start the course, to get familiar with the course layout, and to acquire background.

Remember - don't get overwhelmed or worried. There might be a number of unfamiliar names or ideas at first, but it will quickly fit together better and better. Focus on having working understandings of what "liberation theologies" are--as a broad concept--and why they emerged, and what they aim to achieve.

I'd also like you to have an understanding of who Rev. Dr. James H. Cone and Rachel Held Evans were.

Cone died in April 2018. He was the founder of Black Theology, which is different than Womanist Theology (Black women)--which we'll talk about much more soon. This is also a divergence from how liberation theology was initially developed by Gustavo Gutierrez and focused on poor people in Latin America. Black Theology, in sum, takes "regular" (White) Christian Theology and makes it inclusive for Black people (especially Black men, as it happened).

Evans was an ally to queer people and resisted everyday theologies that marginalized and Othered.

Please read and study the following texts for this module.

- The "Big Idea" History Syllabus
- "Notes on: What is Religion?"
- "Liberation Theology Gets its Due"
- "Catholic church warms to liberation theology as founder heads to Vatican"
- "'If God Is White, Kill God': Why Dr. James Cone Was Once the Most Hated Theologian in America"
- "How Pope Francis Came to Embrace Not Just Climate Justice but Liberation Theology"
- "Noam Chomsky Brilliant Speech On Liberation Theology" (YouTube, talk)
- "Liberation Theology" (SlideShare Presentation, just skim)
- "James H. Cone, a Founder of Black Liberation Theology, Dies at 79" (New York Times)
- "James H. Cone, Founder Of Black Liberation Theology, Dies At 79" (National Public Radio)
- Funeral Program for Rev. Dr. James. H. Cone (PDF)
- Funeral Services for Rev. Dr. James H. Cone (watch from at least 24 minutes in to the 1 hour 45 minute mark)
- Rachel Held Evans, Voice of the Wandering Evangelical, Dies at 37
- How Rachel Held Evans became themost polarizing woman in evangelicalism

Optional texts:
• "5 Questions the Church Needs to Ask about Bi-vocational Ministry"
• "What is liberation theology?"
• "Gustavo Gutierrez: Liberation Theology"
• "Kimberlé Crenshaw Discusses 'Intersectional Feminism'"
• The God Article
• Stuff That Needs To Be Said
• Sojourners

Don’t forget to complete the Module 1 Reflection and replies. You also have the opportunity to make some of your required participation posts ("Interesting Finds," "Student Q&A," "Professor Q&A").

I’m here and your classmates are here to help you and to learn together!

This module should be fully finished by Saturday, June 8, 11:59 pm.

Dr AJP
Last updated 5/18/19 3:17 pm
Module 2: Minorities, Majorities, and Religion Today

Welcome to Module 2! This module is also designed to be a bit of a light start. For this module I really want us to understand and think about how minorities are treated today. In this class (because of our limited time), we are focusing mainly on Women, Black Women, Queers, and Queers of Colors, but we'll also touch on other minority groups, especially those who are poor. Be sure to think about how intersectionality and positionality factor in.

Please read and study the following texts for this module:

- *Rescuing Jesus: How People of Color, Women, and Queer Christians are Reclaiming Evangelicalism* (entire volume)
- "Losing My Religion for Equality"
- "American 'Christianity' Has Failed"
- "Get Ready for the Poor People's Campaign"
- "Two Questions About Trump and Republicans that Stump Progressives" (*)
- "The Women's Marches and the Politics of Care: The Best Response to Trump's Inaugural Address" (*)
- "The President Is The Nation: The Central Metaphor Trump Lives By" (*)

* These three articles may not directly relate to our course topics, at least on the surface, but have important information about metaphors, morality and political views, and "Strict Father" figure that will greatly inform our study.

Optional texts:

- "I'm Christian, Unless You're Gay" (YouTube, vlog)
- "Confirmation Bias, Privilege, and Prayer (or, How Prayer and Discrimination Can Be Connected)"
- "What exactly is 'imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy'?"

Don’t forget to complete the Module 2 Reflection and replies after you finish reading and studying the above texts. You also have the opportunity to make some of the other required participation posts.

I'm here and your classmates are here to help you and to learn together!

This module should be fully finished by Saturday, June 15, 11:59 pm.

Dr AJP
Last updated 5/14/19 11:12 pm
Module 3: (Re)Interpreting the Bible

Welcome to Module 3! This module is also designed to give background, perspective, and some of the big picture. For this module I really want us to understand and think about the Bible and its various uses.

Please read and study the following texts for this module:

- *Reading the Bible from the Margins* (entire volume)
- "Leaning in: A Student's Guide to Engaging Constructively with Social Justice Content"
- "Do All Christians Think The Same" (YouTube)
- Excerpts from *Why Christianity Must Change or Die: A Bishop Speaks to Believers In Exile*

Don't forget to complete the Module 3 Reflection and replies after you finish reading and studying the above texts. Make some participation posts, too!

I'm here and your classmates are here to help you and to learn together!

This module should be fully finished by Saturday, June 22, 11:59 pm.

Dr AJP
Last updated 5/28/19 6:09 pm
Module 4: Feminist Theologies

Welcome to Module 4! By this point I hope you are very familiar with how the course will run, but if you still have questions that's just fine!

This module is to introduce the ideas and histories associated with Christian Feminist Theologies. Such theologies became necessary, in part, because of the male-centric development of Christian theism. Women have been oppressed because of how some people translate and act upon texts in the King James Bible, for example. The Southern Baptist Convention, for example, holds that women cannot be pastors and should not be allowed to serve in combat (see here and here and here and here). The SBC only officially added a prohibition on women serving as pastors in 2000. (Some Baptist churches have violated this position, fyi.) Prior to 2000 it was so assumed it didn't need to be officially written. I call this the "rhetoric of implied exclusion."

Women (and others), as you will see, have worked to find a place free of oppression for women in Christian theologies. As we will focus on more next module, these theologies did not really include a place for women of Color. There are additional theologies specifically for Hispanic women, Native American women, Black women, Asian women, etc. Some of these theologies use a pro-woman view to (re)interpret theological texts or add additional texts. Some envision God/Jesus/et al. as a Black Woman or as an Asian Woman, etc.

As you read and think about these ideas, be sure to remember who is privileged and oppressed, who is made invisible, and how intersectionality and positionality matter.

We should also take note that "male" and "female" are very problematic binaries. These categories (and the associated meanings) are socially constructed.

Please read and study the following texts for this module:

- "Sex Biology Redefined"
- Introducing Feminist Theology (entire volume)
- "Made in the Image of God" (YouTube, TedTalk)
- "Why Does God Need a Penis"
- "Straight White Male: The Lowest Difficulty Setting There Is"
- "Judith Butler: Your Behavior Creates Your Gender" (YouTube, Talk)

Optional:

- "Understanding Patriarchy" (strongly suggested)
- "United Methodist Women in Leadership"

Don’t forget to complete the Module 4 Reflection and replies after you finish reading and studying the above
texts. You also have the opportunity to make some of your required post in other discussion board threads, too.

I'm here and your classmates are here to help you and to learn together!

This module should be fully finished by Saturday, June 29, 11:59 pm.

Dr AJP
Last updated 5/14/19 11:19 pm
Module 5: Womanist Theologies

Welcome to Module 5!

In this module, we focus on Black women and Christian theologies. As with Module 4, be sure to think about intersectionality, positionality--and also racialization. Black women are sometimes considered to have it "worst" because they are both Black and a woman. "Regular" Christian theologies, Black theologies, and Feminist theologies weren’t inclusive enough. At the same time, if we think about identity politics, it’s productive--at least in ways--for each identity group to have theologies unique to/specific to their hopes and fears and to their experiences.

Please read and study the following texts for this module:

- "Hot Topic #4: Feminism vs Womanism" (YouTube, talk)
- Introducing Womanist Theology (entire volume)
- "Journey to Liberation: The Legacy of Womanist Theology" (YouTube, short talk)
- "The Emergence of Black Feminist Consciousness"
- "'From God and a Woman': Black Feminist Theology, from Biblical Feminism to Womanism"
- "Fast Car" (YouTube, song)
- "Sinnerman" (YouTube, song)
- "Why? (The King of Love is Dead)" (YouTube, song)
- "Blackbird" (YouTube, song)
- "There is No Hierarchy of Oppressions" (YouTube, talk)

Optional texts:

- "Envisioning the Future of Theology & Ethics: A Womanist Perspective" (YouTube, talk)
- "J.K. Rowling Suggests To Roy Moore That God Is A Black Woman"
- Lemonade: The Visual Album (YouTube - strongly recommended)

Don’t forget to complete the Module 5 Reflection and replies after you finish reading and studying the above texts. Do some other posts, too!

I’m here and your classmates are here to help you and to learn together!

This module should be fully finished by Saturday, July 6, 11:59 pm.

Dr AJP
Last updated 5/18/19 3:18 pm
Module 6: Queer Theologies

Welcome to Module 6!

This module shifts our focus to sexuality and gender and Christian theologies. Be sure to consider where and how the liberation theologies we discuss are similar and different--comparative theologies. For at least a few hundred years, queer people have not been treated kindly by most churches. For some examples of statements made against queer people take a look at this link.

Please read and study the following texts for this module:

- *Radical Love: An Introduction to Queer Theology* (entire volume)
- "The Bible: A Queer Positive Book" (YouTube, TedTalk)
- "Queer Sex and Spirituality Can Coexist"
- "Key Facts About Trans People"
- "The Transgendered Christ"
- "MCC Statement of Faith"
- "Polish Woman Arrested for Depicting Virgin Mary with Rainbow Halo"
- "Orlando" (YouTube, song)
- "A Womanist Queer Theology" (YouTube)

Optional:

- "The Gay Debate: The Bible and Homosexuality" (YouTube, talk)
- "The Queerness of Christian Theology"
- "The Word "Homosexual" Does Not Appear In The Bible [Pre-1946]"
- "22-year-old Christian preacher clarifies that he wants gays executed ‘humanely’"

Some notes on the word "queer." "Queer" is complex, powerful, and problematic term. For our purposes here, "queer" is an identity--specifically an identity vis-a-vis sex, gender, or sexuality that subverts the normative. "Queer" can also be a verb. In this regard, we have been "queering" theology all semester. If you have not had me for WGSS2360 Intro to GLBT Studies, please at least glance through the following articles for more information about the word "queer."

- "3 Differences between ‘Gay’ and ‘Queer’"
- "Queer"
- "Queer is a Verb"
- "Queering the Textual"

Don’t forget to complete the Module 6 Reflection and replies after you finish reading and studying the above texts. You also have the opportunity to make some of your required post in other discussion board threads.
I'm here and your classmates are here to help you and to learn together!

This module should be fully finished by Saturday, July 13, 11:59 pm.

Dr AJP
Last updated 5/16/19 7:43 am
Module 7: Islam and Life on the Margins of Gender, Race, and Sexuality

Welcome to Module 7!

This module shifts our focus again and away from Christianity (which is our main focus). I can’t wait to hear what you think about this brand new book. I was lucky that the author sent me an advanced copy of it!

Please read and study the following texts for this module:

- *We Have Always Been Here: A Queer Muslim Memoir* (entire volume) (Study questions [here](#))
- *Just Me and Allah: A Queer Muslim Photo Project* (look through)

Don’t forget to complete the Module 7 Reflection and replies after you finish reading and studying the above texts. You also have the opportunity to make some of your required post in other discussion board threads.

I’m here and your classmates are here to help you and to learn together!

This module should be fully finished by Saturday, July 20, 11:59 pm.

Dr AJP
Last updated 5/14/19 11:21 pm
Welcome to Module 8! The last one!

This module is designed to give everyone a lighter week and to cover a few miscellaneous topics. This would be a good module to spend extra time just thinking and planning how you would like to complete the assessments due the next several modules.

Please read the following texts for this module:

- "The Sacrament of Creation: Toward an Environmental Theology"
- "Satanic Temple's Seven Tenets Are Morally Superior To Ten Commandments"
- "Kids Who Die" (YouTube, poem)
- "The New Black Atheists"
- "What It's Like to Be Black and Atheist"
- "Black Atheists Explain What It's Like to Be a 'Double Minority'"
- "Say It With Me: I'm a Hispanic Atheist"
- "A Hispanic Rethinking of the Cross"
- "Rape of the Land': 21st Century Ecofeminism and Environmental Rape Culture"
- "Elegy for the Victims of the Tsunami of March 11, 2011 in Japan" (YouTube, piano)
- "Chaplain"
- "Greg Epstein" (see video included)
- "From God's Perspective" Lyrics Video (Includes some really strong language, FYI)

Don’t forget to complete the Module 8 Reflection and replies after you finish reading and studying the above texts and complete the above assessment. Time is running out if you still need to make posts in "Interesting Finds," "Student Q&A," and/or "Professor Q&A." This would be a great time to do some of these posts--remember you can get a lot of extra credit for doing extra posts!

I’m here and your classmates are here to help you and to learn together!

This module should be fully finished by Saturday, July 27, 11:59 pm.

Dr AJP
Last updated 5/24/19 12:31 am