

**Theo 6420: Saints, Radicals, and Heretics**  
North Park Theological Seminary, Stateville Correctional Center  
Spring Semester 2020, correspondence  
3 credit hours

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Hauna Ondrey, PhD  
Assistant Professor of Christian History, North Park Theological Seminary  
hondrey@northpark.edu

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

An exploration of one or multiple figures in the history of Christianity, through engagement with primary and secondary sources. Examples include Martin Luther King, Jr., Dorothy Day, Augustine, Wendell Berry, Julian of Norwich and Luther. (from Catalog)

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free” (Galatians 5:1). What is the nature of the freedom Christ offers? Is Christian freedom primarily an interior, spiritual reality, or does it entail—or even require—various external conditions or concomitants (freedom of speech, religion, movement, etc.)? Put another way, to what extent is freedom in Christ dependent on external, material realities (economic, political, social), and to what extent is it independent of these? In this seminar course, participants will critically engage key writings of traditions that answer these questions distinctly in order to, ultimately, more clearly ascertain and articulate their own answers, in conversation with the Christian tradition.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Through the course students will:

1. Become familiar with a diverse group of historical and contemporary Christian thinkers;
2. Interpret and evaluate classical texts with historical and theological integrity;
3. Theologically analyze the intersections of freedom, power, and agency;
4. Apply historical content and interpretation to their personal life and Christian ministry.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

1. James Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 40th anniversary edition (Orbis, 2010).
2. Gustavo Gutiérrez, *The Truth Shall Make You Free* (Orbis, 1990).
3. Jacque Philippe, *Interior Freedom* (Scepter Publishers, 2007).
4. The following texts will be distributed in whole or part:
  - Mortimer J. Adler, *How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading* (Simon & Schuster, 1972)
  - Martin Luther, *On Christian Freedom; Admonition to Peace* (1525)
  - Twelve Articles of the Peasants (1525)
  - Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Instruction on Certain Aspects of the Theology of Liberation”
  - Ada María Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology* (Orbis, 1996)
  - Delores S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness* (Orbis, 1993)
  - Richard Bauckham, *God and the Crisis of Freedom: Biblical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2002)
  - Thomas à Kempis, *Imitation of Christ* (ca. 1420)

## ASSESSMENTS

Over the course of the semester we'll engage a series of classical Christian thinkers through a close **reading** of their seminal writings. Your **reading responses** will include (1) a description of how each author understands Christian freedom and (2) an evaluation of their position. Your **group responses** will engage your colleagues' writing, providing encouragement, insight, and critique. A **critical synthesis paper** will allow you to integrate the themes of the semester and articulate your own response to our course question, in dialogue with the sources we've covered. **Pre-course** and **post-course reflections** provide an opportunity for personal reflection and integration. Each of these components is described more fully below. See the schedule below (pp. 5–6) for a calendar of submission dates.

### ASSESSMENTS overview (% of course grade)

Weekly: Reading & group responses (35%)  
Jan 19: Pre-course reflection (10%)  
Mar 16: Midterm reading log (7.5%)  
Apr 20: Final reading log (7.5%)  
Apr 27: Post-course reflection (15%)  
May 4: Critical synthesis paper (25%)

**1. Reading.** As a seminar course, your careful, critical reading of texts is the foundation of our learning. Readings should be completed in preparation for the written response corresponding to them, as noted in the schedule below. Reading logs (p. 7 below) indicating completion of assigned course reading are due at midterm (March 16) and end of the semester (April 20). Grades will correspond to percentage of reading completed. Page numbers for each source are noted within the logs.

**2. Pre-course reflection paper** (due Jan 19). In no more than 750 words, interact with the following questions. This will provide both a reference point for your thought and an opportunity to integrate course questions personally.

1. How do you understand the freedom Christ offers (Gal 5:1)?
2. To what extent is freedom in Christ a spiritual reality, and to what extent is it a material reality? I.e., to what extent is it dependent on, or independent of, various external realities?
3. What primary influences shape your thought on these questions (e.g., experiences, desires, streams of tradition (biblical, political, theological, cultural), specific writings, or figures)?
4. What must one do to be free?

**3. Reading responses & group responses** (due Tuesdays, see schedule below). The primary rhythm of our course will be your written engagement with (1) course texts and (2) one another, providing written responses to each (no more than two pages for printing reasons) on alternating weeks, following the schedule below.

- **Reading responses** should include both (1) your description of how the author understands Christian freedom, following the method outlined in "Criticizing a Book Fairly" and the introductory lecture; and (2) your evaluation of the author's position. You may also include any questions the reading raises for you, though this is not required.
- **Group responses** will engage your colleagues' writing, providing encouragement, insight, and critique (also following the guidelines for "Criticizing a Book Fairly"! ). These may interact directly with an individual's (or several individuals') ideas and/or themes of the group's writing as a

whole. Strong responses will demonstrate understanding another's viewpoint, critical thinking, charitable feedback, and understanding of readings.

You may miss one response (reading or group) without penalty to your grade. Otherwise responses will be graded on a scale of inadequate (-), adequate (x), and exceptional (+) on the basis of their (1) accurate and charitable portrayal of others' thought (authors and classmates) and (2) thoughtful analysis of the same.

**4. Post-course reflection paper** (due Apr 27). In no more than 1000 words, interact with the following questions as well as your own pre-course reflection—identifying explicitly how your thought has been deepened, challenged, nuanced, expanded, etc. through dialogue with readings and with colleagues.

1. How do you understand the freedom Christ offers (Gal 5:1)?
2. To what extent is freedom in Christ a spiritual reality, and to what extent is it a material reality? I.e., to what extent is it dependent on, or independent of, various external realities?
3. What primary influences shape your thought on these questions (e.g., experiences, desires, streams of tradition (biblical, political, theological, cultural), specific writings or figures)?
4. What must one do to be free?

**5. Critical synthesis paper** (due May 4). Over the semester we have explored a core question: to what extent Christian freedom is independent of or dependent on external conditions? In this final paper you will make a strong argument for your own answer to this question. To this end, choose one of the following basic positions (which you may modify to accurately reflect your position) to establish through clear, well-organized argumentation:

- (1) Christian freedom is necessarily a material reality, entailing and depending upon particular external freedoms (be sure to identify these);
- (2) Christian freedom is primarily a spiritual reality, independent of one's external conditions.

Structure your paper in this way:

1. Introduction (1 paragraph). State your thesis and summarize the primary subclaims that will structure your paper, providing the reader a roadmap of your key arguments and how you will convince them of your position.
2. Body
  - a. Summarize both positions, offering the strongest arguments in favor of each. (750–1000 words)
  - b. Make a case for your position. This should be structured around clear claims, supported by reasoned arguments (vs assertions), including both positive arguments in support of your position as well as a response to the opposing position. (750–1000 words)
3. Conclusion (1–2 paragraphs). Restate your thesis, summarizing the key arguments you have offered in support.

Guidelines

- Your work should engage course readings throughout. Be sure to cite all sources you use, whether paraphrased or quoted directly. If you do incorporate direct quotation, be sure these *support* your own point rather than *replace* it.
- Grading criteria:
  - (1) Does the essay address all questions fully and avoid irrelevant discussion?
  - (2) Does the essay describe and evaluate texts in fair, contextually appropriate ways?

- (3) Are all claims clear, focused, and supported by appropriate evidence?
- (4) Does paper evidence nuanced thought and independence of judgment?
- (5) Is the work consistently formatted and clearly written, with no misspellings or grammatical errors?

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating will receive a failing grade on the assignment and are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion. Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another’s work as one’s own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another’s answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one’s answers or work.
4. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.

For additional information, see the Seminary Catalog located in the Resource room or online [Seminary Academic Catalog](#) (pp. 25–27).

### **ACCOMMODATIONS**

North Park is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this class, please communicate this with the instructor.

### **INCOMPLETE POLICY**

If, due to extenuating circumstances a student anticipates he will be unable to complete course work within the allotted time, that student must submit the request form for a grade of incomplete to the course instructor before the last week of class clearly stating the reason(s) for this request. Overscheduling and/or lack of self-discipline are not considered extenuating circumstances. If the request is timely and meets the criteria, the grade for that class will be listed as “I” until the last day of the following semester. If coursework is not submitted by the last day of the following semester the listing of “I” will automatically be changed to “F.”

## SCHEDULE

Readings should be completed on a schedule that allows adequate time for thoughtful completion of corresponding reading responses, submitted every other Tuesday.

	Reading	Assessments to submit (Tuesdays)
<b>Week 1</b> Wed., Jan. 13	Syllabus & instructor greeting (books being delivered)	
<b>Week 2</b> Tues., Jan. 19	Introductory lecture Adler, "Criticizing a Book Fairly"; Bauckham, "Freedom in the Bible: Exodus and Service"; "Freedom in Contemporary Context"	Pre-course reflection
<b>Week 3</b> Tues., Jan. 26	Luther, <i>On Christian Freedom</i>	Reading Response: Luther
<b>Week 4</b> Tues., Feb. 2	Twelve Articles of the Peasants; Luther, <i>Admonition to Peace</i>	Group Response
<b>Week 5</b> Tues., Feb. 9	Gutiérrez, <i>The Truth Shall Make You Free</i>	Reading Response: Gutiérrez
<b>Week 6</b> Tues., Feb. 16	Isasi-Díaz, "Mujerista Theology"; Rituals and <i>Mujeristas'</i> Struggle for Liberation"	Group Response
<b>Week 7</b> Tues., Feb. 23	Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction on Some Aspects of Liberation Theology	Reading Response: Congregation
<b>Week 8</b> Tues., Mar. 2		Group Response
<b>Week 9</b> Tues., Mar. 9	<i>NPTS Spring reading week</i> Use time to catch up on any missed reading and/or get a headstart on Philippe. Midterm reading log due next week.	
<b>Week 10</b> Tues., Mar. 16	Philippe, <i>Interior Freedom</i>	Midterm reading log Reading response: Philippe
<b>Week 11</b> Tues., Mar. 23	Whelan, "Being Loved into Freedom"	Group response
<b>Week 12</b> Tues., Mar. 30	Cone, <i>Black Theology of Liberation</i>	Reading Response: Cone
<b>Week 13</b> Tues., Apr. 6	Williams, "Womanist God-Talk and Black Liberation Theology"	Group response

<b>Week 14</b> Tues., Apr. 13	à Kempis, "Internal Consolation"	Reading response: à Kempis
<b>Week 15</b> Tues. Apr. 20		Group response; final reading log
<b>Week 16</b> Tues. Apr. 27		Post-course reflection
<b>Week 17</b> Tues. May 4		Critical Synthesis Paper

Input your reading progress within these logs, indicating what proportion of each text you have read. You can tear the sheet in half to submit your midterm log (due March 16) and end-of-semester log (due April 20). Be sure to include your name.

**MIDTERM READING LOG** (due March 16)

Name:

TEXT	Portion completed		
	None	#pages	All
Adler, "Criticizing a Book Fairly" (15 pp.)			
Bauckham, "Freedom in the Bible: Exodus and Service" (18 pp.)			
Bauckham, "Freedom in Contemporary Context" (24 pp.)			
Luther, <i>The Freedom of a Christian</i> (35 pp.)			
<i>Twelve Articles of the Peasants</i> (4 pp.)			
Luther, <i>Admonition to Peace</i> (27 pp.)			
Gutiérrez, <i>The Truth Shall Make You Free</i> (117 pp.)			
"Instruction on Certain Aspects of the Theology of Liberation" (17 pp.)			
Isasi-Díaz, "Mujerista Theology" (24 pp.)			
Isasi-Díaz, "Rituals and <i>Mujeristas'</i> Struggle for Liberation" (14 pp.)			
<b>TOTAL (295 pp.)</b>			

**FINAL READING LOG** (due April 20)

Name:

TEXT	Portion completed		
	None	#pages	All
Cone, <i>A Black Theology of Liberation</i> (154 pp.)			
Philippe, <i>Interior Freedom</i> (126 pp.)			
Whelan, "Being Loved into Freedom" (12 pp.)			
Williams, "Womanist God-Talk and Black Liberation Theology" (35 pp.)			
à Kempis, "Internal Consolation" (50 pp.)			
<b>TOTAL (377 pp.)</b>			