

TH-605 Contextual Theologies

Hartford Seminary

Fall 2021

Mondays, 7-9.50 PM

Hybrid Synchronous

Instructor: Hans A. Harmakaputra, Ph.D.

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 4-5.30 PM; or by appointment

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Left: A mural depicting the baptism of Jesus in a typical Haitian rural scenery, Cathédrale de Sainte Trinité, Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Source: Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0

Middle: A Chinese depiction of Jesus and the rich man, from Mark chapter 10.

Source: Wikimedia Commons, public domain image

Right: A traditional Ethiopian depiction of Jesus and Mary with distinctively "Ethiopian" features.

Source: Wikimedia Commons, public domain image

Course Description

Contextual theology is often assumed as a ramification of theology developed in the West. This course begins with a different assumption: Western theology is not the default of Christian theology. Instead, each form of theology stems from a specific context in relation to God's revelation in Jesus Christ. We will investigate significant theological positions on Christianity and culture, and learn different contextual theology methods. In the postcolonial world, global Christians produce multiple perspectives that decenter Christianity from its former pedestal in the Northern part of the world. The course will present examples of contemporary contextual theologies in world Christianity, both Western and non-Western settings.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- (1) Acquire basic knowledge about the nature of contextual theological reasoning
- (2) Identify major influencing factors that shaped contextual theologies in the present time
- (3) Analyze the ways in which social, political, cultural, and theological factors intersect in various models of contextual theologies
- (4) Explain and evaluate different strategies employed by Christian theologians in the world, both Western and non-Western contexts, to connect Christian faith with their particular contextual inquiries
- (5) Develop their own understanding of the relation between theology and context

(This course meets the following learning goals of Hartford Seminary programs: MAIRS 3, 5, MARS 1, 4, 5; DMin 1, 2)

Teaching and Learning Strategies

This class is a graduate seminar. Each meeting will provide a lecture, critical analysis on the assigned readings, and discussion. Afterward, the discussion will continue until Friday at midnight through Canvas. Students must read weekly required readings and write weekly reaction papers based on the activities in each week. Each student will be responsible for at least one presentation based on reading assignments. Last, students must write a final paper on a particular topic in consultation with the instructor.

As a hybrid synchronous course, students may opt to join in-person or online. However, students can only opt in through zoom if they have registered as a distance student and maintain the same modality for the duration of the course. Distance students are expected to be in a secure location that has adequate microphone, camera, and sound capabilities to ensure class participation.

Classroom Netiquette and Etiquette

Students should be aware of, respectful of, and engage those students who are not in the same physical space. Be respectful in all written and oral conversations. Written communication cannot express human inflection, tone, or any accompanying body language. As a result, it can be tempting to express ourselves in ways we might not be prepared to do in a face-to-face conversation. Video communication does help, but it is not the same as embodied communication. Always choose words carefully and refrain from assuming another person's attention. When in doubt, it is always better to ask for clarification. On the other hand, sarcasm is not a good way to communicate, and it is better not to utilize it. If needed, the instructor may contact students privately regarding classroom netiquette and etiquette.

Texts

All required texts are downloadable in Canvas or accessible through Digital Theological Library.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism, the failure to give proper credit for another person's words and ideas, whether published or unpublished, is strictly prohibited. All written material submitted by students must be their own original work; where others' words and ideas are used, they must be acknowledged. Additionally, if students receive editorial help with their writing, they should also acknowledge it

appropriately. Check Hartford Seminary Academic Policies for Graduate Programs on "Plagiarism Policy" for detailed information (<https://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/>).

Assessment

Class attendance: 10%
 Class discussions: 20%
 Religious autobiography: 5%
 Reaction papers: 20% (10 papers)
 Presentation: 10%
 Submission of final paper topic & bibliography: 5%
 Final paper: 30% (4000-5000 words)

Assignments

Class attendance (10%): Attend the weekly meetings either in-person or through Zoom (for distance students only). Should a student need to be absent for whatever reasons, the instructor must be contacted beforehand to get permission. Missing two classes will reduce the final grade.

Class discussion (20%): Starting at week 2, each student is expected to participate in class discussion during meetings and afterward through Canvas. Students may pose questions and comments on Canvas based on the readings, lecture, class discussion, and other students' reaction paper. Here, active engagements with each other are expected. The discussion thread will be closed every Friday midnight (12 AM).

Religious autobiography (5%): Before starting the course, it is recommendable to recognize one's own view, position, and context. Write a reflection paper on personal experience with and personal thoughts of religion(s). The 2-pages single-space paper should be submitted before week 3 through Canvas. There is no right or wrong in this assignment.

Weekly reaction paper (20%): Starting after week 2, each student must submit a total of 10 reaction papers until week 13. The 500-600 word paper must be submitted by Friday midnight through Canvas (due at 12 AM). Creative engagement with the required reading(s), lecture, and ongoing discussion are expected. It is not meant to be a summary of the readings.

Presentation (10%): Students will present a brief summary and critical analysis of one weekly reading assignment during the course (between class 5 to class 13).

Submission of final paper topic & bibliography (5%): Students must submit through Canvas the final paper topic, abstract, and preliminary bibliography for approval prior to class 12.

Final paper (30%): Students may choose between different trajectories for the final paper (4000-5000 words for master or 5000-6000 for doctoral students): (a) a critical analysis on one topic or issue discussed in one of the modules, (b) a comparison between two methods or two models of theology, or (c) a constructive paper of one's own contextual theology. Ability to correlate the content of the paper with one's own context is expected and appreciated. A different trajectory

than those that have been listed is possible, but one must consult the instructor for permission. The due date for the final paper is December 23, 2021 (midnight EST).

Policy and Miscellaneous

Written Assignment: All written assignments should follow the standard conventions as in Turabian 8th ed. The instructor reserves the right to have students re-submit an assignment for reasons of poor grammar, mistakes, or poorly written work. For those who would like assistance in writing a proper research paper, there are several good guides at <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-writing-resources/>.

Late Assignments/Papers: As per the Student Handbook, late papers will be marked down 1/3 of a grade every two days. Extensions for papers will be given for illnesses or family emergencies only in consultation with the instructor.

Email Policy: The instructor will use the official Hartsem student email addresses for all communications. Please check your Hartsem email account regularly.

Non-Academic Resources: Please refrain from citing Wikipedia or other non-documented websites, such as Blogspot. When students are unsure, please consult the instructor

Grading: The following evaluation process will be utilized as a guideline

- A (95-100)** Demonstrates excellent mastery of the subject matter, a superior ability to articulate this, and provides helpful connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.
- A- (90-94)** Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter, ability to articulate this well, and makes connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.
- B+ (87-89)** Demonstrates a very good understanding of the subject matter, able to articulate lessons learned in the assignment well. Meets expectations of the course.
- B (83-86)** Demonstrates an understanding of the subject matter and the ability to articulate lessons learned. Meets expectations of the course.
- B- (80-82)** Demonstrates an understanding of the material at hand, has some difficulty articulating this, and basic connection of the material to daily life or contemporary issues/life. Meets basic expectations for the course.
- C+ (77-79)** Demonstrates a basic comprehension of the subject matter, weak articulation and connections. Does not meet expectations for the course.
- C (70-76)** Demonstrates a minimal comprehension of the subject matter and has difficulty making connections. Does not meet expectations of the course.
- F (below 70)** Unable to meet the basic requirements of the course.

For all other questions you might have regarding policies or procedures, please see <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-handbook/> and <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/>

Assignment	Due Date	Learning Outcome(s) Fulfilled	Percentage of Course Grade
1. Religious autobiography	Monday, September 27, 6 PM	Learning outcomes #1 and #5 (Students learn to identify one of the most important elements of doing contextual theology: human experience)	5%
2. Weekly reaction paper	Fridays after each weekly session at 12 AM (must submit at least 10 papers)	Learning outcomes #1, #2, #3, #4 and #5 (Graduate seminar requires reading and analyzing texts prior to the class meetings, and then to develop one's own theological position)	20%
3. Class attendance	Every week either in-person or through Zoom	Learning outcomes #1, #2, #3, #4 and #5	10%
4. Class discussion	Every week during and after the class through Canvas (closed every Friday at 12 AM)	Learning outcomes #1, #2, #3, #4 and #5 (Engagement with others in a constructive discourse is imperative to shapen one's theological understanding. The instructor plays the role of facilitator in the communal learning process)	20%
5. Presentation	Between class 5 to 13	Learning outcomes #3, #4 (The presentation gives opportunity to analyze texts critically and share one's findings in an intelligible manner)	10%
6. Submission of final paper topic & bibliography	Monday, December 6, 6 PM	Learning outcomes #5 (Students learn how to conduct preliminary procedures on doing a research paper)	5%
7. Final paper	Thursday, December 23, 12 AM	Learning outcomes #5 (Focusing on a specific topic will help students to learn how to conduct appropriate research related to theology and context by identifying good academic sources, incorporate them into one's own thought, and write a short academic paper)	30%

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**Class 1, September 13** IntroductionRequired

- Stephen B. Bevans, "What Has Contextual Theology to Offer the Church of the Twenty-First Century?" in *Contextual Theology for the Twenty-First Century*, eds., Stephen B. Bevans and Katalina Tahaafe-Williams (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2012), 3-17.
- Elizabeth Johnson, *Quest for the Living God: Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God* (New York: Continuum, 2008), chapter 1.

Recommended

- Angie Pears, *Doing Contextual Theology* (London: Routledge, 2010), chapter 1.

## Part I Foundation and Methods

**Class 2, September 20** Christianity and CultureRequired

- Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), chapter 5 and 6.

Recommended

- Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Theology and the Condition of Postmodernity: A Report in Knowledge (of God)," in *Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3-25.
- Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959).
- H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1951).

**Class 3, September 27** Models of Contextual TheologyRequired

- Stephen B. Bevans, *Contextual Methods in Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 1-29.

Recommended

- Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, Rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008), chapter 4 – 9.

**Class 4, October 4** World Christianity and Post/Decolonial TheologyRequired

- Gemma Tulud Cruz, "Light of the World? Christianity and Immigrants from the Global South," in *World Christianity: Perspectives and Insights*, eds., Jonathan Y. Tan & Anh Q. Tran, S.J. (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2016), 64-76.
- Peter C. Phan, "Doing Theology in World Christianity: New Paths, Different Themes, Strange Locations," in *Christian Mission, Contextual Theology, Prophetic Dialogue: Essays in Honor of Stephen B. Bevans, SVD*, eds., Dale T. Irvin, Peter C. Phan, and Stephen B. Bevans (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2018), 87-97.

Recommended

- Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), chapter 9.

- Amos Yong, "Global Renewal Christianity and World Christianity: Treks, Trends, and Trajectories," in *World Christianity: Perspectives and Insights*, eds., Jonathan Y. Tan & Anh Q. Tran, S.J. (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2016), 64-76.
- Musa W. Dube, "Christianity and Translation in the Colonial Context," *The Routledge Companion to Christianity in Africa*, ed., Elias Kifon Bongmba (New York: Routledge, 2016), 156-172.
- Angie Pears, *Doing Contextual Theology* (London: Routledge, 2010), chapter 5.

## Part II

### *Theological Reflections in Global Context*

#### **Class 5, October 11** Botswana

##### Required

- Musa W. Dube, "Let There Be Light! Birthing Ecumenical Theology in the HIV and AIDS Apocalypse," *The Ecumenical Review* 67, no. 4 (2015): 531-542.
- Musa W. Dube, "'And God Saw that it was Very Good': An Earthfriendly Theatrical Reading of Genesis 1," *Black Theology* 13, no. 3 (2015): 230-246.

##### Recommended

- Victor I. Ezigbo, "Jesus as God's Communicative and Hermeneutical Act: African Christians on the Person and Significance of Jesus Christ," in *Jesus Without Borders: Christology in the Majority World*, eds., Gene L. Green, Stephen T. Pardue, and K. K. Yeo (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 17 pages.
- "Botswana," in *World Christian Encyclopedia Online*, eds., Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo (Leiden: Brill, 2020)

#### **Class 6, October 18** Brazil

##### Required

- Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, trans., Phillip Berryman (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997), chapter 6 & 7.
- Ivone Gebara, "Women's Suffering, Climate Injustice, God, and Pope Francis's Theology: Some Insights from Brazil," in *Planetary Solidarity: Global Women's Voices on Christian Doctrine and Climate Justice*, eds., Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Hilda P. Koster (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2017), 67-80.

##### Recommended

- Maria Clara Lucchetti Bingemer, *Latin American Theology: Roots and Branches* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2016), chapter 4.
- Angie Pears, *Doing Contextual Theology* (London: Routledge, 2010), chapter 2.
- Clodovis Boff, "Methodology of the Theology of Liberation," in *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology*, eds., John Sobrino & Ignacio Ellacuría (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996), chapter 1.
- "Brazil," in *World Christian Encyclopedia Online*, eds., Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo (Leiden: Brill, 2020)

**Class 7, October 25** PalestineRequired

- Mitri Raheb, *Faith in the Face of Empire: The Bible Through Palestinian Eyes* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2014), 33-46.
- Viola Raheb, "Women in Contemporary Palestinian Society: A Contextual Reading of the Book of Ruth," in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible and the Hermeneutics of Liberation*, eds., Silvia Schroer & Sophia Bietenhard (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 88-93.

Recommended

- Bernard Sabella, "Palestine," in *Christianity in North Africa and West Asia*, eds., Kenneth R. Ross, Mariz Tadros, and Todd M. Johnson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 140-151.
- George Sabra, "Two Ways of Being a Christian in the Muslim Context of the Middle East," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 17, no. 1 (2006): 43-53.
- "Palestine," in *World Christian Encyclopedia Online*, eds., Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

**Class 8, November 1** Czech RepublicRequired

- Pavol Bargár, "Learning about Spirituality Together with "Seekers": Reading Together towards Life in the Czech Postsecular Context," *International Review of Mission* 108, no. 2 (2019): 326-336.
- Ivana Noble, *Essays in Ecumenical Theology I: Aims, Methods, Themes, and Contexts* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 150-168.

Recommended

- Ivana Noble, *Theological Interpretation of Culture in Post-Communist Context: Central and East European Search for Roots* (London: Routledge, 2016), chapter 2.
- "Czechia," in *World Christian Encyclopedia Online*, eds., Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo (Leiden: Brill, 2020)

**Class 9, November 8** IndonesiaRequired

- Joas Adiprasetya, "Following Jesus the Clown," *Theology Today* 69, no. 4: 418-427.
- Ira D. Mangililo, "When Rahab and Indonesian Christian Women Meet in the Third Space," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 31, no 1 (2015): 45-64.

Recommended

- Isabella Novsima, "A Nonverbal Mission: An Apophatic Missiology from the Trauma Experience of Women with Intellectual Disabilities in Indonesia," *International Review of Mission* 108, no. 1 (2019): 78-87.
- Jan S. Aritonang, "Christians in Indonesia," in *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Indonesia*, ed., Robert Hefner (Abingdon, OX: Routledge, 2018): 257-266.



- Hans Abdiel Harmakaputra, "Toward an Indonesian Postcolonial Christology: Discerning Some Key Elements," *Exchange* 45, no. 2 (2016): 173-193.
- "Indonesia," in *World Christian Encyclopedia Online*, eds., Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

### Part III The US Context

#### **Class 10, November 15** Native American

##### Required

- Richard Twiss, *Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys: A Native American Expression of the Jesus Way*, eds., Ray Martell and Sue Martell (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015), chapter 3.
- Lisa A. Dellinger, "Sin—Ambiguity and Complexity and the Sin of Not Conforming," in *Coming Full Circle: Constructing Native Christian Theology*, eds., Steven Charleston & Elaine A. Robinson (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2015), 119-132.

##### Recommended

- Clara Sue Kidwell, Homer Noley, and George E. Tinker, *A Native American Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 2002), chapter 4.
- Robert Allen Warrior, "A Native American Perspective: Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians," in *Voices From the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*, ed., R.S. Sugirtharajah (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2006), 5 pages.
- Cheryl Bear, "The Smudge Ceremony: Inspiring Faith in Indigenous North Americans," in *Traditional Ritual As Christian Worship Dangerous Syncretism or Necessary Hybridity?*, eds., Robert Daniel Shaw and William R. Burrows (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2018), chapter 12.

#### **No Class on November 22-28, 2020 – Hartford Seminary Reading Day and Thanksgiving Week**

#### **Class 11, November 29** Black & Womanist Theology

##### Required

- James H. Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2011), chapter 5.
- Kelly Brown Douglas, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2015), chapter 5.

##### Recommended

- Kelly Brown Douglas, *The Black Christ* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994), 9-34.
- Frederick L. Ware, "Methodologies in African American Theology," in *The Oxford Handbook of African American Theology*, eds., Anthony B. Pinn and Katie G. Cannon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
- M. Shawn Copeland, *Knowing Christ Crucified: The Witness of African American Religious Experience* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2018), chapter 4.

- Bryan N. Massingale, "The Erotic Life of Anti-Blackness: Police Sexual Violation of Black Bodies," in *Anti-Blackness and Christian Ethics*, eds., Vincent W. Llyod and Andrew Prevot, pp. 173-194.

### **Class 12, December 6** Latinx

#### Required

- Jean-Pierre Ruiz, "The View from Northern Boulevard," in *Reading from the Edges: The Bible and People on the Move* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2011), 115-122.
- Elizabeth D. Ríos, "The Ladies Are Warriors!: Latina Pentecostalism and Faith-Based Activism in New York City," in *Latino Religions and Civic Activism in the United States*, eds., Gastón Espinosa, Virgilio Elizondo, and Jesse Miranda (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 22 pages.
- Neomi De Anda, "Jesus the Christ," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Latino/a Theology*, ed., Orlando O. Espín (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 155-171.

#### Recommended

- Michelle A. Gonzalez, *Afro-Cuban Theology: Religion, Race, Culture, and Identity* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2006), chapter 2.
- Victor Carmona, "Theologizing Immigration," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Latino/a Theology*, ed., Orlando O. Espín, (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 365-385.
- Daisy L. Machado, "The Unnamed Woman: Justice, Feminists, and the Undocumented Woman," in *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology: Religion and Justice*, eds., María Pilar Aquino, Daisy L. Machado and Jeanette Rodriguez (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2002), 161-176.

### **Class 13, December 13** Asian-American

#### Required

- Peter C. Phan, "Deus Migrator-God of the Migrant: Migration of Theology and Theology of Migration," in *Theological Studies*, Vol. 77, No. 4 (2016): 845-868.
- Grace Ji-Sun Kim, "Hybridity, Postcolonialism and Asian American Women," *Feminist Theology* 24, no. 3 (2016): 260-274.

#### Recommended

- Eleazar S. Fernandez, "Exodus-toward-Egypt: Filipino-Americans' Struggle to Realize the Promised Land in America," in *Voices From the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*, ed., R.S. Sugirtharajah (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2006), 11 pages
- Lisa Asedillo Pratt and Grace Y. Kao, "On Becoming Asian American Christian Ethicists," in *Asian and Asian American Women in Theology and Religion: Embodying Knowledge*, ed., Kwok Pui-lan (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 223-239.
- Tat-siong Benny Liew, *What Is Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics?: Reading the New Testament* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), chapter 2.

### **Class 14, December 20** Presentation of ideas for final paper.