

SENIOR SEMINAR: FALL 2008

Body: Theological Reflection and Praxis

Instructors: Cláudio Carvalhaes and Christopher Elwood

This online syllabus should be used to gain a better understanding of the content and focus of a course. The syllabus given out in the class may differ from this online version and its content supersedes that of the online syllabus.

Course description

The Senior Seminar focuses on an area of theological study related to the practice of ministry, providing M.Div. students in their final year of study an opportunity to integrate the various elements of their theological education in a way that contributes to the ongoing discernment of their vocation. Students will produce a substantial essay that brings the methods of theological study to bear on problems and opportunities in ministry and that expresses the student's theological vision. The topic for the Fall 2008 seminar is "Body: Theological Reflections and Praxis."

Christian traditions have often assigned a priority to elements of the self that transcend the physical. Evangelical preaching is often undertaken with the aim of "saving souls"; the classic term for pastoral care is "care of the soul." What, then, is the significance of bodies and embodiment? Theological traditions, historic and contemporary, include significant discussions of this question. This course provides students an opportunity to explore various strands in these traditions, and to bring skills of theological and ethical interpretation to bear in their engagement with issues related to the body that are especially relevant to their contexts of ministry.

Course goals

This course will provide an opportunity for senior students to integrate theological study with pastoral practice and build their capacity for contextual theological-ethical interpretation and analysis. The instructors will work with students to create a space for free, creative, and collaborative theological experimentation/play and discovery.

Students will

1. Bring their passions for ministry and theological reflection into productive conversation with religious and cultural traditions,
2. Gain practice in collaborative theological methods,
3. Refine their skills of constructive theological and ethical reflection and expression,
4. Work towards more adequate understandings of embodiment and practices of ministry that attend to whole persons and the contexts of embodied living,
5. Continue processes of vocational discernment that are theologically grounded, ethically informed, and that draw on several theological disciplines (biblical studies, historical and constructive theology, ethics, practical theology).

Course requirements

1. *Preparation and participation:* Students are expected to attend all seminar meetings, read all assigned material, and enter into thoughtful discussion of the matters the class takes up. Students are partners to one another in their work for this course, so conscientious preparation for each seminar meeting is essential.

2. *Topic Description and Progress report*: Students will submit a description of the topic on which they will work in this seminar, with a preliminary bibliography (due September 5), and a revised description outlining progress made toward the goal of a completed essay or project, with a revised bibliography (due September 29).
3. *Response paper*: Students will write a short (2-3 page) response to a student colleague's draft presentation of their final essay or project. Due dates to be determined.
4. *Senior Seminar essay or project*. The culminating project of the seminar will focus on an area of interest that relates in some way to the seminar topic. The topic should emerge from the student's own theological interests and passions. The project may be expressed in the writing of a substantial essay (about 20 pages). It may also be a performance, a particular practice of ministry, a liturgical project, or a work of art, in which case the project submitted would include some demonstration of the practice (where applicable) together with a substantial, written critical analysis (10-15 pages). Students will present to the seminar their work in progress (weeks 6-10), submitting five days in advance of the presentation a written summary (4-6 pages) that will serve as the basis for a student colleague's prepared response. The final determination of the project, its scope, and resources necessary to produce it will be the work of the student together with the instructors, in collaboration with the seminar as a whole. Students, thus, will have an opportunity to draw on the perspectives of their colleagues as the project is conceived and undertaken. Due December 1.
5. *Final conference*. Following the completion of the essay/project, students will meet with the instructors to assess their learning in the seminar, goals accomplished in their project, and possible directions for future vocational paths. Dates/times to be scheduled.

Readings

Required texts:

- Alves, Rubem. *I Believe in the Resurrection of the Body*. Portland: Wipf & Stock, 2003.
- Isherwood, Lisa and Elizabeth Stuart. *Introducing Body Theology*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.

All basic reading assignments are indicated in the calendar, below. In addition, students will be asked to assign short readings to accompany their presentations to the class of their work-in-progress.

Academic Honesty

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center and should make use of the available resources at an early date, since violations of seminary policy on academic honesty can lead to a failing grade for the course.

Inclusive Language

The use of inclusive language in course work is a policy of Louisville Presbyterian Seminary. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, avoid language for people that leaves out part of the population or perpetuates stereotypes. Do not assume masculine gender when the gender of the person is unknown. When referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety

of images and metaphors. See

http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp.

Calendar

Pre-Seminar orientation and organization

May 2008 (date TBA): Orientation meeting; Summer reading assignments; distribution of possible categories, topics

Summer reading:

- Read through Alves and Isherwood and Stuart, concentrating on chapters to be discussed in the fall (see assignments below).

August/early September 2008: Receive from students brief description of area of interest/project topic with preliminary bibliography (**due September 5**)

Seminar meetings and assignments

Week 1: *Getting to know the body*

Reading:

- Isherwood and Stuart, "Why Body Theology" (summer reading)
- Alves, *I Believe in the Resurrection of the Body* (summer reading: 1-50)
- William R. LaFleur, "Body"
- Michael Tausig, "Transgression"
- Mark C. Taylor, "Skins(r)apes and Dermagraphics" in *Hiding* (recommended)

Week 2: *The history of body (and soul) in Christian cultures*

Reading:

- Isherwood and Stuart, "A Difficult Relationship: Christianity and the Body" (summer reading)
- Caroline Walker Bynum, "Woman as Body and as Food"
- C. Elwood, "I Do Not Pity My Body"
- Richard Norris, "Soul" (recommended)

Week 3: *Sacred matters: making doctrinal connections*

Reading:

- Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gaia and God* (selection)
- Delores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness* (selection) and "Atonement" in *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*, eds. Letty M. Russell & J. Shannon Clarkson
- Sallie McFague, *The Body of God* (selection) (recommended)

- Beth Felker Jones, "The Body Raised," in *Marks of His Wounds* (recommended)
- Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Parker, *Proverbs of Ashes* (selection; recommended)

Week 4: *Sexualities*

Progress reports with revised bibliography due

Reading:

- Isherwood and Stuart, "Queering the Body" (summer reading)
- Rowan Williams, "The Body's Grace," in Hefling, ed., *Our Selves, Our Souls and Bodies*
- Carter Heyward, "The Erotic as Power: Sexual Theology," in *Touching Our Strength. The Erotic Power and the love of God*
- Marcella Althaus-Reid, "Indecent proposals...," *Indecent Theology. Theological Perversion in sex, Gender and Politics* (recommended)
- Mark D. Jordan, "Attack upon Christendom," in *The Ethics of Sex* (recommended)

Week 5: *Bodies in movement*

Reading:

- Alves, *I Believe in the Resurrection of the Body* (summer reading: 51-78)
- Cláudio Carvalhaes, "Gimme de kneebone bent: Liturgics, Dance, Resistance and a Hermeneutic of the knees," in *Studies in World Christianity* 14:1 (2008)
- Guillermo Gómez-Pena, "Conversation with Theorists," in *Ethno-Techno. Writings on performance, Activism and Pedagogy*
- Mark C. Taylor, "The Betrayal of the Body: Live Not" in, *Nots* (recommended)
- Catherine Bell, "Performance" (recommended)

Weeks 6-10: Student presentations; responses; discussion

Reading:

- To be assigned

Weeks 11-12: Final re-writes/presentations; and concluding student-instructor conferences

Beginning Bibliography for “Body: Theological Reflections and Praxis”

Broad Theological Perspectives

- Althaus-Reid, Marcella. *Indecent Theology. Theological Perversions on Sex, Gender and Politics*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Althaus-Reid, Marcella. *Liberation Theology and Sexuality*. Ashgate, 2006.
- Althaus-Reid, Marcella and Lisa Isherwood, ed. *Controversies in Body Theology*. SCM, 2008.
- Brock, Rita Nakashima and Rebecca Ann Parker. *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering and the Search for What Saves Us*. Boston: Beacon, 2002.
- Burrus, Virginia. *The Sex Lives of the Saints, An Erotics of Ancient Hagiography*.
- Gebara, Ivone. *Out of the Depths: Women's Experience of Evil and Salvation*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2003.
- Hefling, Charles C., ed. *Our Selves, Our Souls and Bodies: Sexuality and the Household of God*. Cambridge: Cowley, 1996.
- Heyward, Carter . “Liberating the Body,” in *Our Passion for Justice: Images of Power, Sexuality and Liberation*. Pilgrim Press, 1994.
- Heyward, Carter . *Touching Our Strength. The Erotic as Power and the Love of God*. San Francisco: Harper, 1989.
- Irwin, Alexander C. *Eros Toward the World: Paul Tillich and the Theology of the Erotic*.
- Isherwood, Lisa and Elizabeth Stuart. *Introducing Body Theology*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.
- McFague, Sallie. *The Body of God*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993.
- Raschke, Carl A. *Fire and Roses. Postmodernity and the Thought of the Body*.
- Ross, Susan. *Extravagant Affections: A Feminist Sacramental Theology*. Continuum, 1998.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Sexism and God-talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*.
- Williams, Delores. *Sisters in the Wilderness. The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1995.

Biblical Studies

- Brenner. Athalya. *The Intercourse of Knowledge: On Gendering Desire and “Sexuality” in the Hebrew Bible*. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- Brooten, Bernadette. *Love Between Women*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Martin, Dale B. *Sex and the Single Savior*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006.
- Moore, Stephen. *God's Gym: Divine Male Bodies of the Bible*, Routledge; October 2, 1996.
- Taussig, Hal E. “Dealing Under the Table. Ritual Negotiation of Women’s Power in the Syro-Phoenician Woman Pericope”, in *Reimagining Christian Origins. A Colloquium Honoring Burton L. Mack*. eds. Elizabeth A. Castelli and Hal Taussig. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1996.
- Tribble, Phyllis. *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978.
- Wyschogrod, Michael. *The Body of Faith: Judaism as Corporeal Election*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1996.

Studies of History, Religion and Culture

- Ariès, Philippe. *The Hour of Our Death*. New York: Vintage, 1982.
- Boston Women's Health Book Collective. "Body Image," in *Our Bodies, Ourselves: A New Edition for a New Era*. New York: Touchstone, 2005.
- Brown, Peter. *The Body and Society*. New York: Columbia, 1988.
- Burrus, Virginia. *"Begotten, Not Made": Conceiving Manhood in Late Antiquity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.
- Bynum, Caroline Walker. "The Female Body and Religious Practice in the Later Middle Ages," in *Fragmentation and Redemption*.
- Bynum, Caroline Walker. *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336*. New York: Columbia, 1995.
- Bynum, Caroline Walker. "Woman as Body and as Food," in *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*
- Jones, Beth Felker. *Marks of His Wounds: Gender Politics and Bodily Resurrection*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Coakley, Sarah. *Religion and the Body*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Ark, 1966.
- Eire, Carlos M. N. *From Madrid to Purgatory: The Art and Craft of Dying in Sixteenth-Century Spain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Elwood, Christopher. "I Do Not Pity My Body: Calvin's Theological Anthropology and the Experience of Soul and Body in Sixteenth-Century French Calvinism."
- Gagné, Patricia and Richard Tewksbury. *The Dynamics of Inequality: Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality in the United States*. Prentice Hall, 2003.
- Jordan, Mark. *The Ethics of Sex*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.
- Katz, Jonathan Ned. *The Invention of Heterosexuality*. New York: Penguin, 1995.
- Laqueur, Thomas. *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard, 1990.
- Machado, Daisy. "Women and Religion in the Borderlands" *USQR (Union Seminary Quarterly Seminary)*, Vol. 57, No 3-4 (2003), 146-158.
- Norris, Richard. "Soul," E. Ferguson, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*. Garland, 1990.
- Pagels, Elaine. *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent*. New York: Vintage, 1988.
- Porter, Roy. *Flesh in the Age of Reason*. New York: Norton, 2003.
- Rudy, Kathy. *Sex and the Church, Gender, Homosexuality and Christian Ethics*.
- Ware, Kallistos. "The Way of the Ascetics: Negative or Affirmative?" in Vincent Wimbush and Richard Valantasis, *Asceticism*

Philosophical/Theological/Ethical Perspectives

- Bell, Catherine. "Performance," in Mark C. Taylor, ed. *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Brown, Norman O. *Love's Body and Life Against Death*.
- Brown, Warren, Nancey Murphy, and H. Newton Mahoney, eds. *Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998.
- Cahill, Lisa Sowle. "'The Body' –in Context," in *Sex, Gender and Christian Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality. An Introduction*. New York: Vintage, 1980.
- Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon, 1980.
- Foucault, Michel. *Technologies of the Self*. University of Massachusetts Press, 1988.
- Giddens, Anthony. *The Transformation of Intimacy. Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.

- Frye, Marilyn. *The Politics of Reality*. Freedom, California: Crossing Press, 1983.
- Jones, Serene. "Hope Deferred: Theological Reflections on Reproductive Loss (Infertility, Miscarriage, Stillbirth)." *Modern Theology* 17 (2001): 227-245.
- Jordan, Mark. *The Ethics of Sex*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.
- Kershaw, Sarah. "Insure Me, Please; The Murky Politics Of Mind-Body," *New York Times*, March 30, 2008.
- Hennessy, Rosemary. *Profit and Pleasure: Sexual Identities in late Capitalism*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- LaFleur, William R. "Body," in Mark C. Taylor, ed. *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Lloyd, Genevieve. *The Man of Reason: "Male" and "Female" in Western Philosophy*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Philosophy in the flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York: Basic Books, 1999.
- MacDonald, Diane L. Prosser. *Transgressive Corporeality. The Body, Poststructuralism, and the Theological Imagination*. SUNY, 1995.
- San Juan, E., Jr. *Racism and Cultural Studies. Critiques of Multiculturalist Ideology and the Politics of Difference*. Durham: Duke, 2002.
- Taussig, Michael. "Transgression," in Mark C. Taylor, ed. *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Weaver, Jace. "Indigenusness and Indigeneity," in *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray, ed.

Liturgical Perspectives

- Alves, Rubem. *I Believe in the Resurrection of the Body*. Wipf & Stock, 2003.
- Boff, Leonardo. *Sacraments of Life, Life of the Sacraments*.
- Driver, Tom. *Liberating Rites. Understanding the Transformative Power of Ritual*.
- Gómez-Pena, Guillermo, *Dangerous Border Crossers; and The New World Border, Prophecies, Poems & Loqueras For the End of the Century*.
- Garrigan, Siobhán. *Beyond Ritual, Sacramental Theology After Habermas*. Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004.
- Grimes, Ronald. *Reading, Writing and Ritualizing*.
- Miller, Vassar. *If I Had Wheels or Love: Collected Poems of Vassar Miller*. Dallas: SMU Press, 1991.
- Ramshaw, Gail. *God Beyond Gender: Feminist Christian God-Language*.
- Saliers, Don E. "Liturgy and Ethics; Some New Beginnings." And "Afterword: Liturgy and Ethics Revised." in *Liturgy and the Moral Self: Humanity at Full Stretch Before God*. eds. E. Byron Anderson, Bruce T. Morrill.
- Walton, Janet. *Feminist Liturgy. A Matter of Justice*.