

# Explorations in Christian Theology

## Post-Colonial Theology

Fall, 2007; Rel 299, Fridays, 1 – 3:20, PPHAC 338

Instructor: Dr. Kelly Denton-Borhaug, Comen 214, [kdenton@moravian.edu](mailto:kdenton@moravian.edu), phone: X7104

Office Hours: T/Th 2:10-4:00

**Course Description:** This upper division course is designed for religion majors, and/or those students with sufficient background/ experience in religious studies for more advanced and in depth work in the study of religions. Our focus for this course is sustained theological exploration. We will learn about the discipline of “systematic Christian theology” by sinking into different examples of “post-colonial theology”. Our aim will be broad and profound reading, thinking, questioning, and conversation. Our class will be held in “seminar style,” meaning that a great deal of time will be devoted to group conversation, deliberation and learning from one another. Our sustained study will be augmented by our spring break trip to Tuscon and Nogales to learn more and experience directly some of the realities of this borderland and its connections to Empire and post-colonialism.

### Required Texts:

Reader from the Borderlands non-profit (this document is available to you all in our Blackboard course documents)

Jerry H. Gill, *Borderland Theology*

Joerg Rieger, *Christ and Empire: From Paul to Postcolonial Times*

Grace Ji-Sun Kim, *The Grace of Sophia: A Korean North American Women’s Christology*

### Course Requirements:

- 1) It goes without saying that the success of a seminar such as this one is determined by the intellectual engagement and energy of its participants. You’ll be reading approximately 100 pages or so a week of stimulating, provocative *and* challenging material – you’ll need to allot at least six hours per week for adequate preparation for each Friday’s seminar. Especially once we begin Rieger’s book, read this material in small chunks, maybe 30-40 pages at a time. Write extensive notes and questions in your margins; come to each seminar with a good idea of the thread of argument in your reading *and* with at least three or four substantive questions or themes you wish to raise and discuss. A truly prepared student will take the time to write up summary notes of the reading in advance of each class. In order to encourage you in your in depth reading, ☺ every week’s seminar will begin with a quiz on the reading assigned for that

day. **There are no excused absences allowed for this seminar.** If you are seriously ill or have a family emergency or need for religious observance, you will not be excused unless you clear it with me *in advance* of the class you need to miss, and unless I judge this to be a truly necessary absence. Do your very best to take care of your health so that you don't get ill! 😊

- 2) At the conclusion of our study of different resources, we will have in-class writing exams in a computer classroom. These exams will be open book and open note – the purpose is for you to demonstrate your intellectual engagement with our material. I'll give out more information about these exams as the first one draws closer.
- 3) Over the course of our study, I will be asking you to keep a journal. Use some sort of writing book you already have or purchase on for this semester's work. This will be especially key for you during our travel seminar. Your journal will help you to reflect and track this semester's process you experience intellectually, emotionally, spiritually with this material. Take seriously this part of our course which involves you searching out quiet time for deep reflection, introspection, silence, writing, inner searching. Find a comfortable and quiet place and time to do your journal work each week. *This will only be graded as having been done in a thorough and engaged matter; you will not be graded on the specifics of what you write, so use this course tool in the way that makes best sense for you!* More details to come.
- 4) Breakdown of grading for this course
  - a) Engaged, active, prepared and thoughtful participation in the seminar, including your work in class, your journals, the demonstration of your serious preparation, etc.: 20%
  - b) First Writing Exam: 20%
  - c) Second Writing Exam: 30%
  - d) Final Take Home Exam: 30%

*Students are advised to review the Moravian College Policy on Academic Honesty and required to follow the requirements therein.*

## Schedule of Classes

Jan. 23

Intro to class, film, *El Norte*, Farmington Hills, MI.: CBS/Fox [distributor], 1984

Journal: Reflect on the film we watched. What was new to you? What were your reactions? What initial questions do you have about this class, the experience we are planning together, and what this all means for you? Give yourself about ½ hour to reflect and write about this experience.

Feb. 6

Read: Orientation Reader for trip

*Borderland Theology*, Jerry H. Gill (read all of it)

Journal: What in the orientation reader sparks anxiety in your mind? What sparks excitement? Why? Choose two themes from Gill's book and reflect on them at length.

Feb. 13

In Class: First Writing Exam  
Read: Rieger, *Christ and Empire*  
Preface, Introduction, Chapter one

Feb. 20

Read: Rieger, *Christ and Empire*  
Chapter Two, Three, Four  
Journal questions to be given

Feb. 27 (away on our travel seminar)

I will be giving your journal questions for reflection and writing each day of our trip

Mar. 6

lunch together this day; processing our trip; sharing from our journals;  
No reading assigned for today, but do complete your journals thus far

Mar. 13

Read: Rieger,  
Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Conclusion  
Journal questions to be given

Mar. 20

In Class writing Exam on Rieger

Mar. 27

Read: Kim,  
Preface, Chapters one through four  
Journal questions to be given  
I hope that Prof. Kim will be able to join our seminar one of the two days we spend with her book

April 3 Read: Kim

Chapter Five through Seven  
Journal questions to be given

April 10 Take Home Final Due (more details to come)

In class: Sharing from our journals, our finals, celebration of our good work together this semester.