

TEC 410-O: Queer Theologies

Working Syllabus
Fall 2015

Required WebEx Sessions: 9/17, 10/1, 10/15, 11/5, 12/4, 12/11
7:30 to 9:00 pm CT

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Course Description

What are queer theologies? This course will explore the multiplicity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) Christian theologies that have emerged in recent decades. Topics to be covered include: the sources, histories, and themes of queer theologies since the 1950s; queering scripture and hermeneutics; queering theological doctrines; intersectional and queer of color theologies; bisexual, transgender, and intersex theologies; queer theologies of pleasure; and future directions of queer theologies, including queer ecotheologies and queer interfaith theologies.

Course Objectives

The learning objectives of this course include the following:

- Understanding the sources, histories, and themes of queer theologies since the 1950s
- Engaging in theological discussion, both oral and written, about queer theological texts
- Conducting research on primary sources of queer theology
- Using multimedia tools to teach queer theology to others
- Reflecting upon the past, present, and future of queer theology

Course Requirements

This course contains both online and WebEx discussion components. All students are expected to participate actively in weekly online posts as well as WebEx class discussions. This syllabus is a work-in-progress, and the content of the course may change during the term. Specific requirements for full course credit include:

- 30% Attendance and active participation in the six required WebEx sessions.
- 30% Weekly initial and follow-up online posts, due by 8:00 p.m. CT on the dates listed below.
- 15% An online multimedia presentation on a primary text of queer theology that was not assigned for the course. The presentation is to be posted on Moodle by 5:00 p.m. CT on November 10, 2015.
- 25% A 12-15 page final paper on the question “What is the past, present, and future of queer theology?” The final paper is due by 5:00 p.m. CT on December 21, 2015, via email to pcheng@ctschicago.edu.

1. Attendance and Active Participation

Attendance and active participation in the six required WebEx sessions are required. If you have an unavoidable conflict with one of the sessions, you may watch the recorded session online and submit a 3-5 page essay (no later than one week following the session) on what you would have added to the discussion.

2. Weekly Online Posts

By 8:00 p.m. CT on the dates listed below, provide (a) an initial online post that answers each of the following three questions and (b) a subsequent follow-up post commenting on the materials and posts of your classmates. Include citations to page numbers from the readings, and be sure that you answer all three questions.

- What in the materials surprised and/or excited you the most and why?
- What in the materials troubled and/or disturbed you the most and why?
- What in the materials would you like to highlight for clarification or further discussion and why?

You may wish to draft your posts in a word processing document so that you will have a copy of them for your records.

3. Online Multimedia Presentation

The midterm project is an online multimedia presentation for your classmates on a primary text of queer theology that was not assigned for the course. The project is to be posted on Moodle by 8:00 p.m. CT on November 10, 2015.

You may choose to write a poem, compose music and/or song lyrics, make a drawing or other work of art, write an icon, put together a short video or slide show with music, create a blog post with images, or use another medium of your choice. The project will be graded on the basis of creativity and the effort put into the assignment.

The project should be in a format that can be shared easily online (e.g., drawings should be scanned). Please be sure to describe briefly the text's broader significance to queer theology and why you chose this text in light of your own ministry and vocational calling. Please also say a few words about the content and form of the project in light of your own social location and what you learned from the assignment.

Please note that there are monthly open library sessions during which you can ask research-related questions to the Interim Director of the Lapp Learning Commons via WebEx.

4. Final Paper

The final paper is a 12-15 page paper that answers the question "What is the past, present, and future of queer theology?" Be sure to discuss in detail at least three texts assigned for the course and three texts *not* assigned for the course. The final project is due via email to pcheng@ctschicago.edu no later than 5:00 p.m. CT on December 21, 2015.

Course Grading Criteria

A level – Submits work on time; proposes creative ideas in class sessions and online posts; demonstrates critical and creative thinking in the online multimedia presentation and final project. No unexcused absences from WebEx sessions.

B level – Submits work on time; shows enthusiasm in class session and online posts; demonstrates cogent thinking in the online multimedia presentation and final project. No more than one unexcused absence from WebEx sessions.

C level – Does not submit work on time; shows minimal engagement with the class sessions, online posts, online multimedia presentation, and/or final project; or two unexcused absences from WebEx sessions.

No credit will be given for the class for anyone with three or more absences from WebEx sessions, whether or not such absences are excused.

Required Texts

The following are the required texts for the course:

- Patrick S. Cheng, *From Sin to Amazing Grace: Discovering the Queer Christ* (2012)
- Patrick S. Cheng, *Radical Love: An Introduction to Queer Theology* (2011)
- Patrick S. Cheng, *Rainbow Theology: Bridging Race, Sexuality, and Spirit* (2013)
- Susannah Cornwall, *Controversies in Queer Theology* (2011)
- Kathleen T. Talvacchia, Michael F. Pettinger, and Mark Larrimore, eds., *Queer Christianities: Lived Religion in Transgressive Forms* (2015)
- Adrian Thatcher, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Theology, Sexuality, and Gender* (2015)

Please note that the Talvacchia and Thatcher texts are available as digital resource in the CTS Learning Commons. The other readings for the course will be available in PDF format on Moodle and are marked with a † below.

Course Schedule

Below is the tentative course schedule, which is subject to change. Changes will be posted on the course Moodle site. Unless otherwise stated, assignments are due by 8:00 p.m. CT on the dates listed below.

Most WebEx sessions will be held on Thursday evenings. However, please note that the December 4th and December 11th WebEx sessions will be held on Friday evenings.

Week 1 – Sept. 5 to 10

Introductions; Queer Identities

By September 7, post an introduction of yourself, including your background and why you are taking this course.

By September 8, read the following texts:

- Stuart, “The Theological Study of Sexuality,” *Oxford Handbook*, 18-31
- Loughlin, “Gay Affections,” *Oxford Handbook*, 608-23
- Isherwood, “Lesbians,” *Oxford Handbook*, 624-39
- Robinson, “Bisexual People,” *Oxford Handbook*, 640-56
- Cornwall, “Intersex and Transgender People,” *Oxford Handbook*, 657-75
- † Genderbread Person 3.3

By September 8, watch the video posted on Moodle.

By September 9, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.

By September 10, post your follow-up comments about the materials and the other posts.

We will discuss these texts during the Sept. 17 WebEx session.

Week 2 – Sept. 11 to 17
(WebEx on Sept. 17)

What Is Queer?; What Is Queer Theology?

By September 13, read the following texts:

- Cheng, “Contributions from Queer Theory,” *Oxford Handbook*, 153-69
- Cornwall, “What Is Queer?,” *Controversies*, 9-42
- † Brintnall, “Queer Studies and Religion,” *Critical Research on Religion*, 51-61

- † Schneider and Roncolato, “Queer Theologies,” *Religion Compass*, 1-13
- Cornwall, “Is Queer Theology Synonymous with Gay Theology?,” *Controversies*, 43-71
- † Heyward, “We’re Here, We’re Queer: Teaching Sex in Seminary,” *Body and Soul*, 78-96

By September 13, watch the videos posted on Moodle.

By September 14, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.

By September 16, post your follow-up comments about the materials and the other posts.

On September 17, participate in the WebEx session.

Week 3 – Sept. 18 to 24

Radical Love

By September 21, read the following text:

- Cheng, *Radical Love*

By September 21, watch the video posted on Moodle.

By September 22, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.

By September 24, post your follow-up comments about the materials and the other posts.

We will discuss this text during the Oct. 1 WebEx session.

Week 4 – Sept. 25 to Oct. 1
(WebEx on Oct. 1)

Queering Scripture and Hermeneutics

By September 27, read the following texts:

- Cornwall, “Is the Bible Queer?,” *Controversies*, 114-46
- Jennings, “Same-Sex Relations in the Biblical World,” *Oxford Handbook*, 206-21
- Stone, “Marriage and Sexual Relations in the World of the Hebrew Bible,” *Oxford Handbook*, 173-88
- † Cheng, “Galatians,” *Queer Bible Commentary*, 624-29
- † Koch, “Cruising as Methodology: Homoeroticism and the Scriptures,” *Queer Commentary and the Hebrew Bible*, 169-80
- † Mollenkott, “Reading the Bible from Low and Outside: Lesbians and Gay People as God’s Tricksters,” *Take Back the Word*, 13-22

By September 27, watch the videos posted on Moodle.

By September 28, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.

By September 30, post your follow-up comments about the materials and the other posts.

On October 1, participate in the WebEx session.

Week 5 – Oct. 2 to 8

From Sin to Amazing Grace

By October 5, read the following texts:

- Cheng, *From Sin to Amazing Grace*
- Cherry, “Rainbow Christ Prayer”

By October 5, listen to the audio recording posted on Moodle.

By October 6, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.

By October 8, post your follow-up comments about the materials and the other posts.

We will discuss this text during the Oct. 15 WebEx session.

Week 6 – Oct. 9 to 15
(WebEx on Oct. 15)

Queering Doctrine

By October 11, read the following texts:

- Cornwall, “Is the Christian Theological Tradition Queer?,” *Controversies*, 147-90
- Rogers, “Doctrine and Sexuality,” *Oxford Handbook*, 53-66
- † Cheng, “*Domine, Non Sum Dignus*: Theological Bullying and the Roman Catholic Church,” *More Than a Monologue*, 164-73
- † Jordan, “Telling God: Honesty in Theology,” *Telling Truths in Church*, 59-78
- † Lowe, “Sin from a Queer, Lutheran Perspective,” *Transformative Lutheran Theologies*, 71-86
- Pettinger, “Double Love: Rediscovering the Queerness of Sin and Grace,” *Queer Christianities*, 127-36

By October 11, watch the video posted on Moodle.

By October 12, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.

By October 14, post your follow-up comments about the materials and the other posts.

On October 15, participate in the WebEx session.

Oct. 16 to 22

Reading Week

Week 7 – Oct. 23 to 29

Rainbow Theology

By October 26, read the following text:

- Cheng, *Rainbow Theology*

By October 26, watch the video posted on Moodle.

By October 27, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.

By October 29, submit your follow-up post about the materials and the other posts.

We will discuss this text during the Nov. 5 WebEx session.

Week 8 – Oct. 30 to Nov. 5
(WebEx on Nov. 5)

Queer Intersectionalities

By November 1, read the following texts:

- Cornwall, “Is Queer Theology Inherently White or Western?,” *Controversies*, 72-113
- † Cheng, “Gay Asian Masculinities and Christian Theologies,” *CrossCurrents*, 540-48
- † farajajé-jones, “Holy Fuck,” *Male Lust*, 327-35
- † Townes, “The Dancing Mind: Queer Black Bodies in Academy and Church,” 2011 Castaneda Lecture
- † Villalobos, “Bodies *Del Otro Lado* Finding Life and Hope in the Borderland: Gloria Anzaldúa, the Ethiopian Eunuch of Acts 8:26-40, *y Yo*,” *Bible Trouble*, 191-221.
- † Young, “‘Uses of the Erotic’ for Teaching Queer Studies,” *WSQ* 40:297-301.

By November 1, watch the videos posted on Moodle.

By November 2, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.

By November 4, post your follow-up comments about the materials and the other posts.

On November 5, participate in the WebEx session.

- Week 9 – Nov. 6 to 12
- Online Multimedia Projects
 By November 10, upload your online multimedia project to Moodle.
 By November 12, review the other projects and post your comments on such projects.
- Week 10 – Nov. 13 to 19
- Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Theologies
 By November 16, read the following texts:
- † Althaus-Reid, “Obscenity no. 1: Bi/Christ,” *Indecent Theology*, 112-20
 - † Robinson, “Reading Althaus-Reid: As a Bi Feminist Theo / Methodological Resource,” *Journal of Bisexuality*, 108-20
 - † Reay, “Towards a Transgender Theology: Que(e)rying the Eunuchs,” *Trans/Formations*, 148-67
 - † Tanis, “Trans Christology,” *Trans-Gendered*, 138-43
 - † Partridge, “Skandalon of Conjoinment,” *The Open Body*, 125-49
 - † Cornwall, “The *Kenosis* of Unambiguous Sex in the Body of Christ: Intersex, Theology and Existing ‘for the Other,’” *Theology and Sexuality*, 181-99
- By November 16, watch the video posted on Moodle.
 By November 17, post your answer to the three questions about the materials.
 By November 19, post your follow-up comments about the materials and the other posts.
 We will discuss these texts during the Dec. 4 WebEx session.
- Nov. 20 to 26
- Thanksgiving Recess
- Week 11 – Nov. 27 to Dec. 4
 (WebEx on Dec. 4)
- Queer Theologies of Pleasure
 By November 30, read the following texts:
- † Alpert, “Guilty Pleasures: When Sex Is Good Because It’s Bad,” *Sexuality and the Sacred*, 292-303
 - Laccetti, “Calvary and the Dungeon: Theologizing BDSM,” *Queer Christianities*, 148-59
 - Nealy, “Who Do You Say That I Am?: Transforming Promiscuity and Privilege,” *Queer Christianities*, 160-70
 - † Haldeman, “A Queer Fidelity: Reinventing Christian Marriage,” *Sexuality and the Sacred*, 304-16
 - Petro, “Celibate Politics: Queering the Limits,” *Queer Christianities*, 37-47
 - Creamer, “Disabled People,” *Oxford Handbook*, 676-87
 - † Rubin, “Charmed Circle”
- By November 30, watch the video posted on Moodle.
 By December 1, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.
 By December 3, post your follow-up comments about the materials and the other posts.
 On December 4, participate in the WebEx session.
- Week 12 – Dec. 5 to 11
 (WebEx on Dec. 11)
- Queer Ecotheologies; Queer Interfaith Theologies
 By December 7, read the following texts:
- † Shore-Goss, “Queer and Green: Compassionate Care and Co-Living with Earth”

- † Erickson, “Irreverent Theology: On the Queer Theology of Creation”
- Cornwall, “Should Queer Christian People Stay Christian?,” *Controversies*, 191-223
- † Michaelson, “Toward a Queer Jewish Theology”
- † De Sony, “Prophecy and Masculinities: The Case of the Qur’anic Joseph,” *CrossCurrents*, 529-31
- † Shore-Goss, “Bodhisattva Christianity: A Case of Multiple Religious Belonging,” *Queering Christianity*, 251-69

By December 7, watch the videos posted on Moodle.

By December 8, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.

By December 10, post your follow-up comments about the materials and the other posts.

On December 11, participate in the WebEx session.

Week 13 – Dec. 12 to 17

(In-)Conclusions

By December 14, read the following texts:

- Cornwall, “Other Controversies in Queer Theology,” *Controversies*, 224-50
- Talvacchia, “Disrupting the Theory-Practice Binary,” *Queer Christianities*, 184-94
- † White, “Epilogue: Afterlives of an Invented Past,” *Reforming Sodom*, 171-86
- Lofton, “Everything Queer,” *Queer Christianities*, 195-204

By December 14, view the video posted on Moodle.

By December 15, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.

By December 17, post your follow-up comments about the materials and the other posts.

Dec. 21

Final paper due via email to pcheng@ctsichicago.edu by 5:00 p.m. CT.