

## **TEC 4100: Queer Theologies**

Working Syllabus  
Fall 2016

Required WebEx Sessions: 9/15, 9/29, 10/20, 11/3, 11/17, 12/8  
7:30 to 8:30 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 8:00 p.m. CT on November 23, 2016.
- 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 16, 2016, 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. Please see Appendix A for a list of possible texts. The project is to be posted on Moodle by 8:00 p.m. CT on November 23, 2016.

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 16, 2016.

### 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)
- Pamela R. Lightsey, *Our Lives Matter: A Womanist Queer Theology* (2015)
- 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. The WebEx sessions will be held on Thursday evenings.

Week 1 – Sept. 6 to 8

Introductions; Queer Identities

By September 6, post an introduction of yourself, including your background and why you are taking this course.

By September 7, read the following texts:

- Stuart, “The Theological Study of Sexuality,” *Oxford Handbook*, 18-31
- † UC Davis LGBTQIA Resource Center, “Glossary”
- † Trans Student Educational Resources, “The Gender Unicorn”
- Meyer, “More Than Homophobia,” *Violence Against Queer People*, 17-43

By September 7, watch the videos posted on Moodle.

By September 7, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.

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

We will discuss these texts during the Sept. 15 WebEx session.

Week 2 – Sept. 9 to 15  
(WebEx on Sept. 15)

What Is Queer?; What Is Queer Theology?

By September 11, read the following texts:

- Cheng, “Contributions from Queer Theory,” *Oxford Handbook*, 153-69
- Cornwall, “What Is Queer?,” *Controversies*, 9-42
- † Schneider and Roncolato, “Queer Theologies,” *Religion Compass*, 1-13
- Cornwall, “Is Queer Theology Synonymous with Gay Theology?,” *Controversies*, 43-71

By September 11, watch the videos posted on Moodle.  
By September 12, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.  
By September 14, post your follow-up comments about the materials and the other posts.  
On September 15, participate in the WebEx session.

Week 3 – Sept. 16 to 22

#### *Radical Love*

By September 18, read the following text:

- Cheng, *Radical Love*

By September 18, watch the video posted on Moodle.

By September 19, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.

By September 21, post your follow-up comments about the materials and the other posts.

We will discuss this text during the Sept. 29 WebEx session.

Week 4 – Sept. 23 to Sept. 29  
(WebEx on Sept. 29)

#### Queering Scripture and Hermeneutics

By September 25, read the following texts:

- Cornwall, “Is the Bible Queer?,” *Controversies*, 114-46
- Jennings, “Same-Sex Relations in the Biblical World,” *Oxford Handbook*, 206-21
- † 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 25, watch the videos posted on Moodle.

By September 26, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.

By September 28, post your follow-up comments about the materials and the other posts.

On September 29, participate in the WebEx session.

Week 5 – Sept. 30 to Oct. 6

#### *From Sin to Amazing Grace*

By October 2, read the following texts:

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

By October 2, listen to the audio recording posted on Moodle.

By October 3, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.

By October 5, post your follow-up comments about the materials and the other posts.

We will discuss this text during the Oct. 20 WebEx session.

Oct. 10 to 14

#### Reading Week

Week 6 – Oct. 15 to 20  
(WebEx on Oct. 20)

#### Queering Doctrine

By October 17, 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

By October 17, watch the video posted on Moodle.

By October 18, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.

By October 19, post your follow-up comments about the materials and the other posts.

On October 20, participate in the WebEx session.

Week 7 – Oct. 21 to 27

#### *Rainbow Theology*

By October 23, read the following texts:

- Cheng, *Rainbow Theology*
- † Cheng, “Gay Asian Masculinities and Christian Theologies,” *CrossCurrents*, 540-48

By October 23, watch the video posted on Moodle.

By October 24, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.

By October 26, submit your follow-up post about the materials and the other posts.

We will discuss this text during the Nov. 3 WebEx session.

Week 8 – Oct. 28 to Nov. 3  
(WebEx on Nov. 3)

#### Queer Intersectionalities

By October 30, read the following texts:

- Lightsey, *Our Lives Matter*
- Cornwall, “Is Queer Theology Inherently White or Western?,” *Controversies*, 72-113
- † farajajé-jones, “Holy Fuck,” *Male Lust*, 327-35
- † Villalobos, “Bodies *Del Otro Lado* Finding Life and Hope in the Borderland: Gloria Anzaldúa, the <sup>[1]</sup>Ethiopian Eunuch of Acts 8:26-40, *y Yo*,” *Bible Trouble*, 191-221.

By October 30, watch the videos posted on Moodle.

By October 31, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.

By November 2, post your follow-up comments about the materials and the other posts.

On November 3, participate in the WebEx session.

Week 9 – Nov. 4 to 10

#### Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Theologies

By November 6, 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
- † 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 6, watch the video posted on Moodle.

By November 7, post your answer to the three questions about the

materials.

By November 9, post your follow-up comments about the materials and the other posts.

We will discuss these texts during the Dec. 4 WebEx session.

Week 10 – Nov. 11 to 17  
(WebEx on Nov. 17)

#### Queer Theologies of Pleasure

By November 13, read the following texts:

- 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 13, watch the video posted on Moodle.

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

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

On November 17, participate in the WebEx session.

Week 11 – Nov. 18 to 23

#### Online Multimedia Projects

By November 23, upload your online multimedia project to Moodle.

By November 27, review the other projects and post your comments on such projects.

Nov. 24 to 25

#### Thanksgiving Recess

Week 12 – Nov. 26 to Dec. 1

#### Queer Ecotheologies; Queer Interfaith Theologies

By November 28, 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
- † Watts Belser, “Brides and Blemishes: Queering Women’s Disability in Rabbinic Marriage Law”
- † 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 November 28, watch the videos posted on Moodle.

By November 29, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.

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

We will discuss these texts during the Dec. 8 WebEx session.

Week 13 – Dec. 2 to 8  
(WebEx on Dec. 8)

(In-)Conclusions

By December 4, read the following texts:

- Cornwall, “Other Controversies in Queer Theology,” *Controversies*, 224-50
- Talvacchia, “Disrupting the Theory-Practice Binary,” *Queer Christianities*, 184-94
- Lofton, “Everything Queer,” *Queer Christianities*, 195-204

By December 4, view the video posted on Moodle.

By December 5, post your answers to the three questions about the materials.

By December 7, post your follow-up comments about the materials and the other posts.

On December 8, participate in the WebEx session.

Dec. 16

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

## Appendix A

### Possible Texts for Multimedia Project

- Christina Beardsley and Michelle O'Brien, eds., *This Is My Body: Hearing the Theology of Transgender Christians* (2016)
- Kent L. Brintnall, *Ecce Homo: The Male-Body-in-Pain as Redemptive Figure* (2012)
- Andy Buechel, *That We Might Become God: The Queerness of Creedal Christianity* (2015)
- Megan K. DeFranza, *Sex Difference in Christian Theology: Male, Female, and Intersex in the Image of God* (2015)
- Elizabeth M. Edman, *Queer Virtue: What LGBTQ People Know About Life and Love and How It Can Revitalize Christianity* (2016)
- Teresa J. Hornsby and Deryn Guest, *Transgender, Intersex, and Biblical Interpretation* (2016)
- Dominic Janes, *Visions of Queer Martyrdom from John Henry Newman to Derek Jarman* (2015)
- Richard W. McCarty, *Sexual Virtue: An Approach to Contemporary Christian Ethics* (2015)
- Anthony M. Petro, *After the Wrath of God: AIDS, Sexuality, and American Religion* (2015)
- Linn Marie Tonstad, *God and Difference: The Trinity, Sexuality, and the Transformation of Finitude* (2016)
- Heather Rachelle White, *Reforming Sodom: Protestants and the Rise of Gay Rights* (2015)
- Thelathia Nikki Young, *Black Queer Ethics, Family, and Philosophical Imagination* (2016)