

## **T 2010: Contemporary Christologies**

Working Syllabus  
Episcopal Divinity School, June Term 2014  
Mondays through Fridays, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. ET  
Sherrill 250

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### **Course Description**

Who is Jesus Christ for us today? This course will explore a number of contextual christologies, including the feminist Christ, the Black Christ, the womanist Christ, the Asian Christ, the African Christ, the Latin American Christ, the Latin@ Christ, the Native American Christ, the queer Christ, the intersex Christ, the disabled Christ, the ecological Christ, and the animal Christ. This course will also explore issues of religious pluralism, as well as the intersections of critical theory with contemporary christological reflections.

### **Specific Learning Goals**

- Obtain a general familiarity with contemporary christologies from various global contexts.
- Engage with embodied categories such as race, gender, class, sexuality, ability, and national origin with respect to theological reflections on the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- Read and critically assess primary and secondary theological texts from a variety of theological voices.
- Construct a christology from one's own social location.
- Show improvement in written and oral communications, including facilitation and teaching skills.
- This course will honor multicultural worldviews, respect the contributions by multiple voices, and be taught with a commitment to anti-racism.

### **Course Requirements**

This course will have both lecture and discussion components. All students are expected to come prepared to participate actively in class discussions and in daily online postings. Please note that this syllabus is a work-in-progress, and the content of the course may change during the term. Any student who requires reasonable accommodation with respect to the course requirements as a

result of disability must notify the instructor and academic dean, and also provide written documentation of such disability. Specific requirements for full course credit include:

- 30% Attendance and active participation in class;
- 30% Daily online posts on SurveyMonkey no later than 8:00 p.m. of the night before each class meeting;
- 10% In-class creative presentation; and
- 30% Constructive christological paper, 10-12 pages (short version of 2-3 pages presented in class on June 20, 2014; full paper due via email by Saturday, August 30, 2014, at 5:00 p.m. ET).

### **Daily Posts**

By 8:00 p.m. of the night before each class meeting, post one paragraph for each of the following three questions on SurveyMonkey. Please include citations to page numbers from the readings, and be sure that you answer all three questions.

- What in the readings surprised and/or excited you the most and why?
- What in the readings troubled and/or upset you the most and why?
- What in the readings would you like covered in class 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 for your records. The cumulative length of all your daily posts should equal approximately 12-15 double-spaced pages.

### **In-Class Creative Presentation**

Each student will make a presentation to the class of no more than five minutes about a given day's readings. A sign-up sheet for topics will be circulated on the first day of class. Creativity is highly encouraged, whether it is the use of handouts, liturgy, art, music, video, dance, and/or other forms of media.

### **Constructive Christological Paper**

For your constructive christological paper, you are asked to write a 10-12 page essay in response to Jesus Christ's question in Mark 8:29 ("Who do you say I am?"). That is, construct a christology from your own social location and enter into dialogue with at least two of the theologians assigned for this term. You will present a short version of your paper (2-3 pages) at the last class on June 20, 2014. The final paper is due via email to [pcheng@eds.edu](mailto:pcheng@eds.edu) by Saturday, August 30, 2014, at 5:00 p.m. ET. Any requests for extensions must be directed to the Registrar at [ccull@eds.edu](mailto:ccull@eds.edu). More information about this paper will be provided during class.

### **Note for D.Min. and Other Advanced Students**

Course work for all Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) students must demonstrate an advanced understanding of the nature and purposes of ministry, enhanced competencies in pastoral analysis

and ministerial skills, and the integration of these dimensions into the theologically reflective practice of ministry. D.Min. students are encouraged to focus their course work on a particular subject germane to their anticipated thesis/project. D.Min. students are expected to submit a significant research paper of at least 20 pages on a topic relating to their program goals in lieu of the constructive christological paper. Please discuss the topic of your paper in advance with the instructor.

### **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 teaching presentation, short paper, and final exam. No unexcused absences.

B level – Submits work on time; shows enthusiasm in class session and online posts; demonstrates cogent thinking in the teaching presentation, short paper, and final exam. No more than one unexcused absence.

C level – Does not submit work on time; shows minimal engagement with the class sessions, online posts, teaching presentation, short paper, and/or final exam; or more than one unexcused absence.

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

### **Pass/Fail Option**

Students must let the instructor know that they are electing this option by the end of class on Tuesday, June 10. The grading will be as follows:

- Pass: B or better (required of D.Min. students)
- Marginal Pass: B-
- Fail: Lower than B-

### **Extensions**

Students who cannot finish the course requirements by August 30 must send a petition for an extension to Cecelia Cull in the Registrar's Office. She can be reached via email at [ccull@eds.edu](mailto:ccull@eds.edu).

### **Required Texts**

The following required texts may be purchased online or at the Harvard Coop. These texts are also available on reserve at the Sherrill Library.

- Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Christology: A Global Introduction* (2003) [hereinafter Kärkkäinen]

- Patrick S. Cheng, *From Sin to Amazing Grace: Discovering the Queer Christ* (2012) [hereinafter *From Sin to Amazing Grace*]

## **Other Texts**

The other required readings for the course will be available in PDF format through Canvas. Such readings are marked with “†” in the schedule below.

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## **Daily Class Schedule**

Classes will meet on the days specified below from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. ET.

June 9 – Day 1              Introduction; History of Christology

**Before our first class meeting, please: (1) read these materials; (2) post a brief introduction of yourself on Canvas; and (3) submit your first daily post on SurveyMonkey no later than 8:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 8th.**

- Mark 8:27-29 †
- Kärkkäinen, “The Many Faces of Christ in the Bible,” 19-29
- Kärkkäinen, “Early Christological Disputes” and “From the Council of Nicea (325) to Chalcedon (451),” 61-78
- Kärkkäinen, “The Liberal Picture of Christ” and “The Collapse of the Original Quest,” 95-108
- Kärkkäinen, “Karl Barth: Dialectical Christology” and “Karl Rahner: Transcendental Christology,” 111-18, 140-46

June 10 – Day 2              Christology and Religious Pluralism; Feminist Christ

- John Hick, “General Introduction: Christology in an Age of Religious Pluralism” (1981), 4-9 †
- Paul F. Knitter, “Theocentric Christology” (1983), 130-49 †
- John B. Cobb, “Being Transformationist in a Pluralistic World” (1994), 748-51 †
- Kärkkäinen, “Feminist Christology,” 196-203
- Elizabeth A. Johnson, “Feminist Christology,” in *Consider Jesus: Waves of Renewal in Christology* (1990), 97-113 †
- Lisa Isherwood, “The Feminist Future: Jesus Christ or Sophia’s Empowered Daughters?,” in *Introducing Feminist Christologies* (2002), 118-32 †

June 11 – Day 3              Black Christ; Womanist Christ; Black Feminist Christ

- Kärkkäinen, “Black Christology,” 204-11

- James H. Cone, “Jesus Christ in Black Theology,” in *A Black Theology of Liberation* (1970), 119-24 †
- James H. Cone, “Legacies of the Cross and the Lynching Tree,” in *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (2011), 152-66 †
- Kelly Brown Douglas, “A Womanist Approach to the Black Christ,” in *The Black Christ* (1994), 97-117 †
- Traci C. West, “When a White Man-God Is the Truth and the Way for Black Christians,” in *Christology and Whiteness: What Would Jesus Do?* (2012), 114-27 †

June 12 – Day 4

Asian Christ; Asian Feminist Christ; African Christ; African Feminist Christ; Postcolonial Christ

- Kärkkäinen, “Christology in Asia: Search for Meaning,” 265-78
- Chung Hyun Kyung, “Who Is Jesus for Asian Women?,” in *Struggle to Be the Sun Again: Introducing Asian Women’s Theology* (1990), 53-73 †
- Kärkkäinen, “Christology in Africa: Search for Power,” 245-55
- Mercy Amba Oduyoye, “Jesus Christ,” in *Hope Abundant: Third World and Indigenous Women’s Theology* (2010), 167-85 †
- Kwok Pui Lan, “Engendering Christ: Who Do You Say That I Am?,” in *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (2005), 168-85 †

June 13 – Day 5

Latin American Christ; Latin@ Christ

- Kärkkäinen, “Christology in Latin America: Search for Freedom,” 222-36
- Jon Sobrino, “Jesus of Galilee from the Salvadoran Context: Compassion, Hope, and Following the Cross” (2009), 442-49 †
- Luis Pedraja, “And the Verb Became Flesh,” in *Jesus Is My Uncle: Christology from a Hispanic Perspective* (1999), 60-84 †
- Ada María Isasi-Díaz, “Identificate con Nosotras: A Mujerista Christological Understanding,” in *Jesus in the Hispanic Community: Images of Christ from Theology to Popular Religion* (2010), 38-57 †

June 16 – Day 6

Native American Christ; Aboriginal Christ; Queer Christ

- Achiel Peelman, “The Indian Road to Salvation” (Part I) in *Christ Is a Native American* (1995), 163-79 †
- Lee Miena Skye, “Australian Aboriginal Women’s Christologies,” in *Hope Abundant: Third World and Indigenous Women’s Theology* (2010), 194-202 †

- Patrick S. Cheng, “Jesus Christ: Embodiment of Radical Love,” in *Radical Love: An Introduction to Queer Theology* (2011), 78-86 †
- *From Sin to Amazing Grace*, 69-100

June 17 – Day 7                    Queer Christ; Trans\* Christ; Intersex Christ

- *From Sin to Amazing Grace*, 101-49
- Justin Edward Tanis, “Trans Christology,” in *Trans-Gendered: Theology, Ministry, and Communities of Faith* (2003), 138-43 †
- Susannah Cornwall, “The *Kenosis* of Unambiguous Sex in the Body of Christ: Intersex, Theology and Existing ‘for the Other,’” *Theology & Sexuality* (2008), 181-99 †

June 18 – Day 8                    Disabled Christ

- Nancy L. Eiseland, “The Disabled God” and “Sacramental Bodies,” in *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability* (1994), 89-119 †
- Kimberly Anne Willis, “Claiming the ‘Fearsome Possibility’: Towards a Contextual Christology of Disability,” in *Gender, Ethnicity & Religion: Views from the Other Side* (2002), 215-29 †
- Thomas E. Reynolds, “Reconsidering Redemption in Jesus Christ,” in *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality* (2008), 197-213 †

June 19 – Day 9                    Ecological Christ; Animal Christ

- Denis Edwards, “Jesus – Wisdom and Ecology,” *Jesus, The Wisdom of God: An Ecological Theology* (1995), 69-87 †
- Stephen H. Webb, “Jesus Christ and the Future of Animals” and “Epilogue: God’s Nature as the Future of the World,” in *On God and Dogs: A Christian Theology of Compassion for Animals* (1998), 155-84 †
- Andrew Linzey, “Jesus and Animals: A Different Perspective,” in *Creatures of the Same God: Explorations in Animal Theology* (2009), 59-71 †

June 20 – Day 10                    In-Class Presentation of Short Version Papers

August 30                            **Constructive christological paper (10-12 pages) due by 5:00 p.m. ET in Word format via email to pcheng@eds.edu.**