

## **TR 616 - The Liberation Theology of Jon Sobrino**

United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities

Spring, 2010

Syllabus

**Instructor: Chris smith**

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### **Schedule:**

**Febuary12-12 – Fridays 6:00 – 9:00**

**Saturdays – 9:00 – 12:00 and 1:15 – 4:00**

**March 5- 6**

**April 16-17**

**May 14-15**

### **Course Description**

Jesuit theologian Jon Sobrino has spent more than 50 years working in El Salvador. He is one of the original proponents of liberation theology, and he has become a world renowned teacher and scholar in the field of Latin American liberation theology. This course will explore the major themes and assertions of Sobrino's theological thought, and will examine the ethical implications of his theological system for addressing the particular suffering of the poor in El Salvador and in other places in our world. While the course will look at his entire theological system, there will be particular attention given to his Christology, his ecclesiology, his theology of God, his theology of the cross, his theology of resurrection, and his theology of martyrdom.

The course fulfills the curricular requirement for a course in "Systems of Theological Thought."

### **Course Objectives:**

1. That each student will be able to articulate in class conversations and as a part of the written papers for the course, a basic understanding of the history of El Salvador that is the social, political, economic, and religious context for Sobrino's theology, particularly a clear understanding of the civil war in El Salvador from 1972 – 1992. (assessed on the basis of the written papers for the course, course conversations, and moodle postings)

2. That each student will be able to articulate in written form the basic assertions and beliefs of Jon Sobrino's theological system. (assessed primarily from the four papers that will focus on key aspects of Sobrino's theology, and assessed in part on small group participation and written responses on the moodle portion of the class)
3. That each student will be able to express to the entire class the major theological constructions of Sobrino's theological thought through written theological reflection, visual art, poetry, music, and story. (assessed on the basis of 1 hour and 15 minute presentations to the class by teams of 4-5 people, followed by 1 hour of class discussion facilitated by those same teams)
4. That each student will be able to articulate and write about, some of the distinct aspects of Latin American Liberation Theology. (assessed on the basis of class discussions, papers, moodle postings that will be directly related to Latin American Liberation Theology)

### Required Books

1. Jon Sobrino, *Spirituality and Liberation: Toward Political Holiness* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988). ISBN – 0-88344-617-0
2. Jon Sobrino, *The Principle of Mercy: Taking the Crucified People from the Cross* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994) ISBN – 0-88344-986-2
3. Jon Sobrino, *No Salvation Outside The Poor: Prophetic-Utopian Essays* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2008). ISBN – 13:978-1-57075-752-5
4. Jon Sobrino, *Archbishop Romero: Memories and Reflections* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1990). ISBN – 0-88344-667-7
5. Jon Sobrino, *Witnesses to the Kingdom: Martyrs of El Salvador and the Crucified People* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2003). ISBN – 1-57075-468-3
6. Jon Sobrino, *Where Is God? Earthquake, Terrorism, Barbarity, and Hope* (Maryknoll: Orbis books, 2004). ISBN – 1-57075-566-3

**Four groups of the class will each choose one of these books as the book they will read together and then make a major class presentation about the theological tenets of the book, and facilitate a total class discussion after the presentation.**

1. Stephen J. Pope, editor. *Hope & Solidarity: Jon Sobrino's Challenge To Christian Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2008).
2. Jon Sobrino, *Jesus The Liberator: A Historical-Theological View* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993). ISBN – 0-88344-930-7
3. Jon Sobrino, *Christ The Liberator: A Historical-Theological View* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2001). ISBN – 1-57075-372-5
4. Jon Sobrino, *The True Church And the Poor* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1984). ISBN – 0-88344-513-1

### **Recommended Books**

1. Jon Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1985).
2. Jon Sobrino and Juan Hernandez Pico, *Theology Of Christian Solidarity* (Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1985).

### **Course Requirements:**

1. Opening worship – team of 3 – required, but not evaluated
2. Major presentation about one of Sobrino's major theological texts – with a team of colleagues – All materials submitted in a way that someone else could lead the session with a group of lay people or clergy in a church context  
**(all team members need to write a four page paper on the book the team is presenting) 40% of total evaluation**
3. Three additional 4 page papers based on three different books by Sobrino articulating, exploring, and critically examining the theological assumptions and assertions he makes in each of the three books  
**30% of total evaluation**
4. Two one page responses to two additional books posted on moodle for discussion by small groups, and the depth and clarity of your moodle postings in response to assigned questions  
**10% of total evaluation**
5. Engagement and participation in all class discussions, learning experiences, questions raised, de-constructive and re-constructive theological work expressed, and a willingness to share theological

perspectives even if they are new, tentative, not completely thought out, or in process

**15% of total evaluation**

6. One 4 page resource paper of poetry and readings related to the theology of one of Sobrino's books

**Class Schedule:**

**February 12-13**

Friday:

6:00 – 6:20 Worship - Chris  
 6:20 – 9:00  
 Introductions – Class members  
 An Introduction of Father Jon Sobrino  
 Walk Through the Syllabus  
 Latin American Liberation Theology????

12:00 – 1:15 Lunch

Saturday:

9:00 – 12:00 (including break)  
 El Salvador: Understanding the context in which  
 Father Jon Sobrino has written his theology  
 Guests: Ann Butwell, Bill Dexheimer Pharris, John Wright  
**Music from the Salvadoran Mass – Liberation theology, history,  
 and stories**

12:00 – 1:15 Lunch

1:15 – 4:00 Movie: Voces Inocentes  
 Discussion (including break)

**Work between February 14 – March 4**

**Friday, February 19 – **Written paper** - Four page paper due in my school mailbox or sent to my school email, and please post your paper on Moodle so that your small group can read it. All members of small group read all papers of that group**

**Reading for the Paper:** All class members read *Witnesses to the Kingdom - Sobrino's anthropology (the nature of the human), theology of liberation/salvation, and his theology of martyrdom*

Turn in your **four page reflection paper** on this book guided by these questions:

- What are the most foundational theological beliefs and assertions of Sobrino's overarching theology? Address the theology of "facing reality," and martyrdom explicitly.
- Are there ideas and/or issues that he raises for which you have a social and theological critique?
- From what you can gather from this first volume what are the distinct aspects of liberation theology that has been, and continues to be, done in El Salvador?
- Analyze and reflect on the relationship of liberation and martyrdom so clearly put forth in the second part of the book.

**February 26 – Reading and Moodle Posting - Teams 2, 3, and 4**

**Reading for the Moodle post and conversation:** *Archbishop Romero: Memories and Reflections* - **Sobrino's theology of Prophetic Ministry**

I will post guiding questions about *Archbishop Romero: Memories and Reflections* on the small group forum section by **February 19**. Please read the book and post your response to the questions by **February 26**. **Your posting should be equivalent to a single page, double spaced paper**. Then between February 26 and March 5 make at least one substantive response to the on-going conversation about this book in your small group

**Team One – Do not read or post about Archbishop Romero - work on class presentation**

**In preparation for our week-end class, March 5-6**

**TEAM ONE Reading:** *The True Church And the Poor* – **Sobrino's Ecclesiology**

**TEAM ONE Preparation:** The first team of colleagues will prepare to make a major class presentation on Sobrino's *The True Church and the*

*Poor*. The team will share written theological reflection, visual art, poetry, music, story, sermon reflections, biblical enactment, or whatever other creative means that you choose, to open up Sobrino's basic ecclesiology reflected throughout this book - **1:15 – 2:30 presentation – followed by an hour of open discussion led by the same group from 2:45 – 3:45**

All materials submitted in a way that someone else could lead this session with a group of lay people or clergy in a church context

### **In preparation for our week-end class, March 5-6**

Everyone bring a copy of your paper on *Witnesses to the Kingdom*, and **teams 2, 3, and 4** bring your moodle postings in response to *Archbishop Romero*, and **two theological questions, one from each of the books**, that each one of you will pose to the whole class when we gather.

### **In preparation for our week-end class, March 5-6**

**Everyone read these pieces written by Duane Krohnke:**

El Salvador's Truth Commission

Conversation with Jon Sobrino (April 25, 1989)

Oscar Romero: A Saint for All Seasons and All People

### **March 5-6**

Friday:

6:00 – 6:20 Worship – Members of the class

6:20 – 6:30 Practical things and announcements

6:30 – 7:30 Small groups meet to discuss *Witnesses To The Kingdom* and *Romero*

**Team 1: Discuss The Church and the Poor as your second book**

7:30 - 7:50 Break

7:50 – 9:15 Total class discussion based on the two theological questions class members have brought to class: one significant theological question related to *Witnesses to the Kingdom*, and one significant theological question related to *Archbishop Romero*

Saturday:

9:00 – 9:20 Worship – Members of the class

9:20 – 9:50 Completing the discussion about the questions each person brought from the readings

9:50 – 10:10 Break

10:10 – 12:00 Guest Speaker: Duane Krohnke  
Discussion

Duane is a lawyer and former trustee of United, who has had a long term commitment to El Salvador and who has written an important paper about The Truth Commission in El Salvador

12:00 – 1:15 Lunch

1:15 – 2:30 **TEAM ONE** presentation on *The True Church and the Poor* opening up **Sobrino's ecclesiology**

2:30 – 2:45 Break

2:45 – 3:45 Team leads total class in a discussion about this book  
**Remember that only your group members have read this book**

3:45 – 4:00 Reminders, practical details, announcements, etc.

### **Work Between March 7 – April 15**

**Friday, March 12 – Written paper - Four page paper due in my school mailbox or sent to my school email and post your paper on moodle for your small group members to see. All members of small group read all papers of that group**

**Reading for the Paper** – All class members read *The Principle of Mercy: Taking the Crucified People from the Cross* – **Sobrino's theology of crucifixion, sin, mercy, forgiveness, solidarity**

Turn in a **four page reflection paper** on this book guided by these questions:

- How do people who are not poor and oppressed “wake up from the sleep of inhumanity?” Is it possible, and how can being “awake” to the crucified people of this world be sustained?
- What is the nature of mercy for Sobrino?
- What is the nature of sin and forgiveness for Sobrino?
- On page 33 Sobrino is talking about “determining the place of theology.” Please directly address his challenge and his assertions.

“The option is, above all, a creaturely option that puts theology squarely in contact with the created order. It is an option that every human being must make, whether Christian or religious or nonreligious. It is an option that cuts across and divides humanity into two groups: those whose feelings are lacerated by the sufferings we have described and those whose feelings are untouched.”

“It is an option that sees all reality from a preferential perspective—that sees suffering from the partiality of those who suffer and not from the (apparently) universal perspective of the metaphysical suffering characterizing all finite being.” (page 33, *The Principle of Mercy*)

**Friday, April 2 – Reading and Moodle Posting - Teams One and Four**  
**Reading for the Moodle posting and and moodle conversation:**  
*Spirituality of Liberation: Toward Political Holiness- **Sobrinó's theology of Liberation Spirituality***

I will post guiding questions about *Spirituality of Liberation* on the small group forum section by **Friday, March 19**. Please read the book and post your response to the questions by **Friday, April 2**. **Your posting should be equivalent to a single page, double spaced paper**. Then between April 2 and April 9 make at least one substantive response to the on-going conversation about this book in your small group

**TEAM TWO and TEAM THREE do not read or post about *Spirituality of Liberation* – Work on class presentation**

**TEAM TWO Reading:** *Jesus the Liberator* – **Sobrinó's theology of crucifixion and his christology**

**TEAM TWO Preparation:** This second team of colleagues will prepare make a major class presentation on Sobrinó's *Jesus the Liberator*. The team will share written theological reflections, visual art, poetry, music, story, sermon reflections, biblical enactment, or whatever other creative means that you choose to open up Sobrinó's Christology and his theology of crucifixion which is reflected throughout this book – **1:15 – 2:30 – Presentation, followed by an hour of open discussion in the whole class led by TEAM TWO from 2:45 – 3:45**

All materials submitted in a way that someone else could lead this Session with a group of lay people or clergy in the church context

**TEAM THREE Reading:** *Christ the Liberator* – **Sobrinó's christology, his theology of resurrection, and reflections on his theology of God**

**TEAM THREE Preparation:** This third team of colleagues will prepare to make a major class presentation on Sobrinó's *Christ the Liberator*. The team will share written theological reflections, visual art, poetry, music, story, sermon reflections, biblical enactment, or whatever other creative means that you choose to open up Sobrinó's christology, his theology of resurrection and reflections on his theology of God which is reflected throughout this book – **1:15 – 2:30 – Presentation, followed by an hour of open discussion in the whole class led by TEAM THREE from 2:45 – 3:45**

All materials submitted in a way that someone else could lead this Session with a group of lay people or clergy in the church context

**In preparation for our week-end class, April 16-17**

Everyone bring your paper on *The Principle of Mercy* and a key theological question you want to pose to the class on Friday night, and **Teams one and four** bring your moodle postings about *Spirituality of Liberation* and bring a theological question from *Spirituality of Liberation* as well

### April 16-17

Friday:

- 6:00 – 6:20 Worship – Members of the class  
 6:20 – 6:30 Practical things and announcements  
 6:30 – 7:30 Small groups meet to discuss *The Principle of Mercy* (everyone has read this book)  
**Then**  
**Teams One and Four:** Also discuss *Spirituality of Liberation* more fully and any additional thoughts about Papers and moodle postings  
**And**  
**Team Two:** Also discusses *Jesus the Liberator*  
**And**  
**Team Three:** Also discusses Christ The Liberator
- 7:30 - 7:50 Break  
 7:50 – 9:15 Total class discussion based on the two theological questions class members have brought to class: one significant theological question related to *The Principle of Mercy* and one theological question related to *Spirituality of Liberation: Toward Political Holiness*
- 12:00 – 1:15 Lunch

Saturday:

- 9:00 – 9:20 Worship – Members of the class  
 9:20 – 9:30 Completing the discussion about the questions each person brought from the readings  
 9:30 – 10:45 **TEAM TWO** presentation on *Jesus the Liberator* opening up **Sobrino's theology of crucifixion and his christology**
- 10:45 – 11:00 Break
- 11:00 – 12:00 Team leads class in a discussion about this book

**Remember that only your group members have read this book**

12:00 – 1:15 Lunch

1:15 – 2:30 **TEAM THREE** presentation on *Christ the Liberator* opening up **Sobrino's christology, resurrection, and theology of God**

2:30 – 2:45 Break

2:45 – 3:45 Team leads total class in a discussion about this book  
**Remember that only your group members have read this book**

3:45 – 4:00 Reminders, practical details, announcements, etc.

**Work Between April 18 – May 13**

**Friday, April 23 – Written paper - Four page paper due in my school mailbox or sent to my school email, and please post your paper on Moodle so that your small group can read it. All members of small group read all papers of that group**

**Reading for the Paper:** All class members read *No Salvation Outside The Poor* - **Sobrino's theology of salvation, his theology of the kingdom or reign of God, and his theology of hope**

Turn in your **four page reflection paper** on this book guided by these questions:

- What are the most foundational theological beliefs and assertions of Sobrino's overarching theology? Address the theology of "facing reality," and martyrdom explicitly.
- Are there ideas and/or issues that he raises for which you have a social and/or theological critique?
- From what you can gather from this first volume what are the distinct aspects of liberation theology that has been, and continues to be, done in El Salvador?

- Analyze and reflect on the relationship of liberation and martyrdom so clearly put forth in the second part of the book.

### **April 30 – Reading and Moodle Posting – Teams 1, 2, and 3**

**Reading for the Moodle post and conversation:** *Where Is God?*

I will post guiding questions about *Where Is God?* on the small group forum section by **April 23**. Please read the book and post your response to the questions by **April 30**. **Your posting should be equivalent to a single page, double spaced paper.** Then between April 30 and May 7 make at least one substantive response to the on-going conversation about this book in your small group

**TEAM FOUR do not read or post about *Where Is God?* – work on class presentation**

### **In preparation for our week-end class, May 14-15**

**TEAM FOUR Reading:** *Hope and Solidarity* – **Many voices lifting up Sobrino's theology of solidarity, justice, and hope**

**TEAM FOUR Preparation:** This fourth team of colleagues will prepare to make a major class presentation on *Hope & Solidarity*. The team will share written theological reflection, visual art, poetry, music, story, sermon reflections, biblical enactment, or whatever other creative means that you choose, to open up Sobrino's basic ecclesiology reflected throughout this book - **1:15 – 2:30 – followed by an hour of open discussion led by the same group from 2:45 – 3:45**

All materials submitted in a way that someone else could lead this session with a group of lay people in a church context

### **In preparation for our week-end class, May 14-15**

All members of the class bring a copy of your paper on *No Salvation Outside the Poor*, and teams one, two, and three your moodle postings in response to *Where Is God?*, and **two theological questions, one from each of the books**, that each one of you will pose to the whole class when we gather.

### **May 14-15**

## Friday:

- 6:00 – 6:20 Worship  
 6:20 – 6:30 Announcements and Practical things  
 6:30 – 7:30 Small groups meet to discuss further *No Salvation Outside the Poor*, and *Where Is God?*  
**TEAM FOUR** – Will discuss *Hope and Solidarity* as your second book  
 7:30 – 7:50 Break  
 7:50 – 9:15 Total class discussion based on the two theological questions that people brought related to *No Salvation Outside the Poor*, and *Where Is God?*

## Saturday:

- 9:00 – 9:20 Worship  
 9:20 – 10:35 **TEAM FOUR** presentation on *Hope & Solidarity* opening up **Sobrino's theology of solidarity, justice, and hope**  
 10:35 – 10:55 Break  
 11:00 – 12:00 Team leads total class in a discussion about this book
- 12:00 – 1:15 Lunch
- 1:15 – 2:15 Whole class discussion
- 2:15 – 2:45 Open Invitation for each person to speak
- 2:45 – 3:05 Break
- 3:05 -3:25 Course Evaluations
- 3:25 – 4:00 Ritual of Solidarity and Hope

## TR 616: The Liberation Theology of Jon Sobrino

### Teams

#### One

1. Richard Pemberton
2. Jayneann Gagner
3. Shannon Pascual
4. Shel Boese
5. Bob Caruso

#### Two

1. Jackie Falk
2. Amanda Hunter
3. Donna Olsen
4. Jeff Pope

#### Three

1. Matt Hunter
2. Donna Stucky
3. Joan Lucas
4. Marcia Heggen
5. Tim Mann

#### Four

1. Jeff Reed
2. Diane Light
3. Cyndi Bradbury
4. Shelley Lyksett

TR 616: The Liberation Theology of Jon Sobrino

When Written/ Oral Work Is Due

February 13 – March 5

**Team One**

1. Friday, February 19 – 4 page paper on *Witnesses to the Kingdom*
2. Rest of the remaining time until class – Work on major team presentation on *The True Church And The Poor* – Given on Saturday, March 6  
(included in your work that is handed in is a 4 page paper from each team member about this book)

**Bring copies of all written work to class on March 5 - 6**

March 6 – April 16

1. Friday, March 12 – 4 page paper on *The Principle of Mercy*
2. Friday, April 2 - 1 page Moodle post in response to posted questions about *Spirituality of Liberation*
3. Between April 3 and April 9 – One moodle response to the moodle conversation of your team about *Spirituality of Liberation*
4. Due by April 15 - Creation of one major theological question about *The Principle Of Mercy* and one major theological question about *Spirituality of Liberation*
5. Friday, April 15 – Four pages of poetry and readings related to *Archbishop Romero*

**Bring copies of all written work to class on April 16 - 17**

April 17 – May 14

1. Friday, April 23 – 4 page paper on *No Salvation Outside The Poor*
2. Friday, April 30 - 1 page Moodle post in response to posted questions about *Where Is God?*
3. Between April 30 and May 7 – One moodle response to the moodle conversation of your team about *Where is God?*
4. Due by May 14 - Creation of one major theological question about *No Salvation Outside The Poor* and one major theological question about *Where Is God?*

**Bring copies of all written work to class on May 14 - 15**

When Written/ Oral Work Is Due

**Team Two**

February 13 – March 5

1. Friday, February 19 – 4 page paper on *Witnesses to the Kingdom*
2. Friday, February 26 - 1 page Moodle post in response to posted questions about *Archbishop Romero*
3. Between February 26 and March 5 – One moodle response to the moodle conversation of your team about *Archbishop Romero*
4. Due by March 5 - Creation of one major theological question about *Witnesses to The Kingdom* and one major theological question about *Archbishop Romero*

**Bring copies of all written work to class on March 5-6**

March 6 – April 16

1. Friday, March 12 – 4 page paper on *The Principle of Mercy*
2. Rest of the remaining time until class – work on major presentation on *Jesus the Liberator* - Given on Saturday, April 17 (included in your work that is handed in is a 4 page paper from each team member about this book)
3. Friday, April 16 – 4 pages of poetry and readings related to *Spirituality of Liberation*

**Bring copies of all written work to class on April 16 - 17**

April 17 – May 14

1. Friday, April 23 – 4 page paper on *No Salvation Outside The Poor*
2. Friday, April 30 - 1 page Moodle post in response to posted questions about *Where Is God?*
3. Between April 30 and May 7 – One moodle response to the moodle conversation of your team about *Where Is God?*
4. Due by May 14 - Creation of one major theological question about *No Salvation Outside The Poor* and one major theological question about *Where is God?*

**Bring copies of all written work to class on May 14 - 15**

When Written/Oral Work is Due

February 13 – March 5

**Team Three**

1. Friday, February 19 – 4 page paper on *Witnesses to the Kingdom*

1. Friday, February 19 – 4 page paper on *Witnesses to the Kingdom*
2. Friday, February 26 - 1 page Moodle post in response to posted questions about *Archbishop Romero*
3. Between February 26 and March 5 – One moodle response to the moodle conversation of your team about *Archbishop Romero*
4. Due by March 5 –Creation of one major theological question about *Witnesses to The Kingdom* and one major theological question about *Archbishop Romero*

**Bring copies of all written work to class on March 5-6**

March 6 – April 16

1. Friday, March 12 – 4 page paper on *The Principle of Mercy*
2. Rest of the remaining time until class – work on major presentation on *Christ the Liberator* - Given on Saturday, April 17 (included in your work that is handed in is a 4 page paper from each team member about this book)
3. Friday, April 16 – 4 pages of poetry and readings related to *Spirituality of Liberation*

**Bring copies of all written work to class on April 16-17**

April 17 – May 14

1. Friday, April 23 – 4 page paper on *No Salvation Outside The Poor*
2. Friday, April 30 - 1 page Moodle post in response to posted questions about *Where Is God?*
3. Between April 30 and May 7 – One moodle response to the moodle conversation of your team about *Where Is God?*
4. Due by May 14 - Creation of one major theological question about *No Salvation Outside The Poor* and one major question about *Where Is God?*

**Bring copies of all written work to class on May 14 - 15**

When Written/Oral Work Is Due

February 13 – March 5

**Team Four**

1. Friday, February 19 – 4 page paper on *Witnesses to the Kingdom*
2. Friday, February 26 - 1 page Moodle post in response to posted questions about *Archbishop Romero*
3. Between February 26 and March 5 – One moodle response to the moodle conversation of your team about *Archbishop Romero*
4. Due by March 5 - Creation of one major theological question about *Witnesses to The Kingdom* and one major theological question about *Archbishop Romero*

**Bring copies of all written work to class on March 5-6**

March 6 – April 16

1. Friday, March 12 – 4 page paper on *The Principle of Mercy*
2. Friday, April 2 - 1 page Moodle post in response to posted questions about *Spirituality of Liberation*
3. Between April 3 and April 9 – One moodle response to the moodle conversation of your team about *Spirituality of Liberation*
4. Due by April 16- Creation of one major theological question about *The Principle Of Mercy* and one major theological question about *Spirituality of Liberation*
5. Friday, April 16 – 4 pages of poetry and readings related to *Where Is God?*

**Bring copies of all written work to class on April 16 - 17**

April 17 – May 14

1. Friday, April 23 – 4 page paper on *No Salvation Outside The Poor*
2. Rest of Remaining time until class - work on major presentation on *Hope & Solidarity* - Given on Saturday, May 15  
(included in your work that is handed in is a 4 page paper from each team member about this book)

**Bring copies of all written work to class on May 14 - 15**