



THEO 5140: ECCLESIOLOGY, BODY, PLACE

(Draft)

Advanced Seminar in Theology (3 Credits) prerequisite Theo 5110

Spring 2026 (Jan 12- May 8)

Tuesday 5:45 pm – 7:15 pm (Central Time)

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Lama Htoi San Lu, Ph.D.

Visiting Assistant Professor of Theology & Louisville Institute Postdoctoral Fellow

North Park Theological Seminary

Location: Nyvall Hall 311

hslu@northpark.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The advanced seminar builds on skills and content learned in Christian Theology through in-depth study of either (1) a single doctrinal locus (Christology, Trinity, Sacraments, etc.) from multiple methodologies or (2) multiple doctrines through a single methodology (e.g., liberation theology). Course is run seminar style. (from course catalogue)

Additional Description: (added by Lama)

In ecclesiology, different images and metaphors refer to the church: the people of God, a community of salvation, the body of Christ, and the community of the Spirit. This advanced theology seminar focuses on ecclesiology, particularly how it is tied to Christology, theological anthropology, corporeality, and spatiality. In doing so, we explore ecclesiology that meditates on bodies, particularly the body of Christ, while reimagining the body of Christ with attention to the social body and sociality. We will also examine the notion of Christian personhood in community, and what it means to *form* and *be* in the church community in a globalized and (post) colonial world. Another theme we will also attend to is how place (space) plays a role in shaping, creating, or forming/reforming ecclesial bodies and identities, and how a church community relates to a particular place. For instance, how do we imagine and understand the church as the body of Christ, when bodies are moving from place to place due to socio-economic and political conditions? In this course, we will engage ecclesiology through interdisciplinary approaches, such as sociological, anthropological, biblical, philosophical, theological, moral, and ethical implications. Theologians studied will include Dietrich Bonhoeffer, M. Shawn Copland, Willie James Jennings, Mayra Rivera, and many others from diverse traditions.

COUSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify and explain key concepts in breadth and depth in ecclesiology and ecclesia studies
- Demonstrate thematic approaches and methods of constructing theology/ecclesiology

- Develop and cultivate skills of analytical and critical thinking, most importantly, the skill of thinking *theologically*
- Cultivate the habit of close reading
- Analyze and articulate how religion plays a role in the formation of identities in changing *places*.
- Connect the personal and pastoral relevance of ecclesiology to contemporary life in various social contexts

This course contributes toward the following MACS, MACM, M.DIV., & MATS learning outcomes:

- Interpret the Christian historical and theological tradition for appropriation in the life and mission of the Church.
- Demonstrate a theologically grounded ministerial identity and growing capacity to integrate it with the ministry of Christian formation.
- Engage diversity and exhibit growth towards intercultural competence for ministry reflective of God's global redemptive work.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009)
- Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010)
- Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010)

Provisional Bibliography:

Leonardo Boff, *Church: Charism and Power*

Raymond E. Browns, *The Churches that Apostles Left Behind*

Keri Day, *Unfinished Business: Black Women, the Black Church, and the Struggle to Thrive in America*

Russelle Jeung, *Faithful Generations: Race and New Asian American Churches*

Roger Haight, *Christian Community in History: Historical Ecclesiology Volume 1, Comparative Ecclesiology Volume 2 & Ecclesial Existence Volume 3*

Richard Horsley, ed., *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium Interpretation*

Letty Russelle, *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church*

Mayra Rivera, *Poetics of the Flesh*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance, Reading, and Active Participation (20%)

Active participation and punctual attendance for the class session are expected. Active participation includes the completion of required readings and assignments prior to the class meeting. Reading closely and reading together are two of the practices in the seminar course.

Attendance: Only two class sessions can be missed without penalty to your final grade; five absences will result in failure.

Hyflex Course Modality

In hyflex classrooms, our learning community combines in-person students and students joining the classroom via Teams. Toward cultivating a respectful, accessible environment for mutual learning, we observe the following:

Students attending virtually: Think of your physical space as an extension of the classroom. Ensure that you are in a private, stable location that is free of visual and audio distractions. It's important that we all respect the integrity of classroom discussion. (For this same reason, please do not record class sessions or take screenshots without permission.) Please keep your camera and microphone on through the class session. Consider purchasing a microphone/headset to improve the quality of your sound. (Attendance in class assumes that you are present in this way.)

Students attending in person: Remember that the class and classroom extend to colleagues attending virtually; it's important to remain visible as well. Please engage the full learning community. Registering for the campus section entails a commitment to joining the class in person. If you are too sick to come in person, or if you have an unavoidable scheduling conflict, please use one of your excused absences for the semester rather than joining by Teams.

2. Reading Reflection Essay (500 words Maximum) (20 %)

Each student submits/posts a critical reflection essay on the readings assigned twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting time on the course website. Your reading reflection essay (no more than one-page single-spaced) will be formatted accordingly:

- State the major argument(s) or thesis/purpose of the readings.
- Three Insights or new learnings from the readings that inform your understanding of Christian theology.
- Two Questions: your questions should be fully developed, indicating how they have emerged from the text.
- One Awareness that informs your practice of ministry.

Note: You are excused to not posting for the week you are presenting.

3. Theology Colloquium Exercise (Presenter & Respondent) (20 %)

Each student will sign up to be a presenter and respondent to lead the class presentation and discussion for the first 30-45 minutes. The assignment aims to foster a deeper learning experience of theology (God-talk) in dialogical conversation with respect and integrity.

For each session, two students will perform special roles:

- **Primary presenter:** You will write a short essay (approximately 1500-2000 words) engaging all the required readings of the week and send it to the instructor and respondent 48 hours before the class meets. Your presentation essay should include (1)

the overview of the readings, your critical description, observations, and analysis of the readings, including points of clarification (2) your critical reflection of the texts.

- **Respondent:** You will carefully read the presenter's essay and highlight any points or issues that the presenter has made and built up while offering your own thoughts and questions. The role of the respondent is to generate questions for discussion.

4. Reflection Essay: Interdenominational Church Visits (20 %)

In addition to the church you grew up in or currently attend and serve, you will choose to visit and attend worship at two different denominational churches in your neighborhood. During your visit, notice what ecclesiological and theological images and languages the church community uses in their worship service, bulletins, prayers, sermons, and communions.

Based on your immersive experiences from the site visits, you will write a short reflection essay (1200-1500 words). In the first part of reflection, paying attention to your body, describe what you see, feel, and experience of being in *that place*. Things that surprise you, and things that you want to know and learn more about for your future ministry. In the second part of your essay, you will also integrate at least **three** reading materials.

5. Final Integrative Project & Presentation (20 %)

In this assignment, you will do a **creative theological piece** integrating all the course materials, including your weekly reflection essays and your immersive site visit experiences. Your projects could be a sermon, poem, song, art form, short story, podcast, video presentation, a case study, or a glossary (in your own words). Along with your creative piece, you will provide a short well-written interpretation of your work. The purpose of the assignment is to show how you would translate your theological understanding into your own pastoral/ministerial context and beyond. Your presentation (7-10 minutes) will be on the last day of class.

Note: If you want to develop your skills as a researcher or writer, feel free to complete a research paper. Research guidelines will be provided.

GRADING

Assignment	Weight
Attendance & Active Participation	20%
Weekly Reading Reflection	20%
Theology Colloquium Exercise (Presenter & Respondent)	20%
Reflection Essay: Interdenominational Church Visits	20%
Final Integrative Project & Presentation	20%

*Grade percentages operate as follows: A+ (97-100), A (93-96.9), A- (90-92.9), B+ (87-89.9), B (83-86.9), B- (80-82.9), and so on.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

If, due to extenuating circumstances (specifically, pregnancy, illness, personal and family issues, military assignment, etc.), a student anticipates they will be unable to complete course work within the allotted time, that student may request a grade of incomplete from the course instructor before the last week of class clearly stating the reason(s) for this request. Overscheduling and/or lack of self-discipline are not considered extenuating circumstances. If the request is timely and meets the criteria, student and instructor will submit the incomplete grade form and the grade for that class will be listed as “I” until the last day of the following semester. If coursework is not submitted by the last day of the following semester the listing of “I” will automatically be changed to “F.” For the full policy, see page 15 of the [Seminary Academic Catalog](#).

ADDITIONAL COURSE GUIDELINES

Inclusive Language

In keeping with NPTS policy and language guideline (see NPTS Student Handbook pg. 15-16), inclusive language is expected in public discourse, classroom discussion including canvas discussion boards, and written words. I encourage you to use inclusive language especially when you refer to God and humanity. <https://www.northpark.edu/wp-content/uploads/Student-Handbook-final-2017-18.pdf>

Academic Honesty

In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating will receive a failing grade on the assignment and are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion. Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another’s work as one’s own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another’s answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one’s answers or work.
4. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.
5. Use of ChatGPT or other AI composition software to impersonate individual assignments.

For additional information, see the [Seminary Academic Catalog](#), pp. 25–26.

Accommodations

Your experience in this class is important to me. North Park is committed to creating inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have already established your accommodations, please share your accommodation letter with me so we can



discuss how your accommodations will be implemented in this course. If you have not yet established services and have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations, please email the Disability Access Specialist or contact by phone (773-244-5737). Student Engagement facilitates the interactive process that establishes reasonable accommodations.

TITLE IX

Students who believe they may have experienced sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking should contact the Title IX Coordinator (773) 244-5664 or TitleIX@northpark.edu to learn more about reporting options, resources, and support services.

As members of the North Park faculty, we are concerned about the well-being and development of our students and are available to discuss any concerns. Faculty members are private resources meaning we are legally obligated to share information about the behavior reported above with the University's Title IX coordinator. If you are unsure whether you want your concerns disclosed to the Title IX Coordinator, we encourage you to contact Counseling Support Services at (773) 244-4897 or counseling@northpark.edu.

Please refer to North Park's [Safe Community](#) site for reporting, contact information, and further details.

COURSE SCHEDULE