Latine Theories and Theologies (THEO 850A)
Spring 2026

Modality: online, occasionally synchronous
Synchronous dates: **1/28 and 2/4; 2/25 and 3/4; 3/18 and 25; 4/22 and 29.**
Prerequisites: THEO-500; by permission for masters

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Note: This is not the syllabus. This is a description of the seminar to help you decide whether or not it is for you. I will provide a detailed syllabus just before or possibly on the first day of class.

Course description:

In this course we will work through some carefully curated resources that will allow us to construct a tentative mental "map" of Latine realities in the United States, as well as some of the theoretical and theological responses to those realities. My hope is that this intellectual cartography will serve you as a guide for later continuing to build upon your understandings, honing them, and delving more deeply in the subject matter by connecting it to your interests and passions. I specify below that we will engage Latine theories and theologies "in the United States," because what emerges in the context of said country is very different from Latin American and Caribbean theories and theologies from outside the United States. Puerto Rico occupies a liminal space in this imaginary; because it is occupied by the United States, materials written in English by Puerto Ricans (especially those living in the United States) will be included in our mental map. The primary academic language of Latine theories and theologies in the United States is English, with some incursions into Spanglish or other languages from Abya Yala.[1]

Topics and timeline:

I. Latine history and reality in the United States
Synchronous meetings (9-11 AM CT): January 28, February 4

II. Early Latine theologies in the United States
Synchronous meetings (9-11 AM CT): February 25, March 4

III. Latine feminist and queer theories in the United States
Synchronous meetings (9-11 AM CT): March 18, March 25

[1] Abya Yala is the Kuna name for América, usually used to refer to Latin America and the Caribbean. In our seminar please refrain from referring to the United States as "America;" the United States of (the continent of) America/América should no more should be called "America" than South Africa should be called "Africa," China should be called "Asia" or France should be called "Europe." To speak of the United States as "America" is to engage in an erasure of América, something contrary to the heart of Latine theories and theologies.

IV. Contemporary Latine theologies in the United States
Synchronous meetings (9-11 AM CT): April 22, April 29

What do I need for this course?

We will work weekly on the topics sketched out above, with class discussion of texts and materials happening either in forums on Canvas or with each other in our synchronous sessions. I will provide readings for the class in pdf form, as well as links to videos or other materials. You will not need to buy textbooks for the class.

As you decide whether or not to take this seminar, please note that your camera will need to be on during our synchronous sessions (in other words, a synchronous online session will be equivalent to sitting in a classroom). Said otherwise, you will need to plan to be fully "present" even (or especially) in our virtual setting, which admittedly means overcoming a certain resistance that we probably all have to exposing ourselves to the camera. However, because there is a materiality to virtuality that we can use to our pedagogical advantage, we will use the electronic means at our disposal to practice attentive listening and participation as a material form of togetherness even as we are apart. We will actively bring our respective contexts to bear on the topics we cover. Fluid participation, attention, and openness to each other are key to a successful and enjoyable seminar in this format.

Please understand also that to take this course is to commit to doing your own reading and writing, with no use of AI. I hope that in this semester together we will all become better writers and thinkers, and indeed in an 800-level seminar I will expect rigorous work, but syntactical or grammatical errors in your written work will not hurt your grade. If English is not your first language, don't worry too much about it. I, too, have been a stranger in a strange land and lived to tell the tale. I'm much more interested in the substance of your thought processes than in a supposed perfection of form, so express yourself as freely as you can.

Writing for the seminar will include forum posts and peer responses on Canvas, as well as a final paper we will workshop along the way, and which will require you to do some research and reading in Latine theories and theologies outside of the assigned articles. The final paper will be about 5000-6000 words for the master's level or 7,000-8,000 words for the doctoral level. You should know that I am not interested in -and in fact, actively dislike- textual simulacra generated by ChatGPT or other LLMs (large language models). I value your own priceless and particular voices, and the way in which engaging in reading and writing can help us think critically as well as providing an opportunity for spiritual formation (since ultimately in doing theology we are engaging with God). AI gets in the way of the *process* of figuring out what we think as we are on the way together. Even asking LLMs to help "generate ideas" for an outline short circuits the process of critical thinking and individual synthesis. I am interested -and I hope you will be, too- in the knowledge and theological insights that each of us individually and we as a group can

produce along the way as learner-teachers and teacher-learners, by wrestling with ideas, texts, and other forms of cultural production.[2]

If what I have written above makes sense to you (or you are at least open to functioning within these parameters for the duration of the course), and if you would like to explore the amazing insights of Latine scholars, this course is likely for you. Feel free to email me if you have questions.

[2] The phrase “stochastic parrots” was coined by Emily Bender to illustrate the difference between what is generated by AI and what can be written by humans; see her paper (with other authors) "On the Dangers of Stochastic Parrots: Can Language Models Be Too Big?" *Proceedings of the 2021 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency* (2021) doi:10.1145/3442188.3445922. I have not yet found a problem in theology to which LLMs might be a solution; we can talk more about this during the semester.