

THEO3235-5952: Postcolonial Theology

Tuesdays, 7:00 to 9:30 pm
(Except for 21/9: 9:30 am – 12:00 noon)

Instructor: Professor WONG Wai Ching Angela

“Postcolonial” has been popularly used as a self-designated position for the formerly colonized peoples in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. It carries at least three meanings in its current circulation. First, it is referred to as the historical period after American and European colonization in the 20th century. The second and most popular meaning points to the efforts to write back and deconstruct the very basis of colonial knowledge to re-establish the colonized peoples as historical subjects. The third and more ambivalent use highlights cultural and ideological hybridity, which has become a perennial battle internal to the formerly colonized peoples. The course will review the history of colonialism and the emergence of postcolonial theology, familiarize students with the postcolonial theories and discourse since the late seventies, and critically analyze postcolonial theologies’ contribution, role, and achievements over the last two decades.

Learning objectives:

Students are expected

1. to acquire a good understanding of the history of colonialism and the emergence of postcolonial theories;
2. to familiarize all with postcolonial theories and discourse for critical analysis and
3. to assess the impact of the postcolonial discourse on theology in Asia and its future development.

Class structure:

7:00 – 7:30 pm	Group Discussions
7:30 – 8:00 pm	Open Discussion
8:15 – 9:30 pm	Lecture

A. Course Outlines:

Recommended readings for general introduction:

- Dormor, Duncan. “Guest Editorial: The Case for Postcolonial Theology.” *Modern Believing* 62, 4 (Autumn 2021): 327-337.
- Kim, Grace Ji-Sun. “Postcolonial Theology and Intersectionality,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 55, 4 (2020): 595-608.
- Wong, Wai Ching Angela. “Colonial and Postcolonial Context.” In Ross, K. R., Alvarez, F. D., & Johnson, T. M. *Christianity in East and Southeast Asia*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020. Pp. 463-475.

Classes

3/9 1. **Defining the Terms: From Colonialism to Colonial Discourse**

- Parry, Benita. "The Institutionalization of Postcolonial Studies." In *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*, ed. Neil Lazarus. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Pp. 66-80.
- Loomba, Ania. "Situating Colonial and Postcolonial Studies." *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge, 1998. Pp. 19-111.
- Six, Clemens. "Traces of a Transnational Mindset: Thinking Secularism for the Postcolonial Era." In *Secularism, Decolonisation, and the Cold War in South and Southeast Asia*, Clemens Six. New York: Routledge, 2018. Pp. 22-56.

- *Group Discussion: Self-analysis in Context*

10/9 2. **Imperialism, Orientalism, and Culture,**

- *Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1963. Pp. 35-106.
- *Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1978. Introduction.
- *Bhabha, Homi K. "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817." In *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994. Pp. 145-174.

- *Group Discussion: Fanon, Frantz. The Wretched of the Earth. New York: Grove Press, 1963. Pp. 35-106.*

17/9 **Mid-Autumn Festival**

21/9 **Make-up class: Saturday 9:30 am – 12:00 noon**

3. **The Making of an Empire**

- Chatterjee, Partha. "The Colonial State." In *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993. Pp. 14 -34.
- Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri. "The Dialectics of Colonial Sovereignty," and "Network Power: U.S. Sovereignty and the New Empire." In *Empire*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2000. Pp. 114-136; 160-182.

- *Group Discussion: Said, Edward. Orientalism. New York: Vintage Books, 1978. Introduction.*

24/9 4. **Nation Imagined**

- Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1983. Pp. 39-61.
- *Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev; London: Verso, 1991. Pp. 10-49.
- Fujitani, Takashi. "Inventing, Forgetting, Remembering: Toward a Historical Ethnography of the Nation-State." In Harumi Befu, ed. *Cultural Nationalism*

in East Asia: Representation and Identity. Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies University of Berkeley, 1993. Pp. 77-106.

- *Group Discussion: Bhabha, Homi K. "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817." In The Location of Culture. London: Routledge, 1994. Pp. 145-174.*

1/10 Public Holiday - National Day

8/10 5. Postcolonial Historiographies – The Case of India

- Chibber, Vivek. *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital*. London: Verso, 2013. Pp. 1-27.
 - *Quayson, Ato. "Postcolonial Historiography and the Problem of Local Knowledge." In *Postcolonialism: Theory, Practice or Process?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968. Pp. 1-24.
 - Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for 'India' Past?" In *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Padmini Mongia. New York: Arnold, 1996. Pp. 223-247.
- *Group Discussion: Anderson, Benedict. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. Rev; London: Verso, 1991. Pp. 10-49.*

15/10 6. Engendering Colonialism and Nationalism

- *Chatterjee, Partha. "The Nation and Its Women." In *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. Pp. 116-134.
 - Rajan, Rajeswari Sunder, "Representing Sati: Continuities and Discontinuities," and R. Radhakrishnan, "Nationalism, Gender, and the Narrative of Identity." In *Postcolonial Discourses: An Anthology*, ed. Gregory Castle. London: Blackwell, 2001. Pp. 167-189, 190-205.
 - Yegenoglu, Meyda. "The Battle of the Veil: Woman between Orientalism and Nationalism." In *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Pp. 121-166.
- *Group Discussion: Quayson, Ato. "Postcolonial Historiography and the Problem of Local Knowledge." In Postcolonialism: Theory, Practice or Process? Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968. Pp. 1-24.*

22/10 7. Postcolonial Theologizing 1

- Bill Ashcroft, "Threshold Theology," in Mark G. Brett and Jione Havea, eds., *Colonial Contexts and Postcolonial Theologies* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), pp. 3-12.
 - Dussel, Enrique. "Epistemological Decolonization of Theology," in *Decolonial Christianities: Latinx and Latin American Perspectives*, ed. Raimundo Barreto and Roberto Sirvent. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. Pp. 25-42.
- *Group Discussion: What postcolonial?*

- 29/10 8. Postcolonial Theologizing 2**
- Rivera, Mayra. *The Touch of Transcendence: A Postcolonial Theology of God*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007. Pp. 1-186.
 - Hill, Johnny Bernard. *Prophetic Rage: A Postcolonial Theology of Liberation*. Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2013. Introduction and Ch. 1; Pp. 9-41.
- *Group Discussion: Conceiving your postcolonial theology*
- 5/11 Journals preparation – submitted on 12/11 before class**
- 12/11 9. Postcolonial Theologizing 3**
- Namsoon Kang, “Theology from a Space Where Postcolonialism and Theology Intersect.” In Hille Haker et. al., ed. *Postcolonial Theology*. London: SCM, 2013. London: SCM Press, 2013. Ch. 6.
 - Jonathan Y. Tan, “Dynamics of Interfaith Collaborations in Postcolonial Asia: Prospects and Opportunities.” In *Postcolonial Practice of Ministry: Leadership, Liturgy, and Interfaith Engagement*, ed. Pui-lan Kwok. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016. Pp. 167-182.
 - Kwok, Pui-lan. “Transnationalism and Feminist Theology in the Asia Pacific.” In *Postcolonial Politics and Theology: Unraveling Empire for a Global World*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2021. Pp. 109-122.
- *Open Discussion: Sharing your postcolonial theology 1*
- 19/11 10. Postcolonial Theologizing – Biblical Studies 1**
- Moore, Stephen D. and Fernando F. Segovia. *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections*. London: T & T Clark International, 2007. Pp. 1-78.
 - Kgalemang, Malebogo. “Novel Biblical Translation of Ngugi wa Thiong’o.” In *Postcoloniality, Translation, and the Bible in Africa*, ed. Musa W. Dube and R. S. Wafula. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017. Pp. 104-112.
- *Open Discussion: Sharing your postcolonial theology 2*
- 26/11 11. Postcolonial Theologizing – Biblical Studies 2**
- Dyer, Keith. “The Empire of God, the Postcolonial Jesus, and Postapocalyptic Mark.” In Mark G. Brett and Jione Havea, eds., *Colonial Contexts and Postcolonial Theologies*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014. Pp. 81-97.
 - Liew, Tat-siong Benny. “Haunting Silence: Trauma, Failed Orality, and Mark’s Messianic Secret.” In Tat-siong Benny Liew and Erin Runions, eds. *Psychoanalytic Mediations between Marxist and Postcolonial Readings of the Bible*. Atlanta: SBL Press 2016. Pp. 99-127.
- *Group Discussion: Retelling a biblical story with a postcolonial lens*
- 3/12 12. What After?**
- Young, Robert JC. “Postcolonial Remains.” *New Literary History* 43 (2012): 19-42.

- Wong, Wai Ching Angela. “Postcolonial Theology in Asia: The Impasse and Beyond?” *Asian Christian Review: Inquiring “Postcolonial Asia”: Christian Perspectives* 6, 1 (2012 Nov): 6-22.
- Nel, Reggie. “‘Children must be Seen and Heard’—Doing Postcolonial Theology with Children in a (Southern) African Reformed Church.” *HTS Theologesie Studies/ Theological Studies* 72, 1 (2016), a3565. Open access at <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v72i1.3565>
- Lartey, Emmanuel. “‘Borrowed Clothes Will Never Keep You Warm’: Postcolonializing Pastoral Leadership.” In *Postcolonial Practice of Ministry: Leadership, Liturgy, and Interfaith Engagement*, ed. Kwok Pui-lan and Stephen Burns. Pp. 21-32. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016.

- *Open Discussion: What postcolonial theology in this place at this time?*

B. Assessment:

- 1) Group discussion: identify the key questions concerned and exchange your views in a group of three – peer assessments (20%) + class participation (10%)
- 2) Journal writing (2,000 words): analyze your context with a postcolonial lens and your theological response, to be submitted on December 12, 2024, before class (30%)
- 3) Final paper (about 3,000 words): write a postcolonial theology in your context – build on your discussion and journals, and explain what makes a theology postcolonial in your case, to be submitted on December 20 before 5 pm (40%);

3 marks will be deducted after each day of delay for items 2) and 3).

C. Other References

- Brazal, Agnes M. *A Theology of Southeast Asia: Liberation-postcolonial Ethics in the Philippines*. New York, New York: Maryknoll, 2019. Web.
- Brett, Mark G., and Jione. Ed. *Havea. Colonial Contexts and Postcolonial Theologies [electronic Resource]; Storyweaving in the Asia-Pacific*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Web.
- Castle, Gregory. Ed., *Postcolonial Discourses: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Chandrashekar, S. “Introduction.” In *Colonialism, Conflict, and Nationalism: South India: 1857-1947*. New Delhi: Wishwa Prakashan, 1995. Pp. 1-19.
- Clarke, J.J. *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter between Asian and Western Thought*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Cohn, Bernard S. *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Hille, Haker, Luiz Carlos Susin, and Eloi Messi Metogo, eds. *Postcolonial Theology*. London: SCM, 2013.
- Kang, Namsoon. *Diasporic Feminist Theology [electronic Resource]: Asia and Theopolitical Imagination*. Baltimore, Md.: Project Muse, 2015. Web.
- Kwan, Simon Shui-Man. *Postcolonial Resistance and Asian Theology*. New York, New York: Routledge, 2014.
- Moore, R. J. “India and the British Empire.” In *British Imperialism in the Nineteenth*

- Century*, ed. C.C. Eldridge. London: MacMillan, 1984. Pp. 65-84.
- Moore, Stephen D., and Mayra. Rivera. *Planetary Loves* [electronic Resource]: *Spivak, Postcoloniality, and Theology* (2011). Web.
- Nel, Reggie. “‘Children must be Seen and Heard’—Doing Postcolonial Theology with Children in a (Southern) African Reformed Church.” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 72, 1 (2016), a3565. Open access at <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v72i1.3565>