

LGBT Religious Issues in Postcolonial Perspectives

1.5 credit hours

PSR Summer 2010

Instructor(s): Rev. Elizabeth Leung, PhD

DRAFT Syllabus

Course Description

A critical approach to heterosexism and contemporary world religions in the United States needs to include the complex relationship of race/ethnicity and religion. Religion(s) have been, and in some cases, still are, the cultural marker of the racialized body of the other(s). Popularization of world religions such as Buddhism in the United States does not necessarily bridge the ethnic divide between immigrant groups and “import” groups. In addition, racialization of the other(s) has been connected with the sexualization of the body and vice versa, for example, the recurring geisha movies from Hollywood and the eroticized Asian in gay video pornography. Last, but not least, if queer theory has been criticized for its supposition of white middle-class lesbian and gay experience, then in what ways are religious issues of self, sex, God and church relevant to queers of color?

This course will focus on LGBT issues at the intersections of ethnicity, sexuality and religion, particularly among three disparate groups of Asian Americans. Postcolonial perspectives provide an attention to the context of how these groups have wrestled with the American experiment, and how sexuality issues can be understood against the backdrop of ethnicity and religion.

Learning Outcomes

Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

- Articulate the significance of postcolonial perspectives for LGBT issues
- Understand the intersections of race/ethnicity and sexuality for LGBT issues
- Reexamine LGBT religious issues of self, sex, God, church/community

Required Texts

- *A Course Reader*

Selections from: *Postcolonial Theory and the United States*, eds. Amritjit Singh and Peter Schmidt, *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism*, eds. Arnaldo Cruz-Malave, and Martín F. Manalansán IV, *Heterosexism and Contemporary World Religions* by Marvin Ellison, *Q & A: Queer in Asian American*, eds. David L. Ng and Alice Y. Hom, *Negotiating Race and Religion in American Buddhism* by Joseph Cheah, *Impossible Desires: Queer Diaspora and South Asian Public Cultures* by Gayatri Gopinath, *The Paper Dolls: Reconfiguring Diaspora* by Michael S. Campos, *Gay Hegemony/Latino Homosexualities* by Manolo Guzman etc.

- Film and Video clips

Outline of sessions

Day 1: Heterosexism, World Religions and the American Experiment

Day 2: Postcolonial Glimpse 1 – “The Wedding Banquet”

Day 3: Postcolonial Glimpse 2 – “Chutney Popcorn”

Day 4: Postcolonial Glimpse 3 – “Global Divas”

Day 5: LGBT issues at the intersection of race, sexuality and religion

Course Requirements

For students taking this course for credit, completing the assigned readings and daily participation in the class discussions, as well as a final paper are required for a successful completion of this course. The final paper is due no later than two weeks after the end of the course. The paper should be word-processed and no fewer than ten and no more than twelve pages long; the topic should be chosen in consultation with the instructor.