Term: Spring 2015
Instructor: Dr. Joseph Ogbonnaya
Course #: THEO 4390/5390
Section: 103
Course Title: Studies in Systematic Theology
Topic: Theology and Globalization

Description:

One of the foremost phenomena that cut across disciplines and national boundaries with equally lasting impacts, and attendant consequences on the human person and societies is the phenomenon of globalization. Generally understood as the economic, political and cultural integration of nations worldwide, globalization brings to the fore the fact of human interdependence and the universal scope of interpersonal relationship. Powered by advances in science, and information technology especially of the worldwide web, globalization through the activities of the transnational corporations affects all aspects of human life. Not only does commercial entrepreneurship hold the key to society, the logic of capitalism seems determined to hinge human happiness and political, social and cultural changes on accumulation of capital. Yet globalization is multifaceted and is beyond merely economic growth.

As a complex process that has recorded tremendous success in its stated aims of improving human condition through creating opportunities for exercise of human freedom through production of goods and services in a free-market economy, globalization raises serious moral especially social justice issues of concern to human and social sciences. Theology’s interest in globalization arises in response to the issues of concern raised above: global inequality expressed in the widening gap between the rich and the poor, preference of material goods over human beings manifest in exploitation of migrant workers and depersonalization of migrants, environmental degradation on account of unsustainable quest for economic growth, increasing global insecurity engendered on the one hand by geopolitical inequality and injustice as well as reaction against worldwide materialism and consumerism on the other hand. These and many more issues affect the dignity of the human person created in the image and likeness of God. Human beings are stewards of God’s creation and ought to benefit as well as protect the environment.

Since globalization is inevitable, this course using Christian theological anthropology that emphasises the dignity of the human person and the social teachings of Christian churches dialogues with contemporary development discourse. The aim is for theology not only to humanize globalization but to function as a liberating and revealing force critically assessing the dynamics of the globalization process so as to achieve integral development that caters for the whole dimensions of human value: vital, social, cultural, personal and religious.