

**DRAFT 3.9.2014 – NOT A COMPLETED SYLLABUS. SEE INSTRUCTOR
FOR DETAILS**

School of Theology & Ministry
Seattle University
Seattle, WA 98122-1090
Spring Quarter, 2014

Course Information:

STMM 593-01: **To Hell and Back: Evil and Redemption in Christian Thought**

Credits: 3

Mondays: 1:30 to 4:20 PM

Hunthausen, TBA

Instructor:

Michael Reid Trice, Ph.D.

Office: Hunthausen, Room 207

Office Hours: Thursday Afternoons and by Appointment

Email: Tricem@seattleu.edu

Course Description and Objectives:

Description: This course will explore key aspects of the serious history of Christian reflection on the existence of Evil, and the response of redemption today. Beginning with Genesis and the Christian interpretation of the Fall, the course will address central issues of evil, how a loving God allows suffering, evil in literature through the ages, the 20th century experience of evil, 21st century encounter with the 'unspeakable' from Newtown to Syria, and will conclude with a theologically praxis-based peer-led modeling for religious "first-responders" in the 21st Century.

In terms of systemic cruelty, the course will also explore a 21st century theological re-imagination of original sin and the agency of evil that is corrosive to human well-being and the planet itself. Participants in the course will assess models of redemption and atonement that

respond to sin and evil. The course includes lectures, student presentations, small- and large group collaboration, and creative 'learning together' in the classroom. *There will be no field trip.*

Objectives: The course endeavors to increase student awareness of major trends and themes in the history of discourse about evil, with attention to activated redemption. The course seeks to encourage students toward a sense of personal and social responsibility for their own role in identifying the history and contemporary narrative of evil and human trespass amidst the disintegration of well-being in the world. Students will be guided by our readings, in seminar discussion, through participatory projects, through prayers, film, reflections, and assignments for the purpose of critically engaged theological reflection.

Learning Outcomes:

Ability to read primary and secondary texts critically (MDiv, MAPS, MATS); Ability to be a responsive, discerning listener who can enter another's worldview (MDiv, MAPS, MATS); Student awareness of their own social location/assumptions/hermeneutics as they engage texts and ideas in their own lives, communities and society at large (MDiv).

Ability to reflect theologically on evil, sin and redemption as central themes in the history of the Church; Ability to assess a theological interpretation of these themes in order to inform responses congruent with the needs of religious leadership; Ability to articulate one's interpretation of evil and trespass, as these are informed by theological reflection on these and like-themes; Ability to draw critically and constructively on aspects of the Christian response of redemption in order to lead to a more just and sustainable world; Ability to be a responsive, discerning listener who can engage in the process of discussion on radical evil and the human response of redemption that impacts local, national and international communities.

Required Texts:

- N.T. Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God*, Intervarsity Press, 2006.
- Wendy Farley, *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion: A Contemporary Theodicy*, Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990.
- Course Packet
- Manchala, Froechting, Trice Eds., *Cruelty and Christian Witness: Confronting Violence at its Ugliest*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2011. (Handed Out in Class)

Recommended Texts (No Need to Purchase but rather for your review to learn more about this and related subjects):

- Appleby, R. Scott, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence and Reconciliation*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000.

- Clapsis, Emmanuel, Ed., *Violence and Christian Spirituality: An Ecumenical Conversation*. Geneva: World Council of Churches Publications. 2007.
 - Coward, Harold and Gordon S. Smith, Eds., *Religion and Peacebuilding*. (SUNY series in Religious Studies), Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004.
 - Lederach, John Paul. *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2003.
 - Philpott, Daniel and Gerard F. Powers, Eds., *Strategies of Peace: Transforming Conflict in a Violent World*. (Studies in Strategic Peacebuilding series) New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
 - Schreiter, Robert J. Schreiter, Ed. *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics and Praxis*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010.
 - Susin, Carlos Luiz and Maria Pilar Aquino, Eds., *Reconciliation in a World of Conflicts*. London: SCM Press, 2003.
 - Volf, Miroslav, *Exclusion and Embrace*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.
-

Schedule of Topics and Readings: (CP = CoursePack)

1 – April 2

Title: *The Genesis of the Problem of Evil*

Required: Review the whole course in CANVAS at www.seattleu.edu Arrive Ready to Work and Learn Together!

Recommended Reading To Situate The Course: Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*: Book III. 1-4 (CP); St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Selected Readings (CP); G.R. Evans, *Augustine on Evil*, 29-40 (CP);

Themes: Introduction to the Course. Review the Syllabus. The Genesis of the Problem of Evil

2 – April 9

Title: *A Fracture East of Eden – The Fall and the Justice of God*

Required: Wendy Farley *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion: A Contemporary Theodicy (Preface)*; N.T. Wright *Evil and the Justice of God* (Ch 1 – *Evil is Still a Four Letter Word*, 13-41).

Recommended (For Your Future Toolkit): Charles T. Mathewes, *Evil and the Augustinian Tradition*, 1-36 (CP); Robert Schreiter, *Narratives of the Lie*, p. 29-39 (CP); Luther's Works (Selected Writings) (CP).

Themes: The Fall, Theodicy, Luther (Evil, Sin, Perversion); Augustine (Concupiscence); The Loss of the Art of Care, Love and Justice

3 – April 16

Title: *Theodicy – An Epochal Form of Homelessness*

Required: N.T. Wright *Evil and the Justice of God* (Ch 2 – *What Can God Do About Evil?*, 43-74); Wendy Farley *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion: A Contemporary Theodicy* (Part I – *Tragic Vision and the Rupture of Creation*, 40-65); G.W. Leibniz, *Theodicy* p. 276-283 (CP).

Recommended (For Your Future Toolkit): John Portmann, *A History of Sin, Its Evolution to Today and Beyond*, p. 1-45 (CP)

Themes:

4 – April 23**Title: Evil in Literature: Dante, Milton, Camus, Frankenstein, Dracula and Zombie Apocalypse**

Required: These texts are all located in the Course Pack and are selected readings from the main titles. Students will work on these readings in groups within the class: Machiavelli (b. 1469), *The Prince*; Theresa of Avila (b. 1515), *Interior Castle*; John Milton (b. 1608) *Paradise Lost* + C.S. Lewis' brief exposition on 'The Fall'; Mary Shelley (b. 1797), *Frankenstein*; Friedrich Nietzsche (b. 1844), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra [Zarathustra's Prologue]*; Bram Stoker (b. 1847), *Dracula*; Robert Louis Stevenson (b. 1850), *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*; Albert Camus (b. 1913); *The Plague*.

Themes:

5 – April 30**Title: The 20th Century: Massive Evil and the Making of Modern Identity**

Required: N.T. Wright *Evil and the Justice of God* (Ch 3 – *Evil and the Crucified God*); Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (CP); Eleazar Fernandez, *Reimagining the Human: Theological Anthropology in Response to Systemic Evil*, 53-71 [Read Intro. If you desire more background](CP); Etienne Balibar, *Outlines of a Topography of Cruelty*, (CP) p. 15-29;

Recommended (For Your Future Toolkit): Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, p. 3-11 (CP)

6 – May 7**Title: Structural Violence, Structural Evil and Systemic Cruelty**

Required: Charles Mathewes, *Evil as Privation: Hannah Arendt's Augustinian Ontology*, (CP) 149-196; Traci C. West, *Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women's Lives matter*, (CP) 3-35; Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World [The Structure of Torture]*, selected readings (CP).

Recommended (For Your Future Toolkit): Trice, *Encountering Cruelty, text*; D.Z. Phillips, *The Problem of Evil and the Problem of God [God's Absence and Presence]*, p. 164-193.

Themes: Encountering the 'other'; creative responses to human trespass – from Cain to Job; Peace-building and truth-telling; memory and the past – “re-membering well”

7 – May 14**Title: A 21st Century Response to Evil and Theodicy: Compassion and Justice**

Required: Wendy Farley *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion: A Contemporary Theodicy* (Part II – A Phenomenology of Compassion, 69-94); N.T. Wright *Evil and the Justice of God* (Ch 4 – *Imagine There's No Evil*); Simon Baron-Cohen, *The Science of Evil: On Empathy and the Origins of Cruelty [Explaining Evil and Human Cruelty]*, (CP), 1-15.

Recommended (For Your Future Toolkit): Appleby, Ch 5 (167-204);

Themes: The witness and the message of reconciliation, the moral imagination continued, unpacking our belongings.

8 – May 21**Title: A Response to Evil Today Part I: Divine Love and Human Response**

Required: Wendy Farley *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion: A Contemporary Theodicy* (Part II – A Phenomenology of Divine Love, 95-114); Kinnamon, *Literature and Theology after Auschwitz, Hiroshima and Vietnam*, (CP), 135-174.

Recommended (For Your Future Toolkit): TBA

Themes: From Newtown to Boulder: Building Communities of Peace, Reconciliation as peace-building, the moral imagination, a shared moral platform for peace, stepping across the line.

Becoming a Religious First-Responder: Responder Meetings I

9 – May 28

Title: *A Response to Evil Today Part II: Divine Compassion and the Justice of God*

Required: Wendy Farley *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion: A Contemporary Theodicy* (Part II – *Divine Compassion and the Problem of Evil* 115-133); N.T. Wright *Evil and the Justice of God* (Ch 5 – *Deliver Us From Evil* 131-165).

Becoming a Religious First-Responder: Responder Meetings II

10 – June 4

Title: *Religious First Responders on the Ground: Responding to Evil*

Becoming a Religious First-Responder: Responder Project Presentations and Next Steps

Requirements:

- A. **Completion of reading assignments.** All reading assignments should be completed prior to the class on which they are assigned, in order to ensure robust conversation.
- B. **Attendance and participation in class – 25% of Grade:** Since absence and tardiness, even when they are “excused,” diminish your participation in class, they will likewise diminish your participation grade. Moreover, because classmates and instructor deserve your full attention, food and smart phones are expected to be packed away during class time (not counting the fifteen-minute break). If you take notes on a laptop, I expect you to refrain from social networking during class time. Any of these activities will diminish your participation grade. Participation in class is also graded in the quality and quantity of responses to the course THINKING OUT LOUD sections within the CANVAS online platform. Each student must remain in regular contact throughout the course via the CANVAS platform. Nearly every week of the course students are required to offer a written, video, or audio response to the THINKING OUT LOUD sessions. Familiarize yourself with the course.
- C. **Completion of two micro-papers (five pages each) – 25% of Grade x 2:** Students are responsible for constructing two micro-papers for this class, which are five pages each in length. These papers: 1) ‘My Theology of Evil’ and 2) ‘My emerging Theology of Redemption,’ are outlined in detail on the CANVAS online platform (which also includes a rubric and information on “writing a stellar paper” in the course online orientation material). *Each paper counts for 25% of the grade*, so even as these are micro-papers they still require significant time in framing a response in excellence. I encourage every student to view CANVAS, visit the MODULES section, and review both of these papers within the MODULES in the course. For additional information contact the professor with sufficient advance notice to allow for comprehensive paper research and writing.
- D. **Class Project: Religious First Responder – 25% of Grade:** In meeting the requirements for theology in praxis, students in this course will endeavor collaboratively on a final project in order to construct a hypothetical crisis of radical evil in a local community with an accompanying strategy for responding to this specific crisis. The response will draw on the

content of the course and the first two micro-papers (theologies of evil and emerging redemption/reconciliation). Students will collaborate on a project that uses various forms of media to present: a) the crisis of radical evil in a local context, b) a sophisticated response to the crisis that: i) enunciates a clear and relevant interpretation of evil and reconciliation in society today, ii) outlines a specific and relevant approach of a religious first-responder to the crisis of radical evil, and iii) that reveals a dynamic interdisciplinary and contextually sensitive response that draws from the course, experience, and a growing sense of the role of religious first-responders to the future of local communities. Students are encouraged to view CANVAS, visit the MODULES section, and review the rubric for grading the final project. Students are always encouraged to be in conversation with the professor.

Citation Format

Students in the Pastoral Counseling degree submit papers with citations in APA (American Psychological Association) format delineated by the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. All other students submit papers with citations in CMS (Chicago Manual of Style) format delineated by *The Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers*. The basic rules for these style formats may be found at the following websites:

- **APA:** <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/> (Diana Hacker website/social sciences)
- **CMS** <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/> (Diana Hacker website/history) or http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html (CMS website) At times students need assistance with the writing process itself. In addition to face-to-face assistance offered by Seattle University's Writing Center (McGoldrick Learning Commons 2nd Floor), two websites offer online assistance with writing
- **Seattle University Writing Center:** <http://www.seattleu.edu/writingcenter/> (Resources)
- **Purdue Writing Center:** <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

Special Requirements or Needs: If you have or think you may have a disability (including an "invisible disability" such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to discuss your needs and arrange support services and/or accommodations through Disabilities Services staff in the Learning Center, Loyola 100, 206-296-5740.

Academic Honesty: The School of Theology and Ministry strictly adheres to the Academic Policy concerning Academic Honesty as published in the Seattle University Student Handbook (see the Seattle University website).

Final Grade Calculation:

Your final grade will be calculated thus:

- Attendance and participation in class – 30%*
- Completion of weekly one-page papers – 20% of Grade*
- Class Leadership on Assigned Readings: 5% of Grade*

Case Studies: 15% of Grade
Completion of Final Paper – 30% of Grade

Your letter grade will be determined thus:

A	93-100
A-	90-92.99
B+	87-89.99
B	83-86.99
B-	80-82.99
C+	77-79.99
C	73-76.99
C-	70-72.99
D+	67-69.99
D	63-66.99
D-	60-62.99
F	59 and below