

**Course Syllabus**  
**Ministry in the Darkness: A Theology of Suffering**  
**Wycliffe College**  
**Toronto School of Theology**  
**Fall 2021**

***Instructor Information***

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Instructor: The Rev. Cole Hartin, Ph.D.  
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Office Hours: Fridays, 2:00pm – 4:00pm or by appointment

***Course Identification***

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Course Number: WJ2511H  
Course Format: *In-class and online*  
Course Name: Ministry in the Darkness  
Course Location: Threshold House  
Class Times: Remote: Mondays from 2pm – 4pm EST  
Prerequisites: One course in systematic theology

***Course Description***

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Preparation for the vocation of Christian service involves theological reflection on human experience. In the vein of historical theology from the western theological tradition, this course will offer an account of Christian ministry in the midst of suffering to/for those who are suffering. The twofold focus offers a vantage on the suffering of the Christian minister/priest/evangelist/caregiver as well as how the Christian can be present to the suffering of others. Students will learn how to recognize, engage, and make meaning out of the suffering experienced in their own lives as well as the lives of those they are serving. They will learn to think about suffering theologically. Through readings, course lectures, online discussion, students will engage with a variety of genres of literature. They will be expected to respond through class participation, essays, and reflections.

***Course Resources***

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**Required Course Texts**

- Stanley Hauerwas, *Hannah's Child*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012).
- Kate Bowler, *Everything Happens for a Reason*. (New York: Random House, 2018).
- Annie Dillard, *Holy the Firm*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).
- Leo Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilych and other stories*. (New York: Signet, 2012).
- Terrence Malick, *A Hidden Life*. Directed by Terrence Malick (Los Angeles: Fox Searchlight Picture, 2019). Film.

- Various readings on Quercus (see below).

### Course Website(s)

- Quercus: <https://q.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at <https://q.utoronto.ca/> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus.) Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701> . Students who have trouble accessing Quercus should ask [insert college contact] for further help.]

- Personal Website <http://individual.utoronto.ca/name>

### Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes

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Wycliffe College

#### BD Level

Students successfully completing this course will be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

BASIC DEGREE EXPECTATIONS	CORRESPONDING COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES	CORRESPONDING COURSE ELEMENTS / ASSIGNMENTS
<b>EXPECTATIONS:</b> <i>In this course students are expected to demonstrate the following:</i>		
<b>1. General Academic Skills</b>	<i>Students will learn to reflect theologically on the theme of suffering in ministry. This will require them to comprehend challenging lectures and readings, distill their content, and critically engage them.</i>	<i>Lectures, course readings, reading reports.</i>
<b>2. Understanding of the Content of One or More Theological Discipline</b>	<i>Students will, in the vein of historical theology, gain an appreciation for the Church's reflection on suffering.</i>	<i>Lectures, course readings.</i>

BASIC DEGREE EXPECTATIONS	CORRESPONDING COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES	CORRESPONDING COURSE ELEMENTS / ASSIGNMENTS
<b>3. Personal and Spiritual Formation</b>	<i>Students will find opportunity in this course not only to synthesize what they have learned about suffering, but also to critically evaluate their own theology of suffering.</i>	<i>Reading reports, class discussion, theology of suffering paper.</i>
<b>4. Ministerial and Public Leadership</b>	<i>This course is not purely academic, but is meant to prepare priests, ministers, and evangelist for ministry to those suffering, and to provide the tools for them to reflect theologically on their own suffering.</i>	<i>Course texts, class discussion, theology of suffering paper.</i>

## **Evaluation**

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### **Requirements**

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in four areas:

Basic Degree Students:

- (1) Participation (10%) – In addition to participating in the regular activity of the class, including the reading of the required texts, students are expected to voice their reflections in class discussion. +
- (2) Reading Reports (15%) – Students are expected to submit one-page reading reports that describe the major themes in each week's reading. **Due at the beginning of each class.**
- (3) Reflection Paper (25%) – Students are encouraged to reflect theologically on an instance of suffering in their own life in ministry, touching on themes raised in class. The reflection should be five (5) pages double-spaced. **Due November 1.**
- (4) Theology of Suffering (50%) – Students are expected to write a substantial and thorough account of their own philosophy of suffering that engages with significant course texts and lectures, as well as outside texts. The papers should be twenty (20) pages, double-spaced and should be scholarly in tone. **Due December 13.**

### **Grading System - Basic Degree Students**

1000, 2000 and 3000 level courses use the following numerical grading scale (see section 11.2 of the BD Handbook):

90-100 (A+)	Exceptional
85-89 (A)	Outstanding
80-84 (A-)	Excellent
77-79 (B+)	Very Good
73-76 (B)	Good
70-72 (B-)	Acceptable
0-69 (FZ)	Failure

**Late work (BD).** Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. Late assignments will lose one percentage point (1%) per day after the due date. The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of exam week for the semester in which the course is taught, whichever is sooner.

This penalty is not applied to students with documented medical or compassionate difficulties or exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness); students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor and request an SDF. The absolute deadline for obtaining an SDF for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of examination week, whichever is sooner. An SDF must be requested from the registrar's office in the student's college of registration no later than the last day of exam week in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

**Course grades.** Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted to ACORN. Grades are not official until they are posted to ACORN. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy found at <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/grading-practices-policy-university-assessment-and-january-26-2012>, policies found in the TST conjoint program handbooks, or college grading policy.

## **Policies**

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**Accessibility.** Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

**Plagiarism.** Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code->

[behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019](#). A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges [https://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/library\\_archives/theological\\_resources/theological\\_guides/avoiding\\_plagiarism.html](https://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/library_archives/theological_resources/theological_guides/avoiding_plagiarism.html)

**Other academic offences.** TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019> .

**Back-up copies.** Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

**Obligation to check email.** At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at [www.utorid.utoronto.ca](http://www.utorid.utoronto.ca). The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. Students should check utoronto email regularly for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

**Email communication with the course instructor.** The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students in conjoint programs must be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

## **Course Schedule**

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### **Week 1**

Monday, September 13: Course introduction

### **Week 2**

Monday, September 20: The First Five Hundred Years: Christian Engagement with Suffering:  
-Ecclesiastes  
-Hebrews  
-Leo D. Lefebure, "The Understanding of Suffering in the Early Christian Church" *Claritas: A Journal of Dialogue and Culture*. Vol 4., No. 2, 2015.

### **Week 3**

Monday, September 27 Suffering in the Medieval Period and the Monastic Tradition  
-Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, chapters 1-10  
-*St. Marcellinus the Spirit Bearer* ed. Tim Vivian (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimirs Press, 2014), pp. 19-47.

## **Week 4**

Monday, October 4

Suffering and the Reformation  
-Martin Luther, *Letters of Spiritual Counsel*. Library of Christian Classic, vol. XVII (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1955), pp. 26-37; 82-90.  
-"An Exhortation against the Fear of Death" *Book of Homilies*, Book 1. pp. 53-63. <http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/Homilies/homilies1.pdf>

## **Thanksgiving Day**

Monday, October 11

## **Week 5**

Monday, October 18

Suffering in the Early Modern Period  
Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*. Revised ed. (New York: Penguin Classics, 1995), pp. 3-43.  
Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God," *Mr. Edwards Sermons on the Dangers of the Unconverted*. (Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1741).  
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1053&context=etas>

## **Reading Week**

Monday, October 25

## **Week 6**

Monday, November 1

Victorian Responses to Suffering  
-Geoffrey Rowell, "Pioneers in the Parish: Ritualism in the Slums", *The Vision Glorious: Themes and Personalities of the Catholic Revival in Anglicanism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).  
-Gerard Manley Hopkins, "I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day" *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Poems and Prose* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1985).  
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44396/i-wake-and-feel-the-fell-of-dark-not-day>  
- Richard J. Walker, "7 Dead Letters: Gerard Manley Hopkins 'Terrible Sonnets'", *Labyrinths of Deceit: Culture, Identity and in the Nineteenth Century*. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), pp. 175-91.

## **Week 7**

Monday, November 8

Twentieth Century  
-Terrence Malick, *A Hidden Life*. Directed by Terrence Malick (Los Angeles: Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2019). Film.  
-Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 2018), pp. 201-21.

## **Week 8**

Monday, November 15

Suffering and Meaning  
-Kate Bowler, *Everything Happens for a Reason: And Other Lies I've Loved*. (New York: Random House, 2018).  
-Paul F. M. Zahl, *Peace in the Last Third of Life: A Handbook of Hope for Boomers*. (Charlottesville, VA: Mockingbird Ministries, 2020) pp. 45-78.

## **Week 9**

Monday, November 22

Suffering and the Human Person  
-Stanley Hauerwas, *Hannah's Child*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), pp. 1-178.  
-Katherine Green McCreight *Darkness is My Only Companion: A Christian Response to Mental Illness*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2015), pp. 93-112.

## **Week 10**

Monday, November 29

Suffering and Theodicy  
-Annie Dillard, *Holy The Firm*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).  
-David Bentley Hart, "Tsunami and Theodicy: Myanmar" *First Things*. May 8, 2008. <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2008/05/tsunami-and-theodicy>

## **Week 11**

Monday, December 6

Suffering and Death  
-Leo Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilych*. (New York: Signet Classics, 2012), pp. 92-156.  
Thomas Lynch, *The Undertaking: Life Studies in a Dismal Trade* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), pp.3-16.

## **Week 12**

Monday, December 13

Ecclesial Suffering  
-Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead*. (New York: Harper Perennial, 2004), pp. 1-104.

## **Exam Week**

December 14 – 17

## **Bibliography**

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"An Exhortation against the Fear of Death" *Book of Homilies*, Book 1.

<http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/Homilies/homilies1.pdf>

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- Hauerwas, Stanley. *God, Medicine, and Suffering*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
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- McMartin, Jason, et. al. "Christian Meaning-Making Through Suffering in Theology and Psychology of Religion" *Journal of Moral Theology*. 9, no. 1. 2020.
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