



Course Syllabus Wycliffe College Toronto School of Theology

This description is intended to assist in the course approval process and to assist students in determining whether this course will help them achieve their educational objectives and the learning goals of their program. It is not a learning contract. The details of the description are subject to change before the course begins. The course syllabus will be available to the class at the beginning of the course.

Course Identification

Course Number : WYT3217H/WYT6217
 Course Name: Does God Suffer?
 Campus: St. George

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dennis Ngien, PhD
 E-mail: den.ngien@utoronto.ca, dngienluther@gmail.com
 Office Hours:

Course Prerequisites or Requisites

Pre-requisite: WYT1101H Systematic Theology I

Course Description

The immense suffering of the modern world has had a profound impact on one's understanding of God and his relationship to human suffering. The growing consensus that God himself suffers in solidarity and love with the wounded ones needs re-examination. This course addresses the question of impassibility-passibility from the biblical, historical, theological and pastoral perspectives. Basic to the course are these questions: (a) Is a God who is impassible more loving and compassionate than a suffering God? (b) How do Christology, soteriology and Trinity interact in one's formulation of a doctrine of God? (c) How does one counsel those who suffer, if God is an unmoved mover or the apathetic deity?

Course Methodology

Lecture, seminar, and student interactions

Course Outcomes

BD Outcomes

COURSE OUTCOMES	COURSE ELEMENT	PROGRAM OUTCOMES
By the end of this course, students	This outcome will be achieved through these course elements:	This course outcome corresponds to these aspects

		of Wycliffe's statements of outcomes (MTS, MDiv)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will understand the historical antecedents to the formulation of the doctrine of God; 	Lectures, readings, paper assignment	MTS: 1.2 MDiv: 1.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will be able to identify acquainted with the modern assumptions and problems with the doctrine of divine impassibility and passibility; 	Lectures, readings; presentation, book review, paper assignments	MTS: 1.2 MDiv: 1.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will be able to identify the major theological issues and lines of theological disagreement on the issue; 	Lectures, readings; presentation, book review, paper assignments	MTS: 1.4 MDiv: 1.4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will be able to articulate the significance and relevance of the doctrine for practical ministry. 	Student interactions, presentation and paper assignments	MTS: 2.1, 2.3 MDiv: 2.1, 2.2

AD Outcomes

COURSE OUTCOMES	COURSE ELEMENT	PROGRAM OUTCOMES
By the end of this course, students	This outcome will be achieved through these course elements:	This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of TST's statements of Degree-Learning Expectations (PhD)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will understand the historical antecedents to the formulation of the doctrine of God; 	Lectures, readings; presentation, book review, and scholarly paper assignments	PhD: 1.1.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will be to identify the modern assumptions and problems with the doctrine of divine impassibility and passibility; 	Lectures, readings; presentation, book review, and scholarly paper assignments	PhD: 1.1.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will be able to identify the major theological issues and lines of theological disagreement on the issue; 	Lectures, readings; presentation, book review, and scholarly paper assignments	PhD: 1.1.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will be able to articulate the significance and relevance of the doctrine. 	Student interactions, scholarly paper assignment	PhD: 1.2

Course Resources

Required Course Texts

- Paul Gavriluk, *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Paperback edition is available. **Note:** Students who enrol for this course are required to read the text before classes start.

Recommended Course Texts

- Daniel Castelo, *The Apathetic God. Exploring the Contemporary Relevance of Divine Impassibility* (Bletchley: Paternoster Press, 2009).
- Rob Lister, *God is Impassible and Impassioned. Toward a Theology of Divine Emotion* (Illinois: Crossway, 2013).
- Terrence E. Fretheim, *The Suffering of God: an Old Testament Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).
- Paul Fiddes, *The Creative Suffering of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990)

Course Website(s)

- Blackboard <https://weblogin.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Blackboard for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT portal login page at <http://portal.utoronto.ca> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Blackboard-based courses. (Your course registration with ROSI gives you access to the course website at Blackboard.) Note also the information at <http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students>. Students who have trouble accessing Blackboard should ask Thomas Power for further help.

Class Schedule

Week I (Jan. 5): Introduction: The Language of Suffering of God and terminologies clarified – impassibility, impassioned, apatheia, unmoved mover or the most moved mover, theopaschism, patri-passianism or impassioned.

Required readings:

Daniel Castelo, *The Apathetic God. Exploring the Contemporary Relevance of Divine Impassibility* (Bletchley: Paternoster Press, 2009). See especially pages 14– 18 for a discussion of language.

Week 2 (Jan. 12): The Problem of Language

Required readings:

Bruce L. McCormack, “Divine Impassibility or Simply Divine Constancy? Implications for Karl Barth’s Later Christology for Debates over Impassibility,” in *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*, eds. Joseph F. Keating & Thomas Joseph White, 150– 86 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009). See section 1: Survey of Barth’s Use of the Key Terms in the debate [pages 151–58].

Gilles Emery, “The Immutability of the God of Love and the Problem of Language Concerning the ‘Suffering of God’,” in *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*, eds. Joseph F. Keating & Thomas Joseph White, 27–78 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009).

Week 3 (Jan. 19): Theory of Theology's fall into Hellenistic philosophy? (Gavrilyuk, Introduction and chapter 1).

Week 4 (Jan. 26): The Christian God Vs. Passionate Pagan Deities: Impassibility as an Apophatic Qualifier of Divine Emotions (Gavrilyuk, chapter 2)

Supplemental Reading:

Thomas G. Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 172–213, chapter 5: The Patristic Doctrine of God.

Week 5 (Feb. 2): The Old Testament Understanding of God's suffering

Required Reading:

Terrence E. Fretheim, *The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 107–66.

Week 6 (Feb. 9): Docetism Resisted: Christ's suffering is real (Gavrilyuk, chapter 3)

Supplemental Reading:

Gary Culpepper, "One Suffering, in Two Natures": An Analogical Inquiry into divine and Human Suffering," in *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*, eds. Joseph F. Keating & Thomas Joseph White, 77–98 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009).

Week 7 (Feb. 16): Patripassian Controversy Resolved: the Son, not God the Father, suffered in the Incarnation (Gavrilyuk, chapter 4)

Supplemental Readings:

Robert W. Jenson, "Ipse Pater Non Est Impassibilis," in *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*, eds. Joseph F. Keating & Thomas Joseph White, 117–26 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009).

Reading Week (Feb. 20 to 24): No Class

Week 8 (Mar. 2): Arianism Opposed: The Word's Divinity is not diminished by Involvement in Suffering (Gavrilyuk, Chapter 5)

Week 9 (Mar. 9): Nestorianism Countered: Cyril's Theology of Divine Kenosis (Gavrilyuk, chapter 6).

Supplemental reading:

Bruce D. Marshall, "The Dereliction of Christ and the Impassibility," in *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*, eds. Joseph F. Keating & Thomas Joseph White, 246–323 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009).

Week 10 (Mar. 16): The Usage of the doctrine of *communicatio idiomatum* (communication of idioms) in relation to divine suffering in the Reformation: Luther and Calvin

Required Readings:

Dennis Ngien, "Chalcedonian Christology and Beyond: Luther's usage of the Doctrine of Communicatio Idiomatum," *The Heythrop Journal* XLIV (2004): 54–68. [See my *The Suffering of God according to Martin Luther's 'Theologia Crucis'* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), especially chapter 3: Christology and Divine Suffering].

Joseph N. Tylenda, "Calvin's Understanding of the Communication of Properties," *Westminster Theological Journal* 38, no. 1 (Fall 1975): 54–65.

Supplemental Reading:

Thomas G. Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 172–213, chapter 8: The Incarnation and the Impassible Sufferers.

Week 11 (Mar. 23): (a) The Pastoral Implications of Divine Passibility

Required Reading:

Dennis Ngien, "The God Who Suffers," *Christianity Today* 41, no. 2 (February 1997): 38–42.

(b) The Contemporary Relevance of Divine Impassibility

Required Reading:

Daniel Castelo, *The Apathetic God. Exploring the Contemporary Relevance of Divine Impassibility* (Bletchley: Paternoster Press, 2009). Chapter 6: "Impassibility and Discipleship" (133–45).

Week 12 (Mar. 30): Conclusion: The Dialectics --- the impassible God suffers? Or the Passible God?

Required Readings:

Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of the Impassible God* (see Conclusion)

Paul L. Gavrilyuk, "God's Impassible Suffering in the Flesh: The Promise of Paradoxical Christology," in *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*, eds. Joseph F. Keating & Thomas Joseph White, 127–49 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009).

Evaluation

Requirements

1. **Class attendance and Participation: 15%** Students are expected to attend every class, do the assigned readings in advance and be prepared to engage in class.
2. **Student Presentation: 20%** The student will offer a brief presentation of an assigned topic, and lead a class discussion. He/she prepares enough copies for the whole class. The submitted draft to the professor for grading should comprise no more than 6 pages, double spaced. It should be submitted on the day when the student presents his/her paper.
3. **A Book Review: 25 %** Select a book from the list of bibliography below. The paper should consist of a summary of the author's view and a critical response to it. It should be double spaced, occupying 8-10 pages. The size is 12 of the Times New Roman font. Proper documentations are required, if external sources are quoted. **Due date: Feb., 09, 2017.**
4. **Final Paper: 40% Basic Degree Students** should use the materials taught and presented in classes, and from the list of bibliography below, to substantiate their stance. In Chicago style, the paper should be double spaced, occupying 12-15 pages. The size is 12 of the Times New Roman font. The paper should have at least 35 footnotes, drawing on materials from a minimum of 8 different sources.

****The Advanced Degree students are required to produce a scholarly paper of 25 pages.** The size is 12 of the Times New Roman font. The paper should have at least 50 footnotes, drawing on materials from a minimum of 15 different sources.

Evaluation will be based on the following criteria:

- (a) The clarity and accuracy of the arguments;
- (b) The intelligent use of texts to enrich the discussion;
- (c) The awareness of theological and philosophical issues in the argument;
- (d) The writing and presentational skills.

Deadline: April 06, 2017

Note: Student papers must be submitted in two versions: word document as well as pdf. Please send them to both emails stated above.

Grading System

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalents	Grade Point	Grasp of Subject Matter
A+	90–100%	4.0	Profound & Creative
A	85–89%	4.0	Outstanding
A-	80–84%	3.7	Excellent
B+	77–79%	3.3	Very Good
B	73–76%	3.0	Good
B-	70–72%	2.7	Satisfactory
FZ	0–69%	0	Failure

Grades without numerical equivalent:

CR	Designates credit; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value
NCR	Designates failure; has no numerical equivalent, but has a grade point value of 0 and is included in the GPA calculation
SDF	Standing deferred (a temporary extension)
INC	Permanent incomplete; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value
WDR	Withdrawal without academic penalty
AEG	May be given to a final year student who, because of illness, has completed at least 60% of the course, but not the whole course, and who would not otherwise be able to convocate; has no numerical equivalent and no grade point value

Policy on Assignment Extensions

Basic Degree students are expected to complete all course work by the end of the term in which they are registered. Under **exceptional circumstances**, with the written permission of the instructor, students may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An extension, when offered, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. An SDF must be requested no later than the last day of classes of the term in which the course is taken. The request form is available on the college website or from the Registrar’s office.

One percentage point per day will be deducted on the course grade if an extension has not been requested by the stated deadline.

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. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf>) or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. 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* (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>), a student who plagiarizes in this course. Students will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges (http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm).

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

Writing Style. The writing standard for the Toronto School of Theology is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 8th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), which is available at Crux Books.

Bibliography

Brasnett, Bertrand. *The Suffering of the Impassible God*. New York: Macmillan, 1928.

Castelo, Daniel. *The Apathetic God. Exploring the Contemporary Relevance of Divine Impassibility*. Bletchley: Paternoster Press, 2009.

Creel, Richard. *Divine Impassibility*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Fiddes, Paul. *The Creative Suffering of God*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

Fretheim, Terrence E. *The Suffering of God: an Old Testament Perspective*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.

Hallman, Joseph. *The Coming of the Impassible God: Tracing a Dilemma in Christian Theology*. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007.

Keating, James F, and Thomas Joseph White, eds. *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009.

Kitamori, Kazoh. *Theology of the Pain of God*. London: SCM, 1966.

Lister, Rob. *God is Impassible and Impassioned. Toward a Theology of Divine Emotion*. Illinois: Crossway, 2013.

Moltmann, Jurgen. *The Crucified God*. London: SCM, 1974.

———. *Trinity and the Kingdom of God*. London: SCM, 1981.

McWilliams, Warren. *The Passion of God. Divine Suffering in Contemporary Protestant Theology*. Mercer University Press, 1985.

Ngien, Dennis. *The Suffering of God according to Martin Luther's 'Theologia Crucis'*. New York: Peter Lang, 1995.

Sarot, Marcel. *God, Passibility and Corporeality*. Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1992.

Weinandy, Thomas G. *Does God Suffer?* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000.

DRAFT