

Course Syllabus
KNP3352/KNH6352 – Preaching and Trauma
Knox College
Toronto School of Theology
Winter 2023

Instructor Information

Instructor: Sarah Travis, ThD. Associate Professor
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Course Identification

Course Number: KNP3352 and KNH6352
Course Format: Online
Course Name: Preaching and Trauma
Course Location: Online via zoom
Class Times: Wednesdays 6-8pm
Prerequisites: An introductory preaching course.

Course Description

The presence of trauma in the world and in the sanctuary demands a response. Preachers are invited to become more trauma-sensitive and trauma-informed. This course will address themes of trauma at the intersection of homiletic theory, theological studies and trauma theory. Participants will explore the meaning of trauma, the various ways it impacts congregational life, and the manner in which preachers can respond effectively and pastorally to situations where trauma shapes the experience of listeners. Looking to scripture for guidance this course will navigate themes such as intergenerational trauma, memory, imagination, and hope. Participants will come away with a deeper understanding of the impact of trauma on pastoral ministry, strategies for preaching, and new vocabularies for naming God's presence and action in the world

Course Resources

Required Course Texts/Bibliography

- Travis, Sarah, and Paul Scott Wilson. *Unspeakable: Preaching and Trauma-Informed Theology*. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2021.
- Sancken, Joni S. *Words That Heal : Preaching Hope to Wounded Souls*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2019.

Graduate students will also read:

- Rambo, Shelly. *Spirit and Trauma: a Theology of Remaining*. 1st ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010.

- Menakem, Rasmaa. *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Healing our Minds and Bodies*. Central Recovery Press, 2017.

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://www.sarahtravis.ca>

Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Knox College

BD Level

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

(A) IN RESPECT OF GENERAL ACADEMIC SKILLS, students will identify and describe how trauma and theological insights may be applied to the practice of preaching.

(B) IN RESPECT OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTENT OF ONE OR MORE THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES. Students will demonstrate an introductory knowledge of the literature at the intersection of preaching and trauma studies.

(C) IN RESPECT OF PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION. Students will demonstrate ethical behaviour in their approach to sensitive topics and class discussion. This will include practicing skills such as listening to others with respect, and self-care.

(D) IN RESPECT OF MINISTERIAL AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP. Students will plan, prepare and preach sermons that are trauma sensitive and aware. They will assess student sermons for trauma-awareness and sensitivity.

Graduate Level

GRADUATE "DEGREE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS"	CORRESPONDING COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES	CORRESPONDING COURSE ELEMENTS / ASSIGNMENTS
EXPECTATIONS: In this course students are expected to demonstrate the following:		
1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge is defined as a set of	Students in this course will study the intersection of theological	Lectures, readings.

GRADUATE “DEGREE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS”	CORRESPONDING COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES	CORRESPONDING COURSE ELEMENTS / ASSIGNMENTS
<p>increasing levels of understanding within a student’s area of specialization, methodologies, primary & secondary sources, historical developments and inter-disciplinarity.</p>	<p>and trauma studies as relating to preaching, so that they can demonstrate knowledge of the field and assess the need to alter preaching styles in the face of trauma.</p>	
<p>2. Research and Scholarship is defined as the ability to identify a new or unresolved question, to locate that question within a corpus of scholarly research & assess critically the relevant literature, to adopt a methodology(-ies), and to then formulate a thesis and reasoned argument(s) on the basis of the evidence.</p>	<p>Students will pose a question related to preaching and trauma, critically assess the relevant literature, and produce an artifact which demonstrates the ability to assess the field and apply it to the situation of the contemporary church.</p>	<p>Research Paper Providing an article/chapter for all students to read.</p>
<p>3. Level of Application of Knowledge is defined as the ability to engage in self-directed or assisted research, and the ability to produce innovative or original analysis within the context of graduate seminars and courses. In some cases this includes the application of a research language.</p>	<p>Students will critically engage homiletic and trauma methods in order to determine how these methods may be applied at the level of the congregation.</p>	<p>Case Study Seminar Research Paper</p>
<p>4. Professional Capacity or Autonomy is defined as the ability to translate the knowledge gained in other research or professional settings, e.g., to undertake further studies in their area of concentration; or to enter or return to other professional vocations for which an advanced understanding of Theological Studies is necessary or beneficial.</p>	<p>This course will generate deep personal and theological reflection so that students can translate their knowledge from the classroom to the pulpit.</p>	<p>Class Discussions Case Study Seminar Research Paper Sermons</p>

GRADUATE “DEGREE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS”	CORRESPONDING COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES	CORRESPONDING COURSE ELEMENTS / ASSIGNMENTS
<p>5. Level of Communication Skills is defined as clear and effective communication in both oral and written forms; the construction of logical arguments; the making of informed judgments on complex issues; and facility with standard conventions of style for scholarly writing. Cohort formation is a component of all graduate programs.</p>	<p>Students will demonstrate clear and competent oral and written communication skills.</p>	<p>Research Paper Case Study Seminar Sermons Class Discussions</p>
<p>6. Awareness of the Limits of Knowledge is defined as the recognition that Theological Studies is a complex discipline, comprising: a broad array of subject areas; methods and sources; various ecclesiastical traditions and social contexts; and, insights from other disciplines.</p>	<p>The intersection of preaching and trauma is a complex space. Students will describe the complexities of the field, as well as acknowledging the limits of knowledge about human suffering.</p>	<p>Research Paper Case Study Seminar</p>

Evaluation

Requirements

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

Basic Degree Students:

- (1) Participation (15%) In addition to participating in the regular activity of the class, including the reading of the required texts, students are expected to actively participate in the discussion and the evaluation of student sermons. Assessment will be based on the quality and quantity of interactions and the degree to which the student is able to relate their reading to the class discussion. NOTE: This is a course that deals with troubling and difficult materials. Grading will take into consideration that full participation may be difficult for some because of the often personal and troubling nature of the discussions.
- (2) Scriptural Interpretation Exercise. Students are asked to choose a biblical text and answer the four questions that will be presented in class on January 24. Assignments are due February 7. You may choose the same text that you will be using for your sermon preached in class (see below)

(3) Case Study Seminar and Sermon (25%) – Students are expected to prepare a case study that names a specific context for preaching, and outlines a traumatic situation that affects the congregation/context. The case study should be a **10 minute presentation**, following which the student will facilitate a discussion about the case study. The week following the seminar, students will **submit a written sermon** based on the situation described in the case study. The sermon should be approximately 1500 words.

The case study will be assessed by the clarity of information provided, the completeness of the case study, the ability to relate the congregational situation to trauma/homiletic/theological literature. The sermon will be assessed by its degree of trauma-awareness and sensitivity, its use of trauma-informed biblical interpretation and its impact on listeners. A rubric will be provided.

(4) Preach a Sermon in class (25%) – Students will prepare and preach a sermon on any biblical text that highlights themes of trauma. The sermon should be between 10 and 15 minutes, and may include visuals or any other didactic materials. The sermon will be assessed by its degree of trauma-awareness and sensitivity, its use of trauma-informed biblical interpretation and its impact on listeners. A rubric will be provided. Due as scheduled in class.

(5) Reflection paper (25%) – students will submit a 3000-4000 word reflection about what they have learned in the course. Specifically, students are asked to respond to the following questions:

How has your understanding of trauma been developed throughout this course? How will your preaching change based on what you have learned in the course? What are the unresolved issues for you in terms of preaching and trauma (what questions remain)?

The paper will be assessed in terms of how it answers these questions, its clarity and writing style, the degree to which it is able to critically evaluate the students experience of learning about trauma and preaching. Due: April 10

Graduate Students:

Evaluation will be based on 4 areas:

(1) Participation (15%) – In addition to participating in the regular activity of the class, including the reading of the required texts, students are expected to actively participate in the discussion and the evaluation of student sermons. NOTE: This is a course that deals with troubling and difficult materials. Grading will take into consideration that full participation may be difficult for some because of the often personal and troubling nature of the discussions.

(2) Case Study Seminar (30%) – Students are expected to prepare a case study that names a specific context for preaching, and outlines a traumatic situation that affects the congregation/context. The week prior to leading the seminar, students are asked to **select and share an article or chapter** for all students to read by January 24. The case study should be a **10 minute presentation**, following which the student will facilitate a discussion about the case study. The week following the seminar, students will **submit a written sermon** based on the situation described in the case study. The sermon should be approximately 1500 words. This article should relate in a significant way to your case study topic. The case study will be assessed by the clarity of information provided, the completeness of the case study, the ability to relate the congregational situation to trauma/homiletic/theological literature. The sermon will be assessed by its degree of trauma-awareness and sensitivity, its use of trauma-informed biblical interpretation and its impact on listeners. A rubric will be provided. Due as scheduled in class.

(3) Preach a Sermon in class (25%) – Students will prepare and preach a sermon on any biblical text that highlights themes of trauma. The sermon should be between 10 and 15 minutes, and may include

visuals or any other didactic materials. The sermon will be assessed by its degree of trauma-awareness and sensitivity, its use of trauma-informed biblical interpretation and its impact on listeners. A rubric will be provided. Due as scheduled in class.

(4) Final paper (30%) – Students will submit a 7000-word research paper that specifically addresses an issue related to preaching and trauma that is appropriate for the current context. Topics must be approved by the instructor. Paper will be assessed according to:

1. Clarity and cogency of argument which reflects an ability to communicate preaching and trauma themes clearly.
2. A demonstrated awareness of the state of the field of preaching and trauma that is clearly shown in the content of the discussion.
3. A comprehensive argument that identifies a key issue for preaching and trauma in the contemporary church.
5. The articulation of a credible constructive position regarding the relation of preaching and trauma.
6. Proper reference and end/footnote technique. Due date: April 10.

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

Grading System - Graduate Degree Students

5000, 6000 and 7000 level courses use the following alpha grading scale;

A+	(90-100)	Profound & creative
A	(85-89)	Outstanding
A-	(80-84)	Excellent
B+	(77-79)	Very Good
B	(73-76)	Good
B-	(70-72)	Satisfactory at a post-baccalaureate level
FZ	(0-69)	Failure

Please see the appropriate handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

Late work (BD). Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. If you contact the professor in advance, an extension may be offered. 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.

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.

Late work (Graduate). The prima facie deadline for the completion of work in a course is the last day of the examination week for the trimester in which the course is taken. Students are expected to meet the course deadlines of the instructor offering the course and are advised to plan their research projects accordingly. Students who find themselves unable to meet deadlines for completing coursework can, under certain conditions, receive extensions for completing the work after the dates set by the college in which the course is offered.

The authority to grant an extension for the completion of work in a course beyond the original TST or college deadline (whichever is earlier) for that course rests with the student's college Graduate Director, not the instructor of the course. Nevertheless, the instructor's signature is required for course extension requests to be processed. Students will petition their college Graduate Director for extensions, using a standard form provided by TST on its website. See Section 7.11 of the Conjoint Graduate Degree Handbook.

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

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/research/theology/avoiding-plagiarism-in-theological-writing/>

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. 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.

Inclusive Language Policy: all formal and informal coursework will follow the policy found at: https://knox.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Knox-College-Policy_Use-of-Language-Policy-and-Glossary_221003.pdf

Course Schedule

Week 1

January 10 Course introduction: Embodiment

Week 2

January 17 Topic: What is Trauma? What does it have to do with preaching?

Reading: Travis, Introduction, Chapter 1, 5
Sancken, Chapter 2

Week 3

January 24 Topic: Trauma Informed Scriptural Interpretation.
Writing a case study.

Reading: Sancken Chapter 3
(Graduate Students read Menakem)

Week 4

January 31 Topic: Preacher as Midwife to Grief and Hope.

Reading: Travis, Chapter 3,4

Week 5

February 7 Topic: Evaluating Trauma Sermons. What is a trauma-informed Sermon?

Reading: Travis, Chapter 2

Sancken Chapter 1
(Graduate Students read Rambo)

Week 6

February 14

Case Study Seminars

Reading: TBA – article to be provided by graduate students

Week 7

February 28

Topic: Case Study Seminars

Reading: TBA – article to be provided by graduate students.

Week 8

March 6

Topic: Case Study Seminars

Reading: TBA – article to be provided by graduate students.

Week 9

March 13

Class Sermons

Week 10

March 20

Class Sermons

Week 11

March 27

Class Sermons

Week 12

April 3

Topic: Post Traumatic Growth and Healing

Reading: Sancken Chapter 4

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