

**Course Syllabus**  
**KNT3548HF**  
**Theologies of the Body**

Knox College  
Toronto School of Theology  
Summer 2018

**Instructor Information**

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**Course Identification**

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Course Number: KNT3548HF  
Course Name: Theologies of the Body  
Course Format: In-class (some online content; see below)  
Course Location: Knox College, Academic Wing – Classroom 3  
Class Times: Fridays, 1:40 – 4:30 p.m., May-June 2018  
Prerequisites: KNT1101: Reformed Theology, or another introductory course in systematic theology

**Course Description:**

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In this course, students will begin to construct their own theologies of the body, in creative dialogue with questions raised by significant historical and contemporary theologians. The course will explore the role and function of the human body in past and present Christologies, ecclesiologies, theologies of sin, pneumatologies (theologies of the Holy Spirit) and eschatologies. It will also investigate how our theologies of the body impact pastoral and theological questions of eroticism, physical violence, gender inequality, racism, and medical ethics. Students' work will be assessed via weekly participation, short theological essays, a book-review, and an integrative essay. This course will follow the Toronto School of Theology's grading-scale, and will fulfill the pastoral requirement for a Systematic Theology elective.

**Course Resources**

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**Required Texts:**

- Betcher, Sharon V. *Spirit and the Politics of Disablement*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007.
- Reynolds, Thomas E. *Vulnerable Communion: a Theology of Disability and Hospitality*. New York: Brazos, 2008.
- Johnson, Jay Emerson. *Divine Communion: a Eucharistic Theology of Sexual Intimacy*. New York: Seabury, 2013.
- Vanier, Jean. *Becoming Human*. Toronto: Paulist, 1998.

Yong, Amos. *Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining Disability in Late Modernity*. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2007.

### **Course-Pack Excerpts:**

Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*. Edited by G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960. Vol. III.2.132-88, 367-405.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. "The Natural Life," in *Ethics*, ed. Clifford J. Green, trans. Reinhard Krauss, Charles C. West, and Douglas W. Stott. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1949 / 2005.

Charlton, James I. *Nothing About Us Without Us: Disability Oppression and Empowerment*. Berkeley: University of California, 1998. Ch. 5, "Consciousness and Alienation."

Eiesland, Nancy. *The Disabled God: Towards a Liberatory Theology of Disability*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994. Chs. 5, "The Disabled God" and 6, "Sacramental Bodies."

Isasi-Diaz, Ada Maria, and Eduardo Mendieta, "Freeing Subjugating Knowledges." In Isasi-Diaz, Ada Maria, and Eduardo Mendieta, eds. *Decolonizing Epistemologies: Latina/o Theology and Philosophy*. New York: Fordham, 2012.

Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: the Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985. Chapter 4: "The Structure of Belief and its Modulation into Material Making" (181-243).

Smith, Christine. "Preaching: Hospitality, De-Centering, Re-membling, and Right Relations." In *Purposes of Preaching*, ed. Jana Childers. St. Louis: Chalice, 2004.

Titchkosky, Tanya. *The Question of Access: Disability, Space, Meaning*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2011. Ch. 3: "Who? Disability Identity and the Question of Belonging."

### **Selected online readings (Blackboard):**

Swinton, John, *Raging with Compassion: Pastoral Responses to the Problem of Evil* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), ch. 4

Nakashima Brock, Rita, *Journeys by Heart: a Christology of Erotic Power* (New York: Crossroad, 1988), pp. 25-49

Lathrop, Gordon, *Holy Things: a Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), ch. 5.

### **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 ACORN 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 their professor for further help.

## **Learning Outcomes for Knox and Other Toronto School of Theology Students:**

### **General Academic Skills:**

- Identify and describe the Church's mission to people of all body-types in terms of Reformed and systematic theologies.
- Interpret Christian texts using diverse methods, sources, and norms.
- Identify and celebrate theological diversity within Christian traditions.

### **Understanding the Content of Theological Disciplines:**

- Engage broadly with Christian theological concepts such as healing, suffering, and resurrection.
- Integrate historical Christian doctrines with postmodern theologies of the body.
- Display knowledge of, and interact with Christian religious heritage to create an experiential understanding of the body.

### **Personal and Spiritual Formation:**

- Identify and/or develop a personal theology of the body.
- Describe and analyze the relationships among Christian life, ministry, and theologies of the body, within Reformed theology.
- Connect historical and contemporary theologies of the body to discourses concerning social justice, peace, environmental stewardship, and healing.

### **Ministerial and Public Leadership:**

- Integrate Reformed theologies with theologies of the body, and communicate their synthesis.
- Integrate and communicate Reformed and systematic theologies relative to ministerial and ecclesial praxis.
- Acquire skills for teaching the biblical text theologically to Christian congregations.
- Reflect on contextual challenges to the bodies of human beings within the Church, and address those challenges using theological reflection and pastoral experience.

### **Course Method and Evaluation**

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In-class lectures (the lecture notes will be made available online); classroom discussion and in-class pastoral integrative exercises; two short essays; one book-review; one integrative essay.

### **Requirements:**

All papers are to be submitted electronically to the professor ([ma.walker@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:ma.walker@mail.utoronto.ca)) on the day that they are due. Papers must be sent as a **.doc** or **.docx** file from a University of Toronto email address (**not** as PDF or RTF files, and **not** from a personal email address). Papers should contain numbered pages, and be doubled-spaced.

**Please note this course's late policy:** approval for an assignment extension must be obtained at least 48 hours before that assignment's due-date; otherwise, papers will face a deduction of one-

third of a letter-grade each day (that is, A becomes A-, B+ becomes B). Extensions are granted only in emergency situations; **computer or device issues do NOT constitute an emergency.**

1. **Short Paper: A Personal Theology of the Body**

**May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

Using the guiding questions provided at the end of this syllabus as a guide, explain your personal theology of the body in 450-500 words. Write as concisely and effectively as possible! **This paper does not require outside research:** you need not consult any sources outside of your own understanding of your body and its relation to theological reflection. This paper is meant to help you voice your convictions about your body as a foundation for your in-class learning. **Weight: 20% of final grade.**

2. **Short Paper: A Revised Theology of the Body**

**May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

Continuing to use the Guiding Questions, while also reflecting on **the readings we've done in class**, set out your revised theology of the body in 450-500 words. Again, be as concise and to the point as you can be! Discuss how your views have stayed the same, changed, expanded, become clearer, and so on. While you need not consult your first paper to complete this exercise, please keep it in your mind. Again, this paper is meant to help you in your reflection on your theology of the body. **Weight: 15% of final grade.**

3. **Book Review**

**May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

In 1200-1500 words, review **one** of the following four books, some copies of which will be placed on course reserve at the library: Kathy Black's *Healing Homiletic: Preaching and Disability*, Jennie Weiss Block's *Copious Hosting: a Theology of Access for People with Disabilities*, Molly C. Haslam's *Constructive Theology of Intellectual Disability: Human Being as Mutuality and Response*, **or** Jean Vanier's *Becoming Human*. You **may not** choose a book to review outside this list.

Please choose the book that you are **most** interested in reviewing. Which book helps you to engage the course-readings and discussions? The following criteria will guide evaluation:

- a. Has the student demonstrated a solid grasp of the author's core argument?
- b. Does the student discuss the book's important themes and/or parts?
- c. Does the student critically and generously engage the author's argument, and does the student use the course-materials to interact with that argument?
- d. Does the student ask, and answer, critical questions concerning the author's position?

**Weight: 25% of final grade.**

4. **Integrative Paper**

**June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018**

In 2250-2500 words, describe your revised theology of the body at length, using as your basis a part of the Christian tradition with which you substantially agree. Make your argument for your theology of the body based on:

- a. The course readings, with substantive and clear reference to texts from the course (here you must show the professor that you understand **the history of ideas** related to your chosen/developed theology of the body);
- b. The book you have chosen for review.

While no additional research **outside these crucial sources** is necessary, it is both permitted and most welcome. Please consult the professor should you wish to do additional research. This paper **must** contain a thesis, argument, and conclusion, **must** use proper reference-technique, and **must** append a bibliography. **Weight: 25% of final grade.**

#### 5. **Participation (15% of final grade):**

The shared learning-experiences of this class depend on each learner's fullest participation (that includes your professor!). That said, "participation" means not simply the frequency with which one talks in a classroom setting, but how one's speaking adds to the classroom's culture. Have you engaged the texts for the day deeply, hospitably, and critically, and are you trying to broaden your classmates' horizons? Are you listening to, respecting, and engaging with the ideas of your colleagues? Are you helping your colleagues to examine their own areas of inquiry? Are you willing to ask for help when you don't know how to engage with an idea or argument? Rightness is only one (small) facet of courteous participation in conversation; good participation evinces your desire to add to the group's collective discourse and learning-experiences.

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

#### **Grading System**

A+ (90-100)  
A (85-89)  
A- (80-84)  
B+ (77-79)  
B (73-76)  
B- (70-72)  
Failure

**Course grades:** Consistent 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.govern-ingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/grading.htm>) or college grading policy.

**Late Work:** Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. Again, this means a loss of a letter-grade per day late (A becomes A-, A- becomes B+, B+ become B...). This penalty is not applied to students with medical or compassionate difficulties; 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. The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course. Students who for exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness) are

unable to complete work by this date may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An SDF must be requested from the registrar’s office in the student’s college of registration no later than the last day of classes 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.

## **Other Policies**

**Accessibility: Students with disabilities and/or health-issues are entitled to inclusion and accommodation!** Students must register with the University of Toronto’s Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. If **you** search for accommodation, **we** can help you all the more quickly. Please ask the professor if you have any accessibility questions or issues.

### ***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/content/handbooks>) and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4871>). 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](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/be-haveac.htm>).

**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 are required to have a valid UofT email address. Students must have set up a UofT email address which is entered in the ROSI or 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 their UofT 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.

***Email communication with the course instructor.*** The professor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students should 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 professor is not obliged to respond to email from non-UToronto addresses. The instructor will seek to respond to any email in a timely fashion during the work week (Monday through Friday). Emails sent on the weekend will be replied to during the next work-week.

### **Guiding Questions:**

1. How do we construct our theologies of the body, and whom do they benefit?
2. What is *ableism*, and how does it shape our paradigms of the body?
3. What do inclusion, and an inclusive Church, look like?
4. Where do the sacraments fit into an ecclesiology of disability?
5. What is the role of Jesus Christ in such an ecclesiology?
6. How can the Church help people to give voice to their pain?
7. How can an inclusive Church promote glimpses of God's Reign?

### **Weekly Schedule:**

**May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018: Welcome to the Course!** Reading syllabus; talking about hopes, dreams, and expectations for the class. How do we construct our theologies of the body? Who do our theologies of the body benefit? What is ableism? **Please read for May 4<sup>th</sup>:** Betcher chs. 1 and 2; Reynolds ch. 1; Johnson, Introduction; Isasi-Diaz and Charlton (course-pack).

**May 11<sup>th</sup>: Shame and Exclusion vs. Justice and Inclusion. Part One:** Again, what is ableism? How does it shape our paradigms of the body? **Part Two:** How do we define *inclusion* in an accessible Church? What does the *ecclesiology* of an inclusive church look like? **Please Read for May 11<sup>th</sup>:** Betcher chs. 3 and 4; Johnson chs. 1 and 3; Reynolds ch. 2 and 3; Bonhoeffer and Titchkosky (coursepack). **Reminder: Short Paper #1 DUE!**

**May 18<sup>th</sup>: October 10: Part One: the Place of People with Intellectual Disabilities.** What does inclusion look like for people with intellectual disabilities in particular? How can the Church become more "heart" and less "head"? **Part Two: L'Arche as exemplar.** This session will examine Jean Vanier's idealistic group of global communities integrating intellectual and physical disability. How do L'Arche communities contribute to our growing theologies of the body? **Please read:** Betcher chs. 5 and 6; Reynolds ch. 4; Vanier, *Becoming Human* chs. 1-3; Smith (coursepack). **Reminder: Short Paper #2 due today.**

**May 25<sup>th</sup>: Part One: Contextualizing Jesus.** What promise does Jesus Christ hold for human beings who have varied abilities? A Christology of disability. **Part Two: the Place of the**

**Sacraments.** What do they do? What kind of communities are we trying to form around these rituals? **Please read:** Reynolds chs. 5 and 6; Johnson ch. 4; Yong ch. 4; Barth and Eiesland chs. 5 and 6 (coursepack); Ramshaw-Schmidt, *Christ in Sacred Speech*, pp. 81-92 (**Blackboard**). **Reminder: book review due today!**

**June 1<sup>st</sup>: Part One: The Place of Lament.** What does it mean for human beings to cry out to God, and their community, in pain? **How can we the Church help that to happen?** Eschatology, part one. **Part Two: Healing.** What does it mean for human beings with different abilities to want healing? Should healing and normalization mean conformity? Eschatology (pt. II). Eschatology (pt. I). **Please read:** Betcher ch. 7; Johnson ch. 5; Yong chs. 1, 3, 8, and 9; Smith (**again**; coursepack); Swinton 2007, ch. 4 (**Blackboard**).

**June 8<sup>th</sup>: Embodied Eschatology.** What does it mean for us to be part of *tikkun olam*, or world-repair? How can a Church inclusive of disability promote glimpses of God's Reign? **Please read:** Betcher, ch. 8; Reynolds ch. 7; Brock 1988, 25-49 (**Blackboard**).

**June 15<sup>th</sup>: Special Topic: Inclusive Design.** What would a church sanctuary constructed with *all* bodies in mind look like? **Please read:** Betcher chs. 9-10; Lathrop, *Holy Things* ch. 5 (**Blackboard**).

**June 22<sup>nd</sup>: That's a Wrap.** What have we learned in this class? How can we apply these lessons about the church as a community to our lives and congregations? **No readings. Reminder: integrative papers due today!**