
STH TT898/998

THEOLOGY AND TRAUMA

Boston University School of Theology
Fall 2018
12:30-3:15pm Thursdays

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[additional times may be added]

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“The traumatic event challenges an ordinary person to become a theologian, a philosopher, and a jurist. The survivor is called upon to articulate the values and beliefs that she once held and that the trauma destroyed. She stands mute before the emptiness of evil, feeling the insufficiency of any known system of explanation. Survivors of atrocity of every age and every culture come to a point in their testimony where all questions are reduced to one, spoken more in bewilderment than in outrage: Why? The answer is beyond human understanding.”

Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (178)

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Gloria Anzualdúa. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 25th anniversary edition.
- Peter Capretto and Eric Boynton, eds. *Trauma and Transcendence: Suffering and the Limits of Theory*. (Fordham University Press, 2018)
- Wendy Farley, *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2005)
- Shelly Rambo. *Resurrecting Wounds* (Baylor University Press, 2017)
- Segments of online course, “Love/Spiritual Perspectives on Compassion,” offered through Courage of Care, www.courageofcare.org

Select One:

- Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (Basic Books, 2015)
- Peter Levine. *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma*. (North Atlantic Books, 1997) – also available

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

- Deanna A. Thompson. *Glimpsing Resurrection: Cancer, Trauma, and Ministry* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2018)

THE COURSE

This course brings recent studies in the interdisciplinary study of trauma to bear on the field of theology. It explores the unique challenges that the phenomenon of trauma poses to theological claims about God, humans, and the nature and meaning of suffering. In turn, it examines the contributions that theology and religious traditions offer to an analyzing and addressing trauma. The course aims to familiarize students with the field of trauma studies and to deepen their ability to respond theologically to the complex challenges confronting traumatized persons and communities.

The course is loosely divided into four parts. The first explores theoretical and clinical studies of trauma. The second part focuses on the human condition. The third examines questions about the nature and presence of God. In the

final section, we explore questions about community and healing. Throughout the course, we continually press the questions: How does the phenomenon of trauma challenge and reshape the ways that theologians engage questions of suffering? What do theological understandings of the divine and human contribute to discussions of trauma? What challenges might particular contexts bring to religious leaders?

COURSE GOALS

- To gain deeper understanding of the phenomenon of trauma from a variety of clinical and theoretical perspectives
- To provide a working vocabulary and theological lens for addressing situations of trauma
- To assist students in navigating pressing issues from multiple theological perspectives
- To provide students with the necessary skills and vocabulary to do effective and passionate cross-disciplinary work
- To provide students with resources and insights for developing constructive theological proposals

LEARNING OUTCOMES

As a result of taking this course, students will be able to:

- To articulate a working theodicy
- To develop theological resources for addressing individual and communal experiences of trauma
- To work more effectively with care providers, through an ability to integrate the theological and the clinical discourses of trauma
- To produce a constructive project that will make a direct contribution to a particular community in which trauma is a central issue

INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM

Shelly Rambo is Associate Professor of Theology at Boston University School of Theology. Her research focuses on rethinking classical themes in the Christian tradition in light of contemporary experiences of suffering, trauma, and violence.

Sheila Otieno is a doctoral student in Theological Ethics, who received her Master of Divinity degree from Candler School of Theology in 2015 and a Master of Theology in Ethics from Duke Divinity School. A self-proclaimed Africanist, her research interests lie in global political theory, transnationalism, postcolonial approaches, religious ethics and cultural influence on religious and moral formation.

COURSE FORMAT

Each class session is divided into two segments. First, I will provide the necessary background material for the given topic. Second, we will engage in both large and small group discussions of key issues in the study of trauma and theology. Discussions will generate from the reading responses posted prior to the class session.

SUSTAINING PRACTICES

Given the topic, the readings and discussions in this course will impact you in ways that you may not anticipate. I encourage each member of the class to develop (or continue) a practice that sustains her/his mind, body, and spirit during the course of the semester. This may be a form of exercise, artistic expression, bodywork, or practice of prayer. Throughout the course, I will also be introducing you to forms of self-care, and I welcome you to share other practices that you find helpful. (Suggestions: singing in a choir, yoga, meditation, walking, breath-work, dance, painting). A good book to consult for practices of self-care in relationship to trauma is: Laura van Dernoot Lipsky and Connie Burk, *Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others*.

COURSE WEBSITE

To access the course website on Blackboard, go to <http://learn.bu.edu>. Click on the course number/name (TT898/998 Theology and Trauma). A copy of the syllabus, announcements, assignments, and other course documents will be available on the site.

COURSE GRADES

Your final course grade will be based on the following scale:

Preparation and Participation	5%
Short Papers (2 papers, 15% each)	30%
Working Theodicy	25%
Integrative Project (includes abstract)	35%
Hope Statement	5%

Your final course grade will be based on the following scale:

A	excellent in all respects	≥ 93
A-	good in all and excellent in most respects	= 90-92.99
B+	good in all and excellent in a few respects	= 87-89.99
B	good in all respects	= 83-86.99
B-	acceptable in all and good in most respects	= 80-82.99
C+	acceptable in all and good in a few respects	= 77-79.99
C	acceptable in all respects	= 73-76.99
C-	minimally acceptable (fail for MDiv/MTS)	= 70-72.99
D+		= 67-69.99
D		= 63-66.99
D-		= 60-62.99
F		≤ 59.99

Important due-dates:

- September 27: Draft of working theodicy
- Assigned weeks: Short papers
- November 1: Submit abstract of the final project
- November 8: Final working theodicy
- December 1: Final project due
- December 6: Hope Statement presented to the class

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

LATE WORK AND INCOMPLETES

All work must be turned in on time. If discussion postings are submitted *after* the assigned time, they will *not* be counted. If other papers are turned in after the assigned date, they will be marked down one-third a letter grade for each day they are not submitted. (For example: one day late - an 'A-' will be reduced to a 'B+') In extraneous circumstances, if an incomplete is granted, the student must work with the professor to meet the negotiated deadline for the assignment and he/she forfeits the right to written comments on the project. If you have outstanding circumstances that prevent you from completing the work by the assigned date, please consult with the professor.

PAPER FORMATTING AND DOCUMENTATION

Make sure that all of your assignments are properly documented. The important thing is to be consistent in your documentation and make sure that you provide accurate page numbers in order for me to locate quotes.

ALL PAPERS SHOULD BE: DOUBLE-SPACED WITH 12PT FONT AND 1 INCH MARGINS.

For short papers and the working theodicy, list the author's last name and page number after the sentence in which the reference is included. [Ex. (Farley, 22)]. If you are using a source that is outside of the required readings, please include a full citation in the form of a footnote. You do *not* need to include a works cited page.

For the final project, please follow the Turabian style formatting for these papers. Use *footnotes* (instead of endnotes). For your final project, you must include a bibliography/works cited page. This is not necessary for discussion postings. <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/turabian/citation-guide.html>

ACADEMIC CODE OF CONDUCT

The STH Academic Code of Conduct may be found on the STH website at: www.bu.edu/sth/academic/academic-conduct. All students are required to familiarize themselves with this code, its definitions of misconduct, and its sanctions. Students should especially familiarize themselves with the section on plagiarism.

PLAGIARISM

All written work in this course *must* be original to you. One of the goals of the class is to have you engage *primary* textual material. You may consult secondary sources, but please be careful when drawing from these works in your writings. If you consult outside texts, please cite these sources in the proper format. This pertains to all external sources (books, journals, lectures, sermons, web-sites). I am required by the School of Theology to report all suspected cases of plagiarism to the Academic Dean's Office for review. For detailed description of the policy and procedures, please consult the STH web-site at: www.bu.edu/sth/academic/academic-conduct

In many cases, students do not *intend* to plagiarize. These examples are copied from the University of Albany web-site (http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html#integrity) and may provide a fuller understanding of what falls under the plagiarism umbrella.

EXAMPLES OF PLAGIARISM INCLUDE: failure to acknowledge the source(s) of even a few phrases, sentences, or paragraphs; failure to acknowledge a quotation or paraphrase of paragraph-length sections of a paper; failure to acknowledge the source(s) of a major idea or the source(s) for an ordering principle central to the paper's or project's structure; failure to acknowledge the source (quoted, paraphrased, or summarized) of major sections or passages in the paper or project; the unacknowledged use of several major ideas or extensive reliance on another person's data, evidence, or critical method; submitting as one's own work, work borrowed, stolen, or purchased from someone else.

The School of Theology library is offering three 'anti-plagiarism' workshops this year. These will be helpful informational sessions that will provide information about how to properly document your research papers. For more information, contact Stacey Battles de Ramos at sbattles@bu.edu.

DISABILITIES

Any students who believe they have a disability should meet with BU Disability Services as soon as possible at the beginning of the semester to initiate disability verification and discuss accommodations that may be necessary to ensure your successful completion of course requirements. That office is at 19 Deerfield Street and can be contacted at 617-353-3658. Request for accommodations are then sent by that office to the Academic Dean who forwards them to the Instructor.

LANGUAGE

This course seeks to be inclusive of people of all genders, races, cultures, abilities, and sexual orientations. Throughout the course, we will endeavor to embody the principles set out in the BU student handbook and in the Community Principles. Please be mindful that, when writing papers, you should use terms like people, world, us, human being, humanity, etc. instead of the terms man, mankind, and men. Although it may sound repetitive, using the term ‘God’ instead of using male or female pronouns to reference the divine, is a recommended alternative to gender exclusive language. (i.e. God’s decision to love the world involved God’s gift of Godself to the world). You may also choose to alternate gendered pronouns, switching between male and female pronouns. There are all types of exclusions that have taken place in the history of Christian theology; as theologians in contemporary society and in a global context, we want to make sure that we don’t perpetuate those exclusions. If you have questions about the policy, please feel free to consult with the professor.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION (5%)

Attendance at each class session is required. A good classroom experience requires a collaborative effort and a student’s absence detracts from the learning process of the whole. If you are unable to attend a session, please let me know in advance. Any more than *two* absences will result in a demarcation of your final grade (an ‘A-’ will be reduced to an ‘B+’). Absence from class can occur in other forms as well. The expectation is that you will come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Discussion involves speaking, active listening, and raising questions that will move the conversation towards deeper insights.

Because the study of trauma can be challenging, you may notice differences in your engagement with the material, your interaction in discussions, and your responses to your colleagues. One of the commitments central to this class is that you do the work of checking in with yourself (where you are, what is getting triggered, level of awareness of your personal history) before reacting to statements made in class. Trauma studies requires this extra layer of reflection, given that feelings, sensations, and memories may emerge that do not typically enter the academic classroom. Because the dynamics of trauma are layered and complex, an extra level of attunement is required. Our classroom is an excellent environment in which to practice and hone our ability to be present, attuned, and respectful. We also have the opportunity to develop healthy boundaries for effective trauma response.

SHORT PAPERS (2 papers, 15% each – 30%) due date – questions match weekly readings

There are core questions that lie at the heart of trauma. This assignment aims to focus your readings on addressing those questions. On most weeks, you will find one or two short paper questions below the assigned readings for the week. Three times during the semester, you will respond to one of the questions. The aim of the short papers is to use the required readings to address the question and to extend it to issues that are significant for your communities of concern. Papers should not exceed 1,500 words.

The paper should contain three components:

1. Comprehension: What does the author(s) contribute to the question? [The aim is to show evidence that you read thoroughly and understand what the author(s) is saying.] – 2 to 2 ½ pages
2. Analysis: Why is it important? What’s at stake? - 1 ½ pages
3. Evaluation: What is the significance of the question for your context(s)? - 1 page

Your paper must correspond with the assigned week, and your paper must be uploaded to the “Short Papers” section of Dropbox the previous day by 5pm. Papers received after this time will *not* be counted.

Format for submitting short papers:

How to post on Blackboard:

1. Go to the main Blackboard site for the course (<http://learn.bu.edu>, “My Courses”)
2. Click on “Short Papers”

3. Click on the designated *date*. (ex. October 23)
4. Click on the discussion *thread*. (ex. God and Suffering)
5. Click 'Reply' (green button). This means that everyone is adding a single post to the main thread.
6. In the subject line, write your name and the date (i.e. Shelly Rambo – October 23)
7. Attach your document.
8. **Be sure to click “Submit” (bottom right of the page).**

WORKING THEODICY (25%)

Draft due Sept. 27; final any time before Nov. 8

How do you make sense of trauma given your understanding of God and the world?

Taking James Poling and Sallie McFague as guides, you will be developing a working theodicy that brings together: a) your history and formation; b) your understanding of God and God's relationship to the world; c) your context of work/ministry and your communities of concern. Although this working theodicy may change, this is your best attempt to present a cogent description of what grounds your theological responses to trauma.

- Part One is *autobiographical*. Identify key events, people, and ideas in your life that have shaped your working theodicy. This may mean including aspects of your religious tradition, 'conversion moments' (McFague), and/or a critical experience that shifted your thinking. Make sure to include at least one theological commitment or assumption that you bring to the study of trauma. How do you anticipate that it will impact your response to trauma? Examples: that forgiveness is required, or that suffering is redemptive. [no more than 750 words] – **due September 27**
- Part Two is a *theological statement* that reflects your work throughout the semester. Incorporate *two authors* from the course readings into this part of the assignment. I recommend that you use the credos (McFague and Poling) as templates for your theological statement.

The final working theodicy is a revised version of Part 1 and the addition of Part 2. into your final draft. We encourage you to reduce Part One to 500 words and leave more room for your theological statement. You will receive feedback on Part One, and the comments should help you in streamlining this part for the final assignment.

The final assignment should not exceed 1,250 words, which is approximately 5 pages. – **due on—or before-- November 8**

Checklist for evaluation: 1) Do the parts cohere? One of the aims in developing both parts is to achieve coherence between your history and the statements you make in part two. We, as readers, should be able to see how the theological statements develop from the history that you presented; 2) Is the credo well-developed and informed by the course materials? (two authors); 3) Is the paper well-structured and grammatically correct? Does it flow? [Test: Read the paper aloud to someone before submitting it. Does it convey your ideas in the best possible way?]

INTEGRATIVE PROJECT (35%)

Due Dec. 1

Many of you took the course because you are working in particular contexts in which the themes of the course are timely and relevant. Your project should be designed with this context in mind. For example, you may be working in a chaplaincy position in a VA hospital, or you may be studying towards a career in religion and public policy. How would what you know about trauma and theology be best presented in this context?

The final project provides you with an opportunity to integrate the readings and discussions that we have been discussing throughout the semester. You will design a project that reflects your best contribution to the interdisciplinary discussion between religious studies/theology and trauma. You will design the project with a *particular audience in mind*. I encourage you to consider two things in conceiving the project: 1) the issues and questions that concern you most, and 2) the medium through which these issues are best conveyed. Here are some suggestions:

- a fictional piece that you submit to a journal
- a set of sermons that you plan to preach
- a ritual composed for a particular event
- editorials that you submit to a magazine or newspaper
- study curriculum for a particular group
- a conference proposal and presentation
- a media piece
- a book review for a journal

Note: Some of you may want to take time to deepen your understanding of a particular area that has interested you throughout the course. Thus, the primary aim of your project will be to familiarize yourself with certain literatures. I encourage you to provide a reading list and discuss with me a written project that best corresponds with the set of readings. (i.e. You want to read the novels of Toni Morrison and consider her contribution to views of atonement in womanist thought. You then need to consider *who* will receive the insights that you have gained from the study. This will help shape the medium.)

The papers should be approximately 13-15 pages. If you are doing a creative piece, you may be asked to provide an additional explanatory piece.

On **November 1**, submit an abstract of your project. In this abstract, you will argue the importance of the project and the chosen medium. I will return it to you with comments in preparation for your final presentation and submission of the bibliography. The abstract must include the following components: 1) a brief description of your project, an explanation of why it is important, and the intended audience; 2) explanation of the medium; 3) a list of preliminary sources (at least 3 sources); 4) a brief statement explaining: what is *theological* about your project? What are the key theological issues you are engaging?

HOPE STATEMENT (5%)

Due Dec. 6

After a semester of studying trauma, it is important to reflect on hope in the aftermath of trauma. Is there hope, and, if so, what constitutes that hope? You will prepare a 180 second statement. It is not a definitive or binding statement but, instead, reflects where you are at that point in time. This may take written form, but it is not limited to this. On the last day of class, you will share this statement with the class, and it will be videotaped.

180 Second Hope Statements

Prompter Questions:

- When I think of hope, I think of..... (an image, person, place)
- As a Christian/Buddhist/Moslem/Jew (name your affiliation), where does your hope lie?
- In the aftermath of trauma, hope tastes like/smells like/feels like/sounds like.....

PH.D. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

To take this course at the doctoral level (900-level), you are expected to fulfill these additional requirements:

1. Instead of two short papers, you will do one short paper and expand the integrative project.
2. You are expected to read a & b in full. In c, select one that best bits with your own area of research. These readings will be accompanied by several doctoral-group discussions, with the aim of connecting your research in theological studies to the interdisciplinary study of trauma.
 - a. Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*
 - b. Boynton & Capretto, eds. *Trauma and Transcendence*

- c. One book that reflects different methodological engagements with trauma. You can select your own or choose one from the list below:
- i. Avery Gordon. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. (sociology)
 - ii. Dominique LaCapra. *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (history)
 - iii. Donovan Schaefer. *Religious Affects* (affect theory)
 - iv. Toni Morrison. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (literature, critical theory)
 - v. Kelly Oliver. *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* (philosophy)
 - vi. Susan Neiman. *Evil in Modern Thought* (philosophy)
 - vii. Jonathan Leer. *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation* (ethics)
 - viii. Eduard Glissant. *Poetics of Relation* (philosophy, postcolonial studies)

— COURSE SCHEDULE —

PART ONE: INTERPRETING TRAUMA (THEOLOGICALLY)

SEPTEMBER 6

Introduction to the Course and to the Study of Trauma

❖ **Begin reading:**

- Judith Herman's *Trauma and Recovery*
or
- Peter Levine's *Waking the Tiger*

SEPTEMBER 13

Diagnosing and Theorizing Trauma

❖ **Readings:**

- Finish Herman and Levine.
- Skim "PTSD from DSM-III to DSM-V" (pay close attention to p. 13, Criticisms of the PTSD model – end of chapter) and skim "History of Psychic Trauma" (pay close attention to pp. 42-45 on Freud) in *Handbook of PTSD*, 2nd ed., pp. 3-20, 38-59. (online through BU libraries)
- Cathy Caruth, introductions in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, pp. 3-12, 151-157.
- Dori Laub, ch. 2, "Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening," in *Testimony*, pp. 57-74.
- Cathy Caruth, "Introduction: The Wound and the Voice," in *Unclaimed Experience*, pp. 1-9.

- ❖ **Short Paper Question:** 1) What distinguishes trauma from other forms of suffering?; 2) What does witnessing entail?

SEPTEMBER 20

Expanding the Lens

❖ **Readings:**

- James Poling, "Introduction and A Personal Creed," in *Rethinking Faith: A Constructive Practical Theology*, pp. 1-11.

- Sallie McFague. "A Brief Credo." In *Life Abundant*, pp. 1-24.
- van der Kolk, Bessel. (2002). [In Terror's Grip: Healing the Ravages of Trauma](#). *Cerebrum*, 4, pp. 34-50. NY: The Dana Foundation. You can download the article from this site: <http://www.traumacenter.org/products/publications.php>
- Maria Root. "Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality," in *Personality and Psychopathology*, pp. 229-265. (focus on pp. 236-242)
- Ethan Watters, "The Americanization of Mental Illness," http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/10/magazine/10psyche-t.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
- Ann Cvetkovich, ch. 1, "The Everyday Life of Queer Trauma," in *Archive of Feelings*, pp. 15-48.
- Donna Orange, "Traumatized by Transcendence: My Other's Keeper," *Trauma and Transcendence*, pp. 70-82.
- Robert D. Stolorow, "Phenomenological-Contextualism All the Way Down: An Existential and Ethical Perspective on Emotional Trauma," in *Trauma and Transcendence*, pp. 53-69.

❖ **Short Paper Question:** What do theories of trauma 'miss' and why does it matter?

SEPTEMBER 27

Framing Theological Responses: Theodicy

❖ **Meditation:** *Guided Practice*, Brooke D. Lavalley, begin at minute 9.

❖ **Readings:**

- Wendy Farley, Part One, *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion*, pp. 11-39.
- Rebecca Chopp, "Theology and the Poetics of Testimony," in *Converging on Culture: Theologians in Dialogue with Cultural Analysis and Criticism*, pp. 56-70.
- Marcia Mount Shoop, "Refleshing Christian Spiritual Practice," *Trauma and Transcendence*, pp. 240-255.
- Eric Boynton, "Evil, Trauma, and the Building of Absences," *Trauma and Transcendence*, pp. 83-101.
- Emilie Townes, "To Be Called Beloved: Womanist Ontology in PostModern Refraction," *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics*, Vol. 13 (1993), pp. 93-115.
- Watch Marilyn McCord Adams, "What can Christian Theology say to the problem of evil?" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwMdWx5yysY> [For further reference: Adams and Adams, ed. *The Problem of Evil*]

❖ **Writing Assignment:** Draft of theodicy due.

PART TWO: WHO ARE WE (THAT WE CAN WOUND & BE SO WOUNDED)?

OCTOBER 4

Human Nature: Fear, Guilt, Shame

(Dr. Stephanie Arel, Andrew R. Mellon Fellow, National September 11 Memorial and Museum)

- ❖ **Meditation:** *Guided Practice*, John Makransky [from the tradition of Tibetan Buddhism]
- ❖ **Readings:**

- James Gilligan. “Shame, Guilt, and Violence,” *Social Research*, Winter 2003, pp. 1149-1180.
- Stephanie Arel, “Interpreting Shame Affectively,” in *Affect Theory, Shame, and Christian Formation*,” focus on pps. 30-37, 42-61.
- Richard Mollica “Humiliation,” in *Healing Invisible Wounds: Paths to Hope and Recovery in a Violent World*, pp. 62-87.
- Neta Crawford. “Human Nature and World Politics: Rethinking ‘Man.’” In *International Relations*, (2009), Vol. 23 (2), pp. 271-288.
- Louise Erdrich, “The Shawl,” *New Yorker*, March 5, 2001.
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2001/03/05/the-shawl-2>

- ❖ **Short Paper Question:** 1) Are human beings blameworthy for sin? (Julian of Norwich’s question); 2) What are essential components of a *theology* of shame?

OCTOBER 11

Human Nature: Origins

- ❖ **Meditation:** *Guided Practice*, Sheila Weinberg [from Judaism]
- ❖ **Readings:**
 - Wendy Farley, *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion*, pp. 40-133.
 - Selections from Augustine. *City of God*, Book 14, chs. 11-19 in *Creation and Humanity*, pp. 204-214.)
 - Selections from Reinhold Niebuhr. *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (Vol. 1, 251-260 in *Creation and Humanity*, pp. 282-288.
 - Gloria Anzaldúa, ch. 3, “Entering the Serpent,” *Borderlands*, pp. 47-61.
- ❖ **Short Paper Question:** 1) Are human beings fundamentally good?; 2) Is trauma a universal condition?

PART THREE: WHERE IS GOD IN THE SUFFERING?

OCTOBER 18

God and Suffering

- ❖ **Meditation:** *Guided Practice*, Wendy Farley [from Christianity]
- ❖ **Readings:**
 - Sallie McFague, “Is God in Charge?” in *Essentials in Christian Theology*, pp. 101-116.
 - John Cobb and David Ray Griffin, “God as Creative-Responsive Love,” in *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition*, pp. 41-62.
 - Anthony Pinn, “God’s Obituary: A Humanist Response to Mass Murder,” in *Religion Dispatches*, December 25, 2012.
http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/atheologies/6702/god_s_obituary_a_humanist_response_to_mass_murder
 - Melissa Raphael, “The Female Face of God in Auschwitz,” in Steven Katz (ed.) *Wrestling With God: Jewish Theological Responses During and After the Holocaust*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 649-662.
 - Hilary Scarcella, “Trauma and Theology: Prospects and Limits in Light of the Cross,” *Trauma and Transcendence*, pp. 256-282.

- ❖ **Short Paper Question:** 1) Is God in charge?; 2) Is God subject to suffering?
- ❖ suffering?

OCTOBER 25

The Politics of Trauma

- ❖ **Meditation:** Julie Forsythe [from Quakerism]
- ❖ **Readings:**
 - Judith Butler, “Violence, Mourning, Politics,” *Precarious Life*, pp. 19-49.
 - Daniel McAdams, “American Identity: The Redemptive Self.” *The General Psychologist*, Volume 43, No. 1, Spring 2008.
<http://www.redemptiveself.northwestern.edu/docs/publications/2094657112490a0f25ec2b9.pdf>
 - Michael Rothberg, “From Gaza to Warsaw: Mapping Multidirectional Memory,”
http://michaelrothberg.weebly.com/uploads/5/4/6/8/5468139/rothberg_from_gaza_to_warsaw.pdf
 - George Yancy, “Black Embodied Wounds and the Traumatic Impact of the White Imaginary,” *Trauma and Transcendence*, pp. 142-162.
- ❖ **Short Paper Question:** 1) Is precarity compatible with a redemptive framework? 2) Is multidirectionality theological?

NOVEMBER 1

Borders, Spirit & Witness (Conversation with Laura Rambikur, Gila River Health Care)

- ❖ **Meditation:** Choose two of the poems in *Borderlands*. Read each aloud slowly 2 times through. Pay attention to your breath as you read. After each recitation, take a couple of minutes to breathe. If the poem stirs up sadness, joy, pain, grief, wonder, take note and breathe these sensations in and out.
- ❖ **Readings:**
 - Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands*. chapters 1, 2, 4-7.
 - Shelly Rambo. “Saturday in New Orleans: Rethinking the Holy Spirit in the Aftermath of Trauma,” *Review and Expositor*. Vol. 105, No. 2, Spring 2008, pp. 229-244.
 - Listen to border-themed sermon by Laura Rambikur, BUSTH graduate and counselor at Gila River Health Care, *Gila River* Indian Community (GRIC), Sacaton, AZ; beginning at minute 16. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCiigV3ppsY>
- ❖ **Writing Assignment:** Abstract for final project.
- ❖ **Short Paper Question:** Is God present or absent in trauma?

NOVEMBER 8

Moral Injury & Colonial Histories

❖ **Meditation:** Homayra Ziad, *Guided Meditation* [from Islam]

❖ **Readings:**

- Ronald Eyerman, “Perpetrator Trauma and Collective Guilt: My Lai,” *Trauma and Transcendence*, pp. 163-194.
- Brett Litz, “Moral Injury and Moral Repair in War Veterans: A Preliminary Intervention Strategy,” *Clinical Psychology Review* 29 (2009), pp. 695-706.
- Joseph Wiinikka-Lydon, “Moral Injury as Inherent Political Critique: The Prophetic Possibilities of a New Term,” *Political Theology*, 2016, pp. 1014.
- Willie James Jennings, “War Bodies: Remembering Bodies in a Time of War,” in *Post-Traumatic Public Theology*, pp. 23-36.
- Shelly Rambo. ch. 4, “Discovering Wounds: Veteran Healing and Resurrection in the Upper Room,” *Resurrecting Wounds*, pp. 109-end.
- Watch Rev. Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock on Moral Injury and Soul Repair:
<https://www.voa.org/videos/rita-brock-discusses-moral-injury-soul-repair>

❖ **Writing Assignment:** Final working theodicy due.

❖ **Short Paper Question:** 1) Is there such a thing as good guilt?; 2) Is forgiveness necessary for healing?

PART FOUR: WHO ARE WE TO BE (IN THE AFTERMATH?)

NOVEMBER 15

Resurrection (Wounds)

❖ **Meditation:** Anant Rambachan, *Guided Meditation* [from Hinduism]

❖ **Readings:**

- Shelly Rambo, chs. 1-3, *Resurrecting Wounds*.
- Deanna Thompson, “The Virtual Body of Christ and the Embrace of those Traumatized by Cancer,” in *Post-Traumatic Public Theology*, 155-172; “Introduction,” in *Glimpsing Resurrection*, introduction, pp. 1-10.
- Calhoun, Lawrence G. and Richard G. Tedeschi. “Posttraumatic growth: The Positive Lessons of Loss.” In *Meaning Reconstruction and the Experience of Loss*, 4th ed. Edited by Robert A. Neimeyer, 157-172. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2005. (online access through BU libraries)

❖ **Short Paper Question:** 1) Do people ‘grow’ from trauma? 2) Why might resurrection be less than good news for people working through trauma?

NOVEMBER 22 – NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING

NOVEMBER 29

Visions of Afterliving

- ❖ **Meditation:** Howard Thurman, *Guided Meditation* [from Christianity & womanism]
- ❖ **Readings:**
 - Sharon Betcher, “Introduction” and “Chapter 4: In the Ruin of God,” *Spirit and the Obligation of Social Flesh*, pp. 1-25, 107-138.
 - Watch Dr. Betcher’s lecture, “Crip/tography: Disability Theology in the Ruins of God,” Harvard Divinity School, March 7, 2013.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AigFqXR4-s>
 - Marianne Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” *Poetics Today* 29.1 (Spring 2008), 103-128.
 - Michelle A. Walsh. “Taking Matter *Seriously*: Material Theopoetics in the Aftermath of Communal Violence,” in *Post-Traumatic Public Theology*, pp. 241-265.
 - Additional readings TBD.
- ❖ **Short Paper Question:** 1) What do spiritual practices contribute to the work of trauma healing?; 2) Can future generations heal past trauma?

DECEMBER 6

Hope

- ❖ **In-class Assignment:** presenting hope statements

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A SHORT LIST OF TRAUMA RESOURCES

1. David Baldwin’s Trauma Information Pages: www.trauma-pages.com
2. Sidran Institute: Traumatic Stress Education and Advocacy: <http://www.sidran.org/index.cfm>
3. The Witnessing Project: www.witnessingproject.org
4. The Trauma Center: www.traumacenter.org
5. Cory Johnson Program for Post-Traumatic Healing: <https://rpcsocialimpactctr.org/>
6. The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies: <http://www.istss.org> (For resources, membership (student membership - \$80/\$100), and conference presentation opportunities).
7. STAR program (Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience). Sponsored by Eastern Mennonite University and Church World Service. Information on training programs for religious leaders working with traumatized communities. <http://www.emu.edu/ctp/star/>
8. Child Witness to Violence Program at the Boston Medical Center, <http://www.childwinesstoviolence.org>
9. YogaHope, <http://www.yogahope.org/>
10. Kundalini Yoga Studio & Art Gallery, Hari Kirin Kaur Khalsa, www.artandyoga.com
11. Soul Repair Project: <http://www.brite.edu/soulrepair/>
12. Military Trauma Healing Projects: *Theater of War*, <http://www.philoctetesproject.org/>
Combat Paper Project, <http://www.combatpaper.org/video.html>

A SHORT LIST OF ‘TRAUMA THEOLOGY’ BOOKS

Jennifer Beste, *God and the Victim* (engaging Catholic theologian Karl Rahner)
Cynthia Hess, *Sites of Violence, Sites of Grace* (engaging non-violence, Mennonite tradition)
Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, *Bearing the Unbearable* (pastoral care and trauma)
Serene Jones, *Trauma and Grace* (reinterpreting theology of the cross, gospel narratives)
Flora Keshkgegian, *Redeeming Memories* (historical trauma, gospel narratives)
Dirk Lange, *Trauma Recalled* (liturgical theology, postmodern thinkers)
Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma* (theology of the Spirit, Gospel of John)