COURSE DESCRIPTION
TH5/729 - Thank Goodness, God is NOT in Control!
Evil, Ecology, and Eschatology from Open and Relational Theological Perspectives
Vancouver School of Theology SUMMER 2019

Thomas Jay Oord, Ph.D., Instructor
Professor’s email: tjoord@nnu.edu
Professor’s website: www.thomasjayoord.com

PURPOSE:
Open and Relational theologies come in many forms. They provide winsome resources for answering the biggest questions of our lives. They share an emphasis upon God’s love and relationality and a rethinking of classical views of omnipotence.

Beginning with the core of open and relational thinking, this course explores a variety of subjects subsumed under the broad category of "providence." At the center of discussion are ideas articulated in the new book, God Can’t: How to Believe in God and Love after Tragedy, Evil, and Abuse.

Using everyday language that rests upon a rich theological reservoir, the ideas in this course solve the problem of evil, argue that our lives ultimately matter, and lay out grounds for genuine hope.

COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES:
Students will….
• Understand the core of open and relational theologies
• Grasp the key issues at stake in reconciling divine love and power
• Learn five key dimensions in solving the problem of evil
• See how open and relational theologies address eschatology and ecology
• Identify practical steps toward implementing course topics into everyday life.

REQUIRED READINGS:
Required for all:
- Thomas Jay Oord, God Can’t: How to Believe in God and Love after Tragedy, Evil, and Abuse (SacraSage, 2019)

Required for those taking course for academic credit:

ASSIGNMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS
1. Reading and class participation: All Students including auditors are expected to do the stated required readings and participate in class discussions. 100% attendance is required of Certificate and Degree students.
2. Certificate students: Certificate students are required to do the reading required for all students, and hand in 5-6 pages of writing that demonstrates the ability to thoughtfully engage the material and reading for the class and gives a personal reflection on the reading and material covered.
3. Basic degree students (Diploma; MA; M.Div): are required to do the required readings for students taking the course for academic credit, do any required oral assignments during the course itself, and submit any combination of written assignments totaling approximately 1500-1875 words/6-8 pages.

4. Advanced degree students (Th.M): are required to do the required readings for students taking the course for academic credit, do any required oral assignments during the course itself, and submit any combination of written assignments totaling approximately 3750-4250 words/15-17 pages.

*Further details about assignments will be provided on the course syllabus.*