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Religion at Ground Zero: Theology in the Wake of Disaster and Terrorism
TH556 - SUMMER 2024
Course Description

PURPOSE: This course explores religious and theological responses to human tragedy, terrorism, trauma, and cultural shock.

PREREQUISITES: none

COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES:

- Distinguish various approaches to the impact of terrorism on contemporary culture and politics
- Discuss the relevance of interdisciplinary approaches to theological reflection
- Measure and critically evaluate different theories of theodicy
- Demonstrate familiarity with Christian, Jewish, and Muslim responses to the relation between religion and violence.
- Discuss one's understanding of one's personal assumptions about suffering
- Formulate a position on the relation between religion and violence
- Review one's clarity and confidence for speaking about disaster, religion in politics, and human suffering
- Evaluate distinct pastoral responses to disaster and terrorism
- Compare differing theoretical positions and appraise their relative merits

FORMAT AND CONTENT:

July 1-5, 2024
9 am to 12 noon

For on-campus students, work in the course consists of classes including lectures, discussions and small group exercises, some prepared before class. Distance students will participate through Zoom either synchronously at the same time as class, or asynchronously through recordings of class. Expectations for distance students will be spelled out in the syllabus.

TEXTS: There are no required textbooks, as weekly readings will be available on Populi.

EXPECTATIONS, ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

The expectations and assignments in this course include: active class participation in discussions, a short paper analyzing one of the assigned readings and a final research

paper on a topic to be assigned. Details for all assignments will be provided in the syllabus.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bergen, D. *The Sword of the Lord: Military Chaplains from the First to the Twenty-First Century* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2004)
- Christopher C. Brittain. *Religion at Ground Zero: Theological Responses to Times of Crisis* (T&T Clark, 2011)
- Thomas Brudholm & Thomas Cushman (eds.), *The Religious in Responses to Mass Atrocity: Interdisciplinary Responses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)
- Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso 2009)
- Michael Butter & Peter Knight, "The History of Conspiracy Theory Research," *Conspiracy Theories and the People Who Believe Them*, ed. Joseph E. Uscinski (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 33-43.
- Vincent J. Cornell, 'A Muslim to Muslims: Reflections after September 11', *Dissent from the Homeland* (Duke University Press, 2003), 325-336.
- Emil Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History* (Harper Torchbooks, 1970)
- Susan Faludi, *The Terror Dream* (London: Atlantic Books, 2007)
- David Bentley Hart, *The Doors of the Sea (Eerdmans, 2005)*.
- Stanley Hauerwas, 'September 11, 2001: A Pacifist Response', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101.2 (2002), 425-43.
- Serene Jones, *Trauma and Grace: Theology in a Ruptured World* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2008)
- Mark Juergensmeyer, "Does Religion Cause Terrorism," *The Cambridge Companion to Religion and Terrorism*, ed. James R. Lewis (Cambridge University Press, 2017), 11-22.
- Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors: Thinking about Religion after September 11* (Chicago University press, 2003)
- Yuki Miyamoto, *Beyond the Mushroom Cloud* (NW: Fordham, 2012)
- Haruki Murakami, *After the Quake* (NY: Vintage, 2003)
- Susan Neiman, *Evil in Modern Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002)
- Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009)
- G.A. Studdert Kennedy, 'What is God Like', *The Hardest Part* (1918)
- John Swinton, *Raging with Compassion* (Eerdmans 2007)
- Emmanuel Todd, *Who is Charlie?* (London: Polity Press, 2015)
- Emilie M. Townes, *A Troubling in My Soul: Womanist Perspectives on Evil & Suffering* (Orbis Books, 2015)
- Voltaire, "The Lisbon Earthquake," *The Portable Voltaire*, ed. Ben Ray Redmond (New York: Penguin, 1977), 556-569.
- Amina Wadud, "American by Force, Muslim by Choice" *Political Theology* 5 (2011) 12, pp. 699-705.

- Elie Wiesel, *Night*, trans. Stela Rodway (Toronto, NY: Bantam, 1986)
- Rowan Williams, *Writing in the Dust* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002)
- Robert Wuthnow, *Be Very Afraid* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010)