Conrad Grebel University College

Toronto School of Theology

CGT 3511 God and Abuse: Theology Close to Home

Fall 2019

Class Time: Mondays 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Location: Toronto School of Theology, Seminar Room

Instructor: Assistant Professor Carol Penner

Office Hours: 90 minutes before class

Phone: 519-885-0220 x24221

Email: c2penner@uwaterloo.ca

# Course Description:

This course will examine a variety of theological voices coming out of contexts of abuse.  How do we do theology in churches which include both survivors and perpetrators of violence?  We will be reading about sin, repentance, restorative justice, healing, and forgiveness in the contexts of child abuse, spousal violence, and abuse by clergy.  How do churches help or hinder those in need of healing?

# Learning Goals

1. Students will be able to identify the varieties of abuse within various power systems in religious organizations.
2. Students will be able to determine the theological themes within various stories of abuse.
3. Students will demonstrate research and writing skills, showing familiarity with theologians in this area.
4. Students will be able to apply learnings from this course to contemporary theological contexts.

# Required Reading Materials:

## Texts:

*Beyond Abuse in the Christian Home*. Edited by Catherine Clark Kroeger, Nancy Nason-Clark, Barbara Fisher-Townsend. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2008.

*Violence Against Women and Children: A Christian Theological Sourcebook*. Edited by Carol J. Adams and Marie M. Fortune. New York: Continuum, 1995.

Yantzi, Mark. *Sexual Offending and Restoration*. Waterloo: Herald Press, 1998.

## Articles & Chapters:

Adams, Carol J. “Naming.” In *Woman-Battering*, pp. 28-45. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.

Anderson, Christopher M. “Improving the Response to Male Sexual Abuse: A Primer for Communities of Faith.”  *Currents in Theology and Mission* 45, no. 3 (July, 2018): 45-49.

Beste, Jennifer. “Mediating God's Grace within the Context of Trauma: Implications for a Christian Response to Clergy Sexual Abuse.” *Review & Expositor* 105, no 2 (Spring 2008), pp. 245-260.

Brock, Rita Nakashima. “Ending Innocence and Nurturing Willfulness” in *Violence Against Women and Children*, pp. 71-84.

Brown, Joanne Carlson and Rebecca Parker, “For God so Loved the World?” In *Violence Against Women and Children*, pp. 36-59.

Capps, Donald. “Religious Sources of Childhood Trauma.” In *The Child’s Song: The Religious Abuse of Children*, pp. 37-57. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995.

Cooper-White, Pamela. “Clergy Sexual Abuse.” In *The Cry of Tamar: Violence Against Women and the Church’s Response,* pp. 126-144. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.

Cramer, David C., Jenny Howell, Paul Martens, Cat Ngac Jonathan Tran.“Theology and Misconduct: The Case of John Howard Yoder.” *Christian Century* 131, no. 17 (Aug 2014): 20-23.

Eugene, Toinette M. “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot! A Womanist Ethical Response to Sexual Violence and Abuse.” In *Violence Against Women and Children*, pp. 185-200.

Everhart, Ruth. “The Bible’s #MeToo Stories,” *Christian Century* 135, no. 16 (August 2018); 22-25.

Feldmeth, Joanne Ross, and Midge Wallace Finley. “Discovery of the Lost Child.” In *We Weep for Ourselves and our Children: A Christian Guide for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse*, pp. 1-19. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1990.

Filemoni-Tofaeono, Joan Alleluia and Lydia John. “The Praxis of Violence Against Women in the Oceanian Theological School Setting.” *Reweaving the Relational Mat: A Christian Response to Violence Against Women from Oceania*, pp.124-138. London: Equinox, 2006.

Fortune, Marie M. “The Transformation of Suffering: A Biblical and Theological Perspective.” In *Violence Against Women and Children,* pp. 85-91.

Heggen, Carolyn Holderread. “The Victim and Resultant Issues. ” In *Sexual Abuse in Christian Homes and Churches,* pp. 26-48. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1993.

Jensen, Cory Jewell. “Understanding and Working with Adult Sex Offenders in the church.” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 45, no. 3 (July 2018): 36-40.

Koontz, Gayle Gerber. “Seventy Times Seven: Abuse and the Frustratingly Extravagant Call to Forgive.” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 89, no. 1 (Jan 2015): 129-152.

Krall, Ruth E. “Christian Ideology, Rape and Women’s Postrape Journeys to Healing.” In *Peace Theology and Violence Against Women*, pp. 76-92. Elkhart: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1992.

Kroeger, Marjorie P. “Overcoming Sexual Addictions.” in *Beyond Abuse in the Christian Home,* pp. 140-145.

Liberty, Patricia L. “Victims/Survivors: The Healing Journey.” In *When a Congregation is Betrayed: Responding to Clergy Sexual Misconduct*, edited by Beth Ann Gaede, pp. 74-80. Herndon: Alban Institute, 2006.

McAndless-Davis, Karen and Bruce. “One Couple’s Story of Dramatic Change.” In *Beyond Abuse in the Christian Home*, pp. 47-58.

McKay, Stan. “Healing in Communities Following an Experience of Mission as Oppression.” In *Violence Against Women and Children*, pp. 404-411.

Melinda, “A Bent-over Woman Stands Up.” In *Victim to Survivor: Women Recovering from Clergy Sexual Abuse*, edited by Nancy Werking Poling, pp. 1-21. Cleveland: United Church Press, 1999.

Owen, Julie. “A Survivor Looks Back.” In *Beyond Abuse in the Christian Home*, pp. 3-23.

Penner, Carol. “Congregational Life After Abuse.” In *Spirituality and Health: Multidisciplinary Explorations*, edited by Augustine Meier, Thomas St. James O’Connor and Peter VanKatwyk, pp. 73-84. Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2005.

Penner, Carol. “Content to Suffer: An Exploration of Mennonite Theology from the Context of Violence Against Women.” In *Peace Theology and Violence Against Women*, pp. 99-118. Elkhart: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1992.

Penner, Carol. “How inclusive is the inclusive church?” In *At Peace and Unafraid: Public Order, Security, and the Wisdom of the Cross*, edited by Duane K. Friesen and Gerald W. Schlabach, pp. 195-210. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2005.

Pope-Lance, Deborah. “Afterpastors: Restoring Pastoral Trust.” In *When a Congregation is Betrayed: Responding to Clergy Sexual Misconduct*, edited by Beth Ann Gaede, pp. 53-63. Herndon: Alban Institute, 2006.

Proctor-Smith, Marjorie. “Reorganizing Victimization: The Intersection between Liturgy and Domestic Violence.” In *Violence Against Women and Children*, pp. 428-443.

Proctor-Smith, Marjorie. “The Whole Loaf: Holy Communion and Survival.” In *Violence Against Women and Children: A Christian Theological Sourcebook*, pp. 464-478.

Schroeder, Joy A. ”Marguerite of Navarre Breaks Silence about Sixteenth-Century Clergy Sexual Violence.” *Lutheran Quarterly* 7, No. 2 (Summer 1993), pp. 171-190.

Smith, Andy. “Christian Conquest and the Sexual Colonization of Native Women.” In *Violence Against Women and Children*, pp. 377-403.

Taves, Ann. “The Power to See and the Power to Name: American Church History and the Problem of Domestic Violence.” In *Violence Against Women and Children,* pp. 262-278.

Tchividjian, Basyle. “Responding with Excellence to an Allegation of Sexual Abuse within the Church.” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 35, no. 3 (July 2018): 41-44.

Thorson, Martha. “Forgiveness and the Christian Community.” In *Beyond Abuse in the Christian Home*, pp. 71-77.

Yantzi, Mark. “A Caring Church Responding to those who have Offended.” In *Sexual Offending and Restoration*, pp. 135-153.

Yantzi, Mark. “Applying Restorative Justice.” In *Sexual Offending and Restoration*, pp. 65-80.

Yantzi, Mark. “The Hurts of Sexual Abuse.” In *Sexual Offending and Restoration*, pp. 25-37.

Yantzi, Mark. “Restorative Justice.” In *Sexual Offending and Restoration*, pp. 51-65 .

Yantzi, Mark. “Restorative Justice in Difficult Cases.” In *Sexual Offending and Restoration*, pp. 167-182.

Yantzi, Mark. “Why Sexual Abuse Takes Place.” In *Sexual Offending and Restoration*, pp. 38-50.

# Evaluations:

| Assignment | Weighting | Due Date |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Media Journal | 30% | Week 6 |
| Major Paper | 40% | Week 10 |
| Seminar Presentation | 20% | Week 11 & 12 |
| Class Participation | 10% |  |

## Media Journal (30%)

Length: 2000 words  
Due Date: October 28, 2019  
In this assignment the student will write four journal entries (400-500 words each), where they look at how theology and abuse are being presented in a variety of media. Students will comment on the effectiveness of the particular item they are looking at in explaining the complexity of abuse, and comment on the theological issues that the item raises.

* In-depth news articles about abuse in the church in the secular or religious press
* A movie or documentary about abuse in the church (e.g. *Spotlight)*
* A website that provides support for survivors in religious settings (e.g. *snapnetwork.org* or *IntoAccount.org)*

## Major Paper (40%)

Length: 2500 – 3000 words  
Due Date: December 2, 2019  
Each student will choose a topic to research. This may be a type of abuse, a context for abuse, or a relevant theological issue. Your paper should contain an opening paragraph where you outline your topic and how you are going to examine it, and a conclusion where you summarize your findings and point to future research possibilities. Your bibliography must contain at a minimum four books and three articles. Possible research topics include:

* Abuse in Evangelical Communities
* The Catholic Church in Canada and Child Sexual Abuse
* A Theology for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse
* Submission, Forgiveness and Wife Battering,
* Churches and People who Offend: Inclusion or Exclusion?
* Preventing Sexual Abuse in Churches: Creating a Safe Space
* Elder Abuse and the Church: A Hidden Problem
* Responding to Historical Revelations of Clergy Sexual Abuse
* Worship that is Sensitive to the Context of Abuse

## Seminar Presentation (20%)

Due Date: Scheduled for one of the last two weeks of classes.   
Length: 30 minutes

In this seminar you will present the findings of your research paper to the class. This does not mean reading your paper, but rather you will sum up your research in an engaging 15 minute presentation, after which you will lead a 15 minute class discussion on the topic.

## Class Participation (10%)

Students are expected to attend class, having prepared ahead by reading the assigned texts for the day. If you cannot attend class, please email the professor. If you are absent for more than three classes, even with a valid excuse, you may be expected to do an additional assignment in order to receive this mark.

# Course Schedule:

| Week | Topic | Readings |
| --- | --- | --- |
| #1. Sept. 9 | Abuse in Scripture | Everhart, “The Bible’s #MeToo Stories,” pp. 22-25. |
| #2. Sept. 16 | The Importance of Naming Abuse | Adams, “Naming,” pp. 28-45.  Owen, “A Survivor Looks Back,” pp. 3-23.  Yantzi, “Why Sexual Abuse Takes Place,” “The Hurts of Sexual Abuse,” pp. 25-50 |
| #3. Sept. 23 | Abuse and Power | Smith, “Christian Conquest and the Sexual Colonization of Native Women,” pp. 377-403.  Taves, “The Power to See and the Power to Name,” pp. 262-278.  Eugene, “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot!” pp. 185-200. |
| #4. Sept.  30 | Sin and Victimization | Anderson, “Improving the Response to Male Sexual Abuse,” pp. 45-49.  Capps, “Religious Sources of Childhood Trauma,” pp. 37-57.  Feldmeth and Finley, “Discovery of the Lost Child,” pp. 1-19. |
| #5.  Oct. 7 | Confronting Sin in Institutions | “A Bent-over Woman Stands Up,” pp. 1-21.  Cramer et. al., “Theology and Misconduct: The Case of John Howard Yoder,” pp. 20-23.  Filemoni-Tofaeono and John. “The Praxis of Violence Against Women in the Oceanian Theological School Setting,” pp.124-138. |
| Oct 14 | Thanksgiving – No Class |  |
| Oct 21 | Reading Week – No Class |  |
| #6.  Oct. 28 | Understanding Clergy Abuse | Cooper-White, “Clergy Sexual Abuse,” pp. 126-144. Schroeder, ”Marguerite of Navarre Breaks Silence,”pp. 171-190.  Tchividjian, “Responding with Excellence to an Allegation of Sexual Abuse within the Church,” pp. 41-44. |
| #7.  Nov. 4 | Obedience and Shame | Brock, “Ending Innocence and Nurturing Willfulness,” pp. 71-84.  Heggen, “The Victim and Resultant Issues*,”* pp. 26-48.  Kroeger, “Overcoming Sexual Addictions,” pp. 140-145.  Krall, “Christian Ideology, Rape and Women’s Post rape Journeys to Healing,” pp. 76-92. |
| #8.  Nov. 11 | Suffering  (room change to Boardroom | Brown and Parker, “For God so Loved the World?” pp. 36-59.  Fortune, “The Transformation of Suffering: A Biblical and Theological Perspective,” pp. 85-91.  Penner, “Content to Suffer: An Exploration of Mennonite Theology,” pp. 99-118. |
| #9.  Nov. 18 | Forgiveness | Koontz, “Seventy Times Seven: Abuse and the Frustratingly Extravagant Call to Forgive,” pp. 129-152.  Thorson, “Forgiveness and the Christian Community,” pp. 71-77.  Yantzi, “Restorative Justice,” “Applying Restorative Justice,” “Restorative Justice in Difficult Cases,” pp. 66-80, 167-182. |
| #10.  Nov. 25 | Punishment and Grace | Beste, “Mediating God's Grace within the Context of Trauma,” pp. 245-260.  Jensen, “Understanding and Working with Adult Sex Offenders in the Church,”pp. 36-40.  Penner, “How inclusive is the inclusive church?” pp. 195-210. |
| #11.  Dec. 2 | Healing from Abuse in Community | Liberty, “Victims/Survivors: The Healing Journey,” pp. 74-80.  McAndless-Davis, “One Couple’s Story of Dramatic Change,” pp. 47-58.  Pope-Lance, “Afterpastors: Restoring Pastoral Trust,” pp. 53-63.  Yantzi, “A Caring Church Responding to those who have Offended,” pp. 135-153. |
| #12.  Dec. 9 | Worship and Safe Spaces | McKay, “Healing in Communities Following an Experience of Mission as Oppression,” pp. 404-411.  Penner, “Congregational Life After Abuse,” pp. 73-84.  Proctor-Smith. “Reorganizing Victimization,”  pp. 428-443.  Proctor-Smith, “The Whole Loaf: Holy Communion and Survival,” pp. 464-478. |