

The Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) is a consortium of denominational seminaries whose mission is to educate Christian leaders for ministry and service in the Church and the global community. The ITC educates and nurtures women and men who commit to and practice: a liberating and transforming spirituality; academic discipline; religious, gender, and cultural diversity; and justice and peace.

Spring 2008

**Healing Miracles: Biblical Exegesis and Pastoral
Theology in the Context of HIV/AIDS
BSL 580: Healing Miracles
PSC 733: Ethics and Pastoral Care**

Tuesdays 1:20 – 4:00 p.m.

Teaching Staff

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Tuesday night on-line chat with both professors: 9-11 p.m.

Interdenominational Theological Center
Atlanta, GA

Course Description

Talking across disciplines

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges facing seminarians is the lack of integration between the disciplines of the academy, a lack of integration facilitated by the ways in which disciplines are taught in advanced graduate studies. This course seeks to start a conversation across the disciplines of the theology and ethics of pastoral care, and biblical studies through an examination of the healing miracles and the theo-ethical barriers and facilitators to pastoral care and healing.

Exegesis: A Critical Engagement of the Text

One point of entry into this ongoing discussion is to engage in biblical exegesis. Exegesis takes a particular type of systematic approach to the study of an ancient text. The interest of exegesis is primarily historical and literary: it leads the scholar to consider a text within its ancient socio-historical and literary contexts, including the ideology of the author and the location of the ancient readers. However, with the rise of postmodernity and the increasing awareness of the subjectivity of even the most systematic of analyses, the location of the contemporary reader is now also being considered a factor in interpretation. Readers previously underrepresented within the academy can, at times, bring to the text a healthy suspicion that it harbors and perpetuates harmful as well as salvific constructs. Exegesis is not the only way to consider the language of healing in the synoptic gospels; but it is a way, and it will be treated as such.

Theo-ethical and Pastoral care considerations of Healing

The second point of entry into the ongoing discussion is to reflect on the theological, ethical, and pastoral care implications of one's exegesis. Just as the contemporary reader's social location informs how interpretative choices are made, the reader's interpretation informs her or his particular theologies, doctrines, morals, and ethics; and, ultimately, the reader's interpretation influences the provision of pastoral care. In particular, one's theological and ethical assumptions contribute to the beliefs, attitudes, mores, and behaviors that influence the practical dimensions of pastoral care in regard to sickness, disease, and general health and wellness. Ethical issues of health status and physical ability as well as issues of sex/gender, race, age, social class, and sexual orientation have implications for a theo-ethical vision of pastoral care (as opposed to value-neutral approaches to pastoral care). Within this pastoral care method, one must consider not only the positive implications of theological and religious beliefs but also the negative implications, or barriers, regarding both the personal and socio-moral impact on health and wellness. A theo-ethical vision of pastoral care is not the only approach to pastoral care; but, it is a way, and it will be treated as such.

Prerequisite: Students who wish to take this course for exegetical credit must have taken and passed (with a C or better) IBSL 531. There is no prerequisite for students wishing to take the course as PSC 732.

Course Requirements

- A three-page reflection paper that will take stock of your experience with the Bible and matters of “healing,” specifically focused around HIV/AIDS. The instructions for this will be handed out on January 22, 2008, in class. The paper is due on January 29, 2008, posted to the Moodle website by no later than 1 p.m. Students *will* be reading this paper aloud in class, so students should bring a hard-copy of the paper to class. [14 pts]
- Three required two-paragraph critical discussions of readings, to be posted on Moodle forums [18 pts—6 pts each]
- Three required two-paragraph critical responses to discussions of readings, to be posted on Moodle forums [18 pts—6 pts each]
- Short hermeneutical discussions: Students will be required to write two short hermeneutical discussions of assigned passages over the course of the semester. Each discussion may not exceed 3 pp. in length (exclusive of footnotes/bibliography). Hermeneutical discussions are due, uploaded to the Moodle website, as noted on the syllabus below. [20 pts each: 40 pts total]
- Pastoral care responses to exegetical discussions: Students will be required to write a 1-2 page response to two of their fellow students’ exegetical discussions, in which they consider the pastoral care matters which emerge from the biblical passage. These will be assigned. Pastoral care responses to exegetical discussions are due, uploaded to the Moodle website, as noted on the syllabus below. [20 pts each: 40 pts total]
- One-paragraph responses to three postings on Moodle forums between March 11 and April 27 (3 responses total) Students are to write and to post to the Moodle forums one paragraph responses to either a hermeneutical discussion or a pastoral care response that they did not write. One may respond to a response to one’s own paper. [18 pts—6 pts each].
- Annotated Bibliography: A Class-based Wiki: Choose two articles from the JSTOR database that no one else is using on HIV/AIDS and theology, pastoral theology, Bible, biblical hermeneutics, religion, health and/or healing, and add them to the wiki in bibliographic format, each one followed by an annotation of not longer than 75 words. [12 pts—6 pts each]
- Final Examination Students will be given a passage in class on January 22, 2008. In that class they will be required to exegete the passage, highlight their major exegetical findings and outline the pastoral care implications of those findings. The passage will be given on the first day of class. Seniors are required to take their final exam on April 22, 2008. [40 pts]
- Total number of points: 200 (passing=146 pts)

A Word about Forums: A main form of triggering and furthering class discussions will be the “forum.” Forums are opportunities in Moodle for you to write up your thoughts in a way that can be better formulated than in class discussions, but that is less formal than an academic paper. Students are required to post a paragraph or two to the forums at least 12 times over the semester. Six of these will be focused on the readings for 2/5, 2/12, and 2/19. Students will be asked to write three (3) original postings about their reactions to the readings, and to respond to three (3) postings from their classmates. The remaining six (6) postings are to be done between 2/26 and the end of the semester. These may address weekly readings, in class discussions, papers posted to the forums (either hermeneutical or pastoral), or may expand the discussion into relevant areas. In addition to their written thoughts, students may post links to websites, to videos, to photos, and/or to other on-line resources. Postings to forums will be graded on a ten-point scale, based on the thought and insight in the postings and/or responses. Posting to forums will comprise 27% of your grade.

Standards for Submission of work: Barring unusual extenuating circumstances (catastrophic illness accident, etc.), no work will be accepted late. Please note: a revival, charter day celebration, or other church- or seminary-related function does not constitute a basis for extension.

Accountability within the academy: Students are expected to know and to use the Turabian/Chicago method of academic citation for all quotations. Biblical and extracanonical sources may be cited using the SBL Handbook of Style, which is the standard for academic biblical research. Students who are unsure about academic citation should see Dr. Aymer or Dr. Pujol. Plagiarized work and cheating on examinations will result in immediate failure of the class and reporting of the student to her or his denominational dean, to the Academic Dean, and to the President of the Seminary.

A Note to Greek Readers

Students who wish to translate the assigned texts from Greek and to look at some of the text-critical matters closely are welcome to schedule a time to read the passages with Dr. Aymer in Greek. Interested students should come to these sessions with their best attempt at textual translation and prepared to discuss grammatical and text-critical matters.

ITC Add/Drop Policy

Students are permitted to add or drop courses in their program during the ***first ten business days of class (through February 1, 2008)*** based on the new track system with written consent of the advisors, instructors, denominational deans, and the provost.

After the tenth class day, students must remain in class until after the twelfth week of the semester. Students may drop after the twelfth week and receive a grade of ‘W’. Students wishing to drop courses must complete the ‘Change of Registration’ form and present to their instructors and advisors. All students must obtain clearance through Financial Aid prior to dropping or withdrawal. Withdrawals are processed in the Registrar Office.

Bibliography

Required Books: Biblical Studies

- Dube, Musa W. and Musimbi Kanyoro. *Grant Me Justice! HIV/AIDS and Gender Readings of the Bible*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 2004.
- Holgate, David and Rachel Starr. *Biblical Hermeneutics*. SCM Study Guide. London: SCM, 2006.
- Pilch, John J. *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000.

Required Books: Theology, Ethics, Pastoral Care

- Graham, Elaine, Heather Walton and Frances Ward. *Theological Reflection: Methods*. London: SCM, 2008
- Pujol, Jr., G. Guy. "HIV Disease: Diagnosing the Theological and Religious Barriers to HIV Prevention and Care." Columbia Theological Seminary, 2004 (for purchase in class).
- Shuman, Joel James and Keith G. Meador. *Heal Thyself: Spirituality, Medicine, and the Distortion of Christianity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Recommended Books

- Allen, O. Wesley. *Reading the Synoptic Gospels: Basic Methods for Interpreting Matthew, Mark and Luke*. St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice, 2000.
- Townes, Emilie M. *Breaking the Fine Rain of Death: African American Health Care and a Womanist Ethic of Care*. New York: Continuum, 1998.

Recommended Websites (listed as links on Moodle)

- <http://www.kchanson.com/PTJ/ptj.html> --the website for K. C. Hanson's *Palestine in the Time of Jesus*, a very helpful introduction to the social history of the region
- <http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/pilchj> --the website for J. Pilch's *Healing in the New Testament*, which is assigned

CLASS SCHEDULE

- January 22 Introduction to Exegesis and the Theo-ethical examination of health and healing
In-class viewing of *The AIDS Chronicles: Here to Represent*
- January 29 Personal Stories of Biblical Interpretation and AIDS
- DUE: Personal reflections on the Bible and AIDS
- February 5 The demon-possessed boy; “supernatural cure” as a barrier
- Matthew 17: 14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9: 37-43
 - Pilch, chapter 1; Shuman, Introduction and chapter 1; Pujol, 1-18
 - Forum 1: in two paragraphs, discuss the Pilch and/ or Shuman readings—what strikes you; what concerns you; what questions do you have? How do the readings connect to each other? To the Pujol piece? To your experiences of, or understandings of, health and healing, particularly around HIV/ AIDS?—6 pts
 - Reply to at least ONE other posting besides your own. —6 pts
- February 12 The widow of Nain; theodicy as a barrier
- Luke 7:11-17
 - Readings due: Pilch, chapter 2; Shuman, chapters 2-3; Pujol, pp. 19-25
 - Forum 2: in two paragraphs, discuss the Pilch and/ or Shuman readings—what strikes you; what concerns you; what questions do you have? How do the readings connect to each other? To the Pujol piece? To your experiences of, or understandings of, health and healing, particularly around HIV/ AIDS?—6 pts
 - Reply to at least ONE other posting besides your own.—6 pts

- February 19 The “man born blind”; doctrine of sin as a barrier
- John 9
 - Readings due: Pilch, chapter 3, Shuman, chapters 4-5, Pujol, pp. 25-34
 - Forum 3: in two paragraphs, discuss the Pilch and/ or Shuman readings—what strikes you; what concerns you; what questions do you have? How do the readings connect to each other? To the Pujol piece? To your experiences of, or understandings of, health and healing, particularly around HIV/ AIDS?—6 pts
 - Reply to at least ONE other posting besides your own.—6pts
- February 26 Jairus’ daughter and the woman with the hemorrhage; alienation of the body as a barrier
- Mt 9:18-26; Mark 5: 21-43; Luke 8:40-56
 - Readings due: Pujol, pp. 34-40; Holgate and Starr, chapter 1; Graham and Ward, chapter 1

SPRING BREAK

*-Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS-
-SECSOR-*

- March 11 A Day at AIDS Alliance for Faith and Health: Commemoration of the Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS
- *Please note: You are required to be at Common Ground at 10:30 a.m. and we will stay until 4 p.m. Please plan accordingly.*
- Group A—using the Holgate and Starr reading assigned on Feb 26, write a 3-5 page hermeneutical exercise on Mt. 8:5-13 or Luke 7:1-10. Full instructions are available on Moodle under March 11, the day the paper is due. Upload the paper to the grading space and post it to the forum by 12:00 a.m. Tuesday morning.—20 pts

- March 18 The centurion's *παῖς*; praxis of silence as a barrier
- Mt 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10
 - Readings due: Pujol, pp. 40-49; Holgate and Starr, chapter 2; Graham and Ward, chapter 2
 - Group C—Choose one Group A hermeneutical exercise from the forum, read it, and write—and post—a one-page theological response to it based on Graham and Ward chapter 1. Upload the paper to the grading space and post it to the forum by 12:00 a.m. Tuesday morning. –20 pts
 - Group B—using the Holgate and Starr reading due today, write a 3-5 page hermeneutical exercise on Mt. 8:28-34 or Mark 5:1-20 or Luke 8:26-39. Upload the paper to the grading space and post it to the forum by 12:00 a.m. Tuesday morning. –20 pts
- March 25 The Gerasene demoniac; liberation theology as a facilitator
- Mt 8: 28-34; Mark 5: 1-20; Luke 8:26-39
 - Readings due: Holgate and Starr, chapter 3; Graham and Ward, chapter 3
 - Group A—Choose one Group B hermeneutical exercise from the forum, read it, and write—and post—a one-page theological response to it based on Graham and Ward chapter 2. Upload the paper to the grading space and post it to the forum by 12:00 a.m. Tuesday morning. –20 pts
 - Group C—using the Holgate and Starr reading due today, write a 3-5 page hermeneutical exercise on Mt. 15:21-28 or Mark 7:24-30. Upload the paper to the grading space and post it to the forum by 12:00 a.m. Tuesday morning.—20 pts

April 1 The Syrophenician woman: justice as a facilitator

- Matt 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30
- Readings due: Holgate and Starr, chapter 4; Graham and Ward, chapter 4
- Group B—Choose one Group C hermeneutical exercise from the forum, read it, and write—and post—a one-page theological response to it based on Graham and Ward chapter 3. Upload the paper to the grading space and post it to the forum by 12:00 a.m. Tuesday morning.—20 pts
- Group A—using the Holgate and Starr reading due today, write a 3-5 page hermeneutical exercise on Mk. 1:23-28 or Luke 4:33-37. Upload the paper to the grading space and post it to the forum by 12:00 a.m. Tuesday morning.—20 pts

April 8 The demoniac in the synagogue: pastoral theology as facilitator

- **CLASS WIKI DUE TODAY—All annotations due no later than midnight tonight.**
- Mark 1: 23-28; Luke 4: 33-37
- Readings due: Holgate and Starr, chapter 5; Graham and Ward, chapter 5
- Group C—Choose one Group A hermeneutical exercise from the forum, read it, and write—and post—a one-page theological response to it based on Graham and Ward chapter 4. Upload the paper to the grading space and post it to the forum by 12:00 a.m. Tuesday morning.—20 pts
- Group B—using the Holgate and Starr reading due today, write a 3-5 page hermeneutical exercise on Mk. 1:23-28 or Luke 4:33-37. Upload the paper to the grading space and post it to the forum by 12:00 a.m. Tuesday morning.—20 pts

April 15

The paralytic: Embodiment as facilitator

- Matt 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26
- Readings due: Holgate and Starr, chapter 6; Graham and Ward, chapter 6
- Group A—Choose one Group B hermeneutical exercise from the forum, read it, and write—and post—a one-page theological response to it based on Graham and Ward chapter 5. Upload the paper to the grading space and post it to the forum by 12:00 a.m. Tuesday morning.—20 pts
- Group C—using the Holgate and Starr reading due today, write a 3-5 page hermeneutical exercise on Mt. 8:1-4 or Mark 1:40-45 or Luke 5:12-16. Upload the paper to the grading space and post it to the forum by 12:00 a.m. Tuesday morning.—20 pts

April 22

Cleansing of a leper: Narrative theology as a facilitator

- Matt 8: 1-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5: 12-16
- Holgate and Starr, chapter 7; Graham and Ward, chapter 7
- Group B—Choose one Group C hermeneutical exercise from the forum, read it, and write—and post—a one-page theological response to it based on Graham and Ward chapter 5. Upload the paper to the grading space and post it to the forum by 12:00 a.m. Tuesday morning.—20 pts
- SENIOR FINAL EXAMINATIONS—40 pts

April 29

FINAL EXAMINATION—40 pts