***Iliff School of Theology***

## IST3034 Post-traumatic stress disorder: Pastoral, psychological, and theological responses

*Winter Quarter Residential, 2017; 4 credits*

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**Course Description**

We will use a practical theological approach to understanding traumatic narratives and how spiritual practices of compassion prepare us to listen. Readings from psychological of religion and intercultural spiritual care and our own spiritual practices will help us listen compassionately and become more theologically reflexive when we listen to trauma stories. We will use psychological perspectives to understand acute stress responses and post-traumatic stress (PTS), post-traumatic growth (PTG) and religious coping. We will use theological perspectives (theodicies) to compare traditional and contemporary ways of understanding traumatic suffering, and, in particular, the moral dilemmas generated by trauma and its aftermath.

We will use our own trauma narratives in order to integrate what we are learning in journal assignments. We will focus on what was over-whelming and what helped in terms of coping and meaning-making. Using peer learning and support, we will reflect upon our own experiences of trauma in order to become aware of the embedded religious and existential beliefs and values we use to make sense of and cope with overwhelming stressors. In sharing these reflections with each other, we will learn how to use a theologically-oriented transactional understanding of religious coping. The peer learning and support experienced during sharing our trauma narratives and reflections with each other will help us practice an intercultural approach to spiritual care that fully acknowledges the mystery and alterity of our religious worlds. By putting into practice an intercultural approach to spiritual care with each other, we will better understand how our trauma narratives can become resources or roadblocks when we care for others experiencing post-traumatic stress. This self and theologically reflexive learning will enhance our formation as pastoral and spiritual caregivers who deeply engage religious and cultural traditions within a spiritually, socially complex world.

**Iliff M.Div. Curricular Goal related to Theology and Religious Practices (PR):** engage in analysis of contemporary religious traditions and institutions in order to assess, design, and perform meaningful leadership practices with sensitivity to contextual realities and relationships.

**Iliff MAPSC Curricular Goals Central to this Course**

The course is designed to meet the needs of those preparing for the specialized vocation of pastoral and spiritual care. Students take courses in pastoral and spiritual care that implement an intercultural approach to spiritual care, integrating contextual understandings of religious truth with a social justice orientation. Experiential learning through sharing and intentional conversations about journals describing traumatic experience provide intense group learning and supervision of the practice of pastoral and spiritual care. This course will help students integrate what they are learning in the core curriculum. Each area has a thematic focus, and courses within each area cohere in directing students to think more critically about their assumptions and to develop theological perspectives necessary for becoming responsible pastoral and spiritual caregivers in a changing world.

**Specific Goals of this Course**

Students will understand and use an intercultural approach to spiritual care to respond to trauma narratives.

Students will identify and critically evaluate the ways in which their personal, religious, and cultural experience, along with their theology, moral orientation, and vocational formation shapes their response to overwhelming and traumatic events.

Students will draw upon psychological theories and research on post-traumatic stress disorder and growth along with religious and spiritual coping and meaning making to understand and respond to trauma narratives.

Students will describe strategies for their continued spiritual development and self-care that helps them connect with a sense of the sacred in responding to overwhelming and traumatic events.

**Course Objectives**

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| Course Objectives: At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to: | The following assignments will be used to assess the extent to which these objectives have been met |
| Use an intercultural paradigm of spiritual care of trauma survivors that  -establishes a sense of trust  -focuses on using religious and spiritual practices to establish a sense of safety  -explores meaning-making | * Journal assignments * Learning partner responses to and conversations about journal assignments |
| Use psychological theories and theologically-oriented approaches to religious coping in response to trauma in order to help trauma survivors assess their coping skills and use effective spiritual and religious coping to establish a sense of safety | * Reading reflections * Journal assignments * Learning partner responses to and conversations about journal assignments |
| Identify traditional and contemporary forms of theodicy and be able to explain how each makes sense of tragedy using theological themes like sin, evil, power, love, and compassion. Explore with trauma survivors how they make sense of their suffering. | * Reading reflections * Journal assignments * Learning partner responses to and conversations about journal assignments |
| Practice self-care so that students do not become overwhelmed by caring for trauma survivors | * Use a spiritual practice throughout the course that strengthens compassion. |

**Teaching Methods**

Online reading forum discussions in preparation for class, journal assignments, peer reflections on journal assignments, peer support and peer intercultural spiritual care.

**Disability Accommodations**

Iliff engages in a collaborative effort with students with disabilities to reasonably accommodate student needs.  Students are encouraged to contact their assigned advisor to initiate the process of requesting accommodations.  The advising center can be contacted at [advising@iliff.edu](mailto:advising@iliff.edu) or by phone at 303-765-1146.

**Professional Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting**

All students must agree to abide by professional confidentiality in all matters, which means that they will preserve anonymity by disguising the identity of cases when seeking consultation and case reporting. Student disclosures to one another and to the professor will remain confidential, unless the law requires otherwise. In all cases, students must be aware of the mandatory reporting laws of the state in which they provide professional caregiving. If they are designated spiritual caregivers within their religious tradition, they need to also be aware of what their religious organization requires. If students have reason to suspect or have first-hand knowledge of recent, current, or ongoing child abuse or neglect perpetrated on a child currently under the age of 18 years, elder abuse, sexual and domestic violence, or threats of homicide or suicide in any of the pastoral situations they use for fulfilling the requirements of this course they need to seek immediate consultation with supervisors, denominational leaders, and the professor of this course so that proper reporting procedures can be ascertained. We will work together to establish an appropriate pastoral relationship with all parties facing these crises.

State laws on mandatory reporting are available at [State Laws on Mandatory Clergy Reporting](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/clergymandated.cfm) Colorado mandatory reporting requirements may be found at [Colorado Revised Statutes](http://www.michie.com/colorado/lpext.dll?f=templates&fn=main-h.htm&cp) 19-3-304, 1a, 2(aa, II, III); 13-90-107c.

**Requirements**

**Weekly reading responses** to be posted before class by Monday (midnight):

Grading Rubric:

* Posting on time: Points deducted for late postings
* Quoting from each of the weekly readings: Points will be deducted if required weekly readings are not cited (with page #) in the Monday forum.
* Substantive use of concepts

**One journal assignment** following the outline provided online**: Due to your partner and Prof. Doehring by midnight Monday, Feb 13, interview questions due by midnight, Feb 17**. These students’ journal assignments will become the basis for the spiritual care conversations with your learning partners on one of the following days: Tues. Feb 21, Wed., Feb 22, Friday, Feb. 24, Monday, Feb. 27, and Tuesday, Feb. 28 (40%).

**Submitting and revising the spiritual care conversation questions:** In preparation for leading a spiritual care conversation with a peer, each student will prepare a list of questions for their spiritual care conversation with their partner, following the outline provided online, and also the video conversation also provided online. These questions are due Feb 17, will be submitted to Prof. Doehring and their partner, for feedback from Prof. Doehring and revision of questions prior to the spiritual care conversations (11% for questions and conversations that demonstrate these capabilities: intercultural, differentiation of self, spiritual integration and theological fluency).

#### Class Texts:

#### *All students are required to purchase*

Doehring, Carrie (2015. The practice of pastoral care (Revised and expanded). Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press. ISBN 9780664238407 *This text is required for the prerequisite for this course and will be used for review purposes. If the prerequisite was waived or you read the first edition, please purchase this so you can read review chapters for this course.*

Levine, P. A. (2015). *Trauma and memory: Brain and body in a search for the living past: A practical guide for understanding and working with traumatic memory*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books. $14.50 new/ $12.75 used

#### *Chapters and articles (posted online)*

Doehring, C. (2015a). Intercultural spiritual care in the aftermath of trauma. In F. Kelcourse & K. B. Lyon (Eds.), *Transforming wisdom: The practice of psychotherapy in theological perspective* (pp. 148-165). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.

Doehring, C. (2015b). Resilience as the relational ability to spiritually integrate moral stress. *Pastoral Psychology, 64*(5), 635-649. doi: 10.1007/s11089-015-0643-7

Doehring, C. (2017). Teaching andassessing competencies in intercultural spiritual care in online courses.

Drescher, K. D., & Foy, D. W. (2010). When horror and loss intersect: Traumatic experiences and traumatic bereavement. *Pastoral Psychology, 59*, 147-158. doi: 10.1007/s11089-009-0262-2 (11 pages)

Ellison, G. C., II. (2014). The way it is and the way it could be: Fear, lessness and the quest for fearless dialoguesTM. *Pastoral Psychology, 63*(5-6), 625-639. doi: 10.1007/s11089-014-0610-8

Feldman, C. (2015, December 3). She who hears the cries of the world.

Harris, G. (2005). Healing in feminist Wicca. In L. L. Barnes & S. S. Sered (Eds.), *Religion and healing in America* (pp. 253-263). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

hooks, b., & Ensler, E. (2014). Strike! Rise! Dance! Retrieved from *http://www.lionsroar.com/strike-rise-dance-bell-hooks-eve-ensler-march-2014/*.

Lipsky, L. v. D., & Burk, C. (2009). Selected chapters from *Trauma Stewardship : An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers. (Note: available as an ebook at our library).

Moore, D. L. (2009). Theorizing the "black body" as a site of trauma: implications for theologies of embodiment. *Theology & Sexuality, 15*(2), 175-188.

Nguyen, T.-T., Bellehumeur, C. R., & Malette, J. (2014). Women survivors of sex trafficking: a trauma and recovery model integrating spirituality/ Les femmes survivantes du trafic sexuel: un modèle portant sur le traumatisme et le rétablissement intégrant la spiritualité. *Counseling et Spiritualité, 33*(1), 111-133. doi: 10.2143/cs.33.1.3044833

Pargament, K. I., Desai, K. M., & McConnell, K. M. (2006). Spirituality: A pathway to posttraumatic growth or decline? In L. G. Calhoun & R. G. Tedeschi (Eds.), *Handbook of posttraumatic growth: Research and practice* (pp. 121-135). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Rodríguez, A. (2008). God's protection of immigrants: A personal reflection from a Hispanic pastoral perspective. *Journal of Latin American Theology, 3*(2), 76-92.

Sheppard, P. I. (2008). Mourning the loss of cultural selfobjects: Black embodiment and religious experience after trauma. *Practical Theology, 1*(2), 233-257.

Tanner, M. N., Wherry, J. N., & Zvonkovic, A. M. (2013). Clergy who experience trauma as a result of forced termination. *Journal of Religion and Health, 52*(4), 1281-1295. doi: 10.1007/s10943-012-9571-3

Tanner, M. N., Zvonkovic, A. M., & Tanner, M. R. (2013). The perceptions of terminated ministers scale--revised. *Pastoral Psychology, 62*(1), 69-74. doi: 10.1007/s11089-012-0461-0

Willis, J. D. (2014). Community of 'neighbors': a Baptist-Buddhist reflects on the common ground of love. *Buddhist-Christian Studies, 34*, 97-106.

**WEEK 1. Tuesday, January 10 (Post by Monday Jan. 9)**

Review the course pages on Canvas

If you know any students that you want to ask to be your partner, email that person and agree on a time for your spiritual care conversation and then sign up on the page on the course home page.

Read Doehring, C. (2015b). Resilience as the relational ability to spiritually integrate moral stress. *Pastoral Psychology, 64*(5), 635-649. doi: 10.1007/s11089-015-0643-7 (14 pages)

Read Doehring Notes on using spiritual practices while exploring moral stress (10 pages)

1. How did the readings help you understand the role of spiritual practices in exploring overwhelming life events (*make sure you specifically cite from ALL articles*). Word count for posting: between 300 and 400 words.

**WEEK 2 Tuesday, January 17 (Post by Monday Jan. 16)**

Read Doehring, C. (2015a). Intercultural spiritual care in the aftermath of trauma. In F. Kelcourse & K. B. Lyon (Eds.), *Transforming wisdom: The practice of psychotherapy in theological perspective* (pp. 148-165). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock. (17 pages)

Read Doehring, C. (2017). Teaching andassessing competencies in intercultural spiritual care in online courses.

Optional Reading Pargament, K. I., Desai, K. M., & McConnell, K. M. (2006). Spirituality: A pathway to posttraumatic growth or decline? In L. G. Calhoun & R. G. Tedeschi (Eds.), *Handbook of posttraumatic growth: Research and practice* (pp. 121-135). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. (14 pages)

Read The Outline for the Journal Assignment

Read Carrie Doehring’s Journal Assignment

Read The Life Stressor Checklist

The readings this week help us understand how this course is designed to use our own trauma narratives in journal assignments and spiritual care conversations in order to integrate what we are learning and become more competent as intercultural spiritual caregivers. By putting into practice an intercultural approach to spiritual care with each other, we will better understand how our trauma narratives can become resources or roadblocks when we care for others experiencing post-traumatic stress.

**By reading *The Outline for the Journal Assignment,* and *Carrie Doehring’s Journal Assignment***, you will start thinking about the overwhelming life experience you would like to write and talk about in your journal assignment shared with me and your learning partner. *The Life Stressor Checklist* prompts you to review the kinds of overwhelming life events you have experienced, which you might wish to write about. The purpose of the assignment is to spiritually integrate and learn from a personal experience *not to do psychotherapy on yourself or your learning partner.* I will guide you by giving feedback on the questions you draft for your spiritual care conversation with your learning partner, to make sure these are spiritual care and not psychotherapy questions.

As you can see from my sample journal assignment, I wrote about one of the most stressful childhood experiences I had had. I did this because it was an experience I had already worked on extensively in therapy, and I wanted to integrate theological reflections into the psychotherapy work I had done. Also, I had processed this life event and written about it, such that I felt safe sharing it in this written form with all of you in this course. While I did re-experience some post-traumatic stress in writing about this experience, I was able to cope with such stress by using spiritual practices.

In thinking about the life experience you might write about, I suggest that you choose an experience you have already worked on, which feels safe to share with your learning partner and me, and which has religious or spiritual significance (involves core beliefs about suffering, core values that shape your life, and core stress responses and coping patterns). You can experiment by trying to write the 300 word description while using your spiritual practices to cope with the stress of remembering. If you find yourself becoming so overwhelmed that your coping practices do not allow you to continue writing, then you can shift to writing about a different experience. It can be difficult to predict in advance how stressful such self-reflection and sharing can be, so experimenting with writing the 300 word summary is helpful.

I have used this kind of assignment in this course for the past six years. Students have shared a lot of different kinds of experiences, ranging from

* *sexual/physical violence, harassment, bullying* (like my journal assignment),
* *health crises* (chronic disability, health crises),
* *family crises* (combining work and parenting; caring for an aging parent),
* *relational crises* (ending a committed relationship; divorce of parents),
* *parental crises* (with children/teens), and
* *work* *crises* (horrible job/boss/work environment),
* *not* *fitting in and experiencing stress/aggression* because of religious, sexual, gender, racial identity and oppression,
* *ways of coping with stress that were life-limiting* (i.e. addictions).

While it is easier to write about a single overwhelming event, you can write about ongoing stressors by focusing on a representative event that typified the overwhelming stress. Feel free to consult with me by email about the experiences you considering for your journal assignment.

This courseemphasize the differences between *spiritual care* of trauma and *psychotherapy*. We will not be doing psychotherapy on ourselves or each other. We will be engaged in intercultural spiritual care focusing on what makes spiritual care distinct:

1. *spiritual and religious ways of coping* with traumatic stress
2. *spiritual and religious meanings*: (a) understanding the embedded embodied theologies of trauma/spiritual orienting systems we internalized through family and culture and (b) co-constructing intentional theologies/spiritual orienting systems we would like to experience in our bodies, and enact in our beliefs, values, and ways of coping.

**The optional reading by Ken Pargament et al.** provides ways for us to assess whether our religious/spiritual coping and meanings are life-giving or life-limiting. The four criteria for assessment Pargament describes help us assess spiritual/religious coping and meanings both psychologically and theologically. Ken Pargament is one of the leading psychologists of religion in the world today and he does adjunct teaching at Iliff School of Theology.

**Questions to answer in this forum:**

1. *Anticipated Benefits:* Quoting specifically from both readings by Doehring (the chapter on trauma, the draft article of competency) highlight two or three anticipated benefits of learning how to use an intercultural approach to spiritual care in reflecting on, sharing, and having spiritual care conversations about an overwhelming life experience in your journal assignment. *Risks:* Identify the risks for you of doing this kind of self-reflexive learning that draws upon your own life experience.
2. *Challenges:* Quoting specifically from both Doehring’s chapter on trauma and her draft article on competencies, what will be the challenges for you as a spiritual caregiver who will be leading a conversation with your learning partner about his or her journal assignment?

Word count for posting: between 350 and 450 words.

**WEEK 3 Tuesday, January 24 (Post by Monday Jan. 23)**

**Read** Levine,P. A. (2015). *Trauma and memory: Brain and body in a search for the living past: A practical guide for understanding and working with traumatic memory*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books. (You can skip chapter 6, making this reading about 120 pages)

**Read Read**[**https://www.brainpickings.org/2016/06/20/the-body-keeps-the-score-van-der-kolk/?utm\_source=Brain+Pickings&utm\_campaign=9f0e5b74d5-EMAIL\_CAMPAIGN\_2016\_12\_30&utm\_medium=email&utm\_term=0\_179ffa2629-9f0e5b74d5-236591805&mc\_cid=9f0e5b74d5&mc\_eid=a54a809fc7**](https://www.brainpickings.org/2016/06/20/the-body-keeps-the-score-van-der-kolk/?utm_source=Brain+Pickings&utm_campaign=9f0e5b74d5-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2016_12_30&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_179ffa2629-9f0e5b74d5-236591805&mc_cid=9f0e5b74d5&mc_eid=a54a809fc7)

**Read**Doehring, C. 2016 Spiritual integration as revolutionary love.  [Doehring 2016 installation addresss on Revolutionary Love.docx](https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/1894698/files/100660194/download?wrap=1)

The purpose of our readings is to highlight the physiological stress responses that are part of overwhelming life events, especially in different kinds of memories.

1. Quoting specifically from this book, what insights did you have about a memory of your own that you now understand better? (Note, only your spiritual care partner/s will see your post, so feel free to share details
2. Quoting specifically from Levine and Doehring, how do these readings help us understand the work of spiritual integration we are doing in this course, either in working on one of our own memories or having a spiritual care conversation with our learning partner about his/her memory?
3. Quoting specifically from Levine and Doehring, identify a difference between the way Levine works on trauma in his therapy and what we can do as pastoral and spiritual caregivers.

**WEEK 4 Tuesday, January 31 (Post by Monday Jan. 30)**

**Read:** **Fawson, S. (2017), and be prepared to**

listen to Carolyn Forché read a poem by going to the link

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/detail/90646>

As you read along with her, we’ll ask you to stop as frequently as you need to return to a centered/safe/strong place using spiritual practices.

**You will also read**

Drescher, K. D., & Foy, D. W. (2010). When horror and loss intersect: Traumatic experiences and traumatic bereavement. *Pastoral Psychology, 59*, 147-158. doi: 10.1007/s11089-009-0262-2 (11 pages)

**Pause while reading this and try using your spiritual practice when you feel overwhelmed.**

DISCUSSION

In your forum post to your spiritual care partner, answer these questions, found in Fawson’s article:

1. What image in the poem stands out to you?
2. What image generated stress for you?
3. How did your spiritual practice help you?

**Next read** Drescher, K. D., & Foy, D. W. (2010). “When horror and loss intersect: Traumatic experiences and traumatic bereavement.” *Pastoral Psychology, 59*, 147-158.

**Pause while reading this and try using your spiritual practice when you feel overwhelmed.**

1. Identify a quote from Drescher and Foy that helps you understand the kind of traumatic experience of this taxi driver
2. Imagine yourself in this taxi**.** What three things have you learned in this course so far that helps you stay emotionally and spiritually present with this cabdriver’s experience?

We will be building on your responses during our class discussion.