

## **Violence, Sexual Abuse, and the Gospel**

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary - Jacksonville  
Summer 2019  
Justin S. Holcomb  
jholcomb@gordonconwell.edu

This course will meet on these dates and times: June 14 (1pm to 9:30pm) and 15 (8am to 4:30pm) and August 2 (1pm to 9:30pm) and 3 (8am to 4:30pm)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will be a study of various forms of violence and abuse and the theological and practical implications of the Gospel of the kingdom for these topics.

First, we will investigate various forms of violence and abuse (sexual assault, domestic violence, and sex trafficking) to better understand each issue as well as the prevalence of the issue and effects on victims.

Second, we will study the theological subjects of the Gospel, specifically theological anthropology and the doctrine of sin, to lay a foundation for how these biblical themes affect our view of violence and abuse.

Third, we will explore the how the Gospel offers help, hope, and healing to victims. This part of the course will include issues from both Christian thought and practical theology. We will focus on theological engagement and practical engagement.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

For the student to understand the numerous dimensions of sexual assault, domestic abuse, and sex-trafficking.

For students to be aware of the scope of the problem of violence and abuse and to be aware of the prevalence and effects for victims.

For the student to be able to formulate a theology of violence and abuse.

For students to understand how the theological subjects of the Gospel lay a foundation for how biblical themes affect how we view violence and abuse.

For students to be able to relate major themes of Christian theology to violence and abuse.

For students to be able to articulate how Gospel-based hope and healing relates to violence and abuse.

For students to know individuals and the church can respond practically with help and victim advocacy.

For students to learn about the experiences of and responses to sexual and domestic violence.

## REQUIRED READING

### 1. Required Books

Justin S. Holcomb and Lindsey A. Holcomb, *Rid of My Disgrace: Hope and Healing for Victims of Sexual Assault*

Justin S. Holcomb and Lindsey A. Holcomb, *Is It My Fault?: Hope and Healing for Those Suffering Domestic Violence*

Leslie Stevenson, David, Haberman, and Peter Wright, eds., *Twelve Theories of Human Nature* [Read “Introduction,” “Conclusion,” and at least six theories]

Cornelius Plantinga, *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin*

### 2. Required Articles or Book Chapters [Electronic copies of these readings will be available]

Anthony Hoekema, “The Nature of Sin” and “The Restraint of Sin” in *Created in God's Image*

Gerald Bray, “Sin in Historical Theology” in *Fallen: A Theology of Sin, edited by Christopher Morgan and Robert Peterson*

John Mahony, “A Theology of Sin for Today,” in *Fallen: A Theology of Sin, edited by Christopher Morgan and Robert Peterson*

R. Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead, “Introduction: Contextualizing Human Dignity,” in *God and Human Dignity*, ed. R. Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead

Christoph Schwöbel, “Recovering Human Dignity,” in *God and Human Dignity*, ed. R. Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead

H. Russel Botman, “Covenantal Anthropology: Three Discourses of Human Dignity,” in *God and Human Dignity*, ed. R. Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead

Fraser Watts, “Human Dignity: Concepts and Experiences,” in *God and Human Dignity*, ed. R. Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead

Nicholas Wolterstorff, “Is There Justice in the Trinity,” in *God’s Life in Trinity*, ed. Miroslav Volf and Michael Welker

Siddharth Kara, “Sex Trafficking: An Overview”

R. W. Connell, “Hegemonic Masculinity and Emphasized Femininity”

Andrea Marie Bertone, “Sexual Trafficking of Women”

Augustine Park, “‘Other Inhuman Acts’: Forced Marriage, Girl Soldiers, and the Special Court”

Paul Farmer, “On Suffering and Structural Violence”

Paul Farmer, “Health, Healing, and Social Justice”

Allan Johnson, “Patriarchy, the System”

Michael Kimmel, “Masculinity as Homophobia”

Michael Kaufman, “Construction of Masculinity and the Triad of Men’s Violence”

Christopher Kilmartin, “Boys Will Be Boys: Men and Violence”

Peggy Reeves Sanday, “Rape-Prone Versus Rape-Free Culture”

### 3. Choose (Sex Trafficking)

Pick one book on the topic of sex trafficking that you will read before the course:

- Victor Makarek, *The Natashas: The Horrific Inside Story of Slavery, Rape, and Murder in the Global Sex Trade*
- Kathryn Farr, *Sex Trafficking: The Global Market in Women and Children*
- Siddharth Kara, *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*

### 4. Choose (Christian Thought or Practical Theology)

Pick one book from this list that you will read and for which you will write a review:

If you want to focus on “Christian Thought” engagement:

- Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*

- Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining*
- Serene Jones, *Trauma and Grace: Theology in a Ruptured World*
- Marjorie Hewitt Suchocku, *The Fall to Violence: Original Sin in Relational Theology*
- Jennifer Erin Veste, *God and Victim: Traumatic Intrusions on Grace and Freedom*
- Lisa Barnes Lampman, ed., *God and Victim: Theological Reflection on Evil, Victimization, Justice, and Forgiveness*

If you want to focus on “Practical Theology” engagement

- Steven Tracy, *Mending the Soul: Understanding and Healing Abuse*
- Jim Martin, *The Just Church*
- Mary Frances Bowley, *White Umbrella: Walking with Survivors of Sex Trafficking*
- Chris Sicks, *Tangible: Making God Known Through Deeds of Mercy and Words of Truth*
- Daniel Walker, *God in a Brothel: An Undercover Journey into Sex Trafficking and Rescue*
- Gary Haugen, *Good News About Injustice*

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Book Review: Write a 750-1,000 word (3-4 page) book review of the book you selected from #4 above. Please do not summarize the book, but engage the book critically. We will discuss the guidelines for this review in class. Due August 31, 2019, 11:59pm.

Paper #1: Write a 1,750-2,000 word essay focusing on a specific issue: domestic abuse, sexual assault, sex trafficking, etc. Due August 31, 2019, 11:59pm.

Paper #2: Write a 1,750-2,000 word essay focusing on a particular theological loci (sin, image Dei, creation, doctrine of God, eschatology, etc) as it relates to violence and abuse. Due August 31, 2019, 11:59pm.

## GRADING SCALE

Listed below are the assignments that will determine your final course grade.

Book Review	20%
Essay #1	40%
Essay #2	40%

A (97-100), A- (94-96), B+ (91-93), B (88-90), B- (86-87), C+ (83-85), C (80-82), C- (78-79), D+ (75- 77), D (72-74), D- (70-71), F (below 70)

## ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Class attendance and participation are a central part of this course. If you should miss a class, you are expected to contact another student regarding the information covered.

Late papers will be graded down 33% for each 24 hours late.

All written assignments should be submitted in either Word or PDF format. Assignments should be double spaced with 1" margins on all sides of each page, and should be printed in Times New Roman 12 point type. Assignments must be submitted electronically.