

MINISTRY AND THEOLOGY OF DISABILITY
MS 2XD3
MCMMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE
SUMMER 2015

MAY 11–15

MONDAY, 11:30 A.M.–4:00 P.M.

TUESDAY–THURSDAY, 9:00 A.M.–4:00 P.M.

FRIDAY, 9:00 A.M.–NOON

MEGHAN D. MUSY, PH.D. CAND.
meghan.musy@gmail.com

Meghan is an ordained minister and is actively involved in ministry. She earned her bachelor's in Biblical Studies and her master's in Religious Studies. She is a Ph.D. student at McMaster Divinity College, with a concentration in Biblical Studies, and disability studies is one of her research interests.

TERI L. MUSY, PH.D.
teri.musy@gmail.com

Teri has bachelor's and master's degrees in Special Education and worked as a special educator for 22 years in a public school system. She continues to work as an administrator in the school system, teaches workshops for church organizations on inclusion, leads the special needs ministry at her church, and has earned her Ph.D. in Administration.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Since the One without blemish has made the ultimate sacrifice for humanity, then Christian communities must remove the stumbling block placed before those with disabilities and usher them into their communities. This course explores theology of disability and ethical readings of the Bible in regard to disability. It reviews the treatment of and ministry to individuals with disabilities, with a focus on the historical development of inclusion in society in general and in the Church in particular. Attention will be given to how disability is addressed in both the Old and New Testaments. Opportunities will be given to explore strategies to remove barriers to inclusion, foster positive inclusive attitudes, and foster the spiritual development of those with disabilities in congregational settings.

SPECIALIZATIONS: Biblical Studies, Christian Worldview, Pastoral Studies

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- A. **KNOWING:** 1) To gain an introductory understanding of theology of disability and the Church's obligation to those with disabilities. 2) To grasp the historical context of disability in society and the Church.

- B. **BEING:** 1) To gain an appreciation of theology of disability and its significance for congregational worship. 2) To embrace an ethic of disability that leads to the facilitation of deepening people with disabilities' relationships with God and embracing all members of the body of Christ. 3) To inventory and assess personal attitudes towards disability and inclusion in light of Scripture. 4) To be an interpreter who is transformed by each encounter with Scripture throughout the course and beyond.

- C. DOING: 1) To sharpen one's skills in interpreting the Bible and constructing a biblical theology. 2) To develop a hermeneutic for reading Scripture ethically. 3) To acquire competency in developing a plan for implementation of programs that foster spiritual development in those with disabilities and eliminate barriers to inclusion. 4) To match research-based techniques with personal characteristics and leadership style in order to lead and manage an inclusive ministry. 5) To discuss and analyze a scriptural model of management and leadership and the theology of management for an inclusive congregation. 6) To develop a model for assessing church culture related to meaningful inclusion.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Avalos, Hector et al. *This Abled Body: Rethinking Disabilities in Biblical Studies*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.

Eiesland, Nancy L. *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994.

Yong, Amos. *The Bible, Disability, and the Church: A New Vision of the People of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011.

Additional resources will be placed on reserve at the library or made available online.

All required textbooks for this class and others at McMaster Divinity College are available from R.E.A.D. On Books. They should be purchased as early as possible and at least by the beginning of the term when R.E.A.D. On Books has its book table here at the College. They can be contacted at: 195 The West Mall, Suite 414, Etobicoke, ON M9C 5K1; phone, 416-622-0655 ext. 4; fax, 416-622-2308; e-mail, books@readon.ca; or www.readon.ca.

DROPBOX

We will be using Dropbox (www.dropbox.com) during this course for sharing resources for reading as well as distributing papers for evaluation. You will receive an invitation to Dropbox, which will lead you through the process for signing up and gaining access to our shared Dropbox.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Final grades will be based on the total number of points accumulated. Formative and summative evaluations are required.

- A. CLASS PARTICIPATION: Student participation in interactive lectures and group discussions is expected, based on your readings for the week.
- B. FORMATIVE EXERCISES (5%)
 - 1. Write vision and mission statements.

2. Articulate personal attitude/view of inclusion.
- C. SUMMARY AND APPLICATION OF CONTENT FROM JOURNAL ARTICLES (25% each)
- PURPOSE: To promote graduate students' ability to seek and select professional literature and research related to the fields of ministry, theology, and biblical studies.
 - TASK: Select an article from a refereed journal (2000–2015) that contains information related to inclusion of people with disabilities in congregational or community activities. Summarize the article according to the following guidelines. *A copy of the article must be submitted with the summary.*
 - Summarize the main idea and details of the article (one page).
 - Critique the article/offer your own evaluation of the selection (one page).
 - Discuss application of content to your approach to ministry (one page).
 - SUBMISSION: Your first submission is due Wednesday, May 13, at 11:59 p.m. Your second submission is due Friday, May 15, at 11:59 p.m. Your summaries and evaluations are to be submitted via turnitin.com. See additional handout for submission details.
 - LENGTH, LAYOUT, & STYLE: Each assignment should be 3 pages in length (no less than 2.5 pages, no more than 3), excluding title page and bibliography (if necessary). It should be typed in 12-point (10-point for footnotes) Times New Roman and double-spaced with 1" margins. It must have a title page, footnoting where appropriate, and a bibliography, all of which are not included in the length required. It should be written in excellent modern literary English with proper grammar, spelling, punctuation and rhetoric (including an introduction, conclusion and logical flow of argument). Secondary and primary sources should be used, cited, and footnoted appropriately.
 - CITATIONS: Quotations should be kept to a minimum. Write as much as possible in your own words. No more than 10% verbatim quotation, including Scripture, will be allowed.
 - RUBRIC:

Selected article is appropriate	/2
Citation is correct	/1
Main idea of article is accurate and clearly stated	/2
Details of article are concise, accurate, and clearly stated	/4
Critique includes at least 2 comments and supporting statements clearly stated	/8
At least 2 ideas for practical application clearly identified	/8
TOTAL POINTS EARNED (per journal article summary)	/25

D. PROGRAM SPECIALIZATION RESPONSES (35%; due FRIDAY, MAY 29 at 11:59 P.M.)

Students will complete one of the following assignments. This project will be evaluated for both creativity and content. Your work should reflect your understanding of theology of disability and the Church's obligation to those with disabilities.

1. BIBLICAL STUDIES: Select a biblical passage that addresses disability (to be approved by the instructors). Write a paper in which you exegete the passage and

evaluate it for its usefulness in constructing a theology of disability. Consult at least 10 academic sources; 4 must be books and 2 must be journal articles. You may use the textbooks, but they do not count as your required sources. Your conclusion should include how to connect your passage to personal discipleship, formation, and contemporary culture in light of the hermeneutical principles discussed in class.

- **LENGTH, LAYOUT, & STYLE:** Your paper should be 10 pages in length (no less than 9.5 pages, no more than 10), excluding title page and bibliography. It should be typed in 12-point (10-point for footnotes) Times New Roman and double-spaced with 1” margins. It must have a title page, footnoting where appropriate, and a bibliography, all of which are not included in the length required. It should be written in excellent modern literary English with proper grammar, spelling, punctuation and rhetoric (including an introduction, conclusion and logical flow of argument). Secondary and primary sources should be used, cited, and footnoted appropriately.
- **CITATIONS:** You must cite the source of your material very carefully using a consistent system, not only when quoting from a section, but also when drawing from it as resource. Quotations should be kept to a minimum. Write as much as possible in your own words. No more than 10% verbatim quotation, including Scripture, will be allowed.
- See attachment for grading criteria.

2. **CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW (Choose one option)**

- a. Create a 40-minute Sunday school lesson for elementary school children or a middle or high school class or a 40-minute small group study for adults that deals with a topic related to disability and inclusion. Select biblical passages or extra-biblical material as appropriate. Focus on how the material is relevant for Christians today and how it might reinforce or challenge the worldviews of those you are teaching. Specify the age level and nature of your class. Include the purpose of the lesson, the strategies, and the lesson materials.
- b. Select a topic or issue related to disability or inclusion (to be approved by the instructors). Offer an overview of the subject, exploring the history of research and critical issues. Your conclusion should include how to connect your topic or theme to personal discipleship, formation, and contemporary culture. Consult at least 10 academic sources; 4 must be books and 2 must be journal articles. You may use the textbook, but it does not count as one of your required sources.
 - **LENGTH, LAYOUT, & STYLE:** Your paper should be 10 pages in length (no less than 9.5 pages, no more than 10), excluding title page and bibliography. It should be typed in 12-point (10-point for footnotes) Times New Roman and double-spaced with 1” margins. It must have a title page, footnoting where appropriate, and a bibliography, all of which are not included in the length required. It should be written in excellent modern literary English with proper grammar, spelling, punctuation and rhetoric

(including an introduction, conclusion and logical flow of argument). Secondary and primary sources should be used, cited, and footnoted appropriately.

- CITATIONS: You must cite the source of your material very carefully using a consistent system, not only when quoting from a section, but also when drawing from it as resource. Quotations should be kept to a minimum. Write as much as possible in your own words. No more than 10% verbatim quotation, including Scripture, will be allowed.
 - See attachment for grading criteria.
3. PASTORAL STUDIES (Choose one option)
- a. Prepare and record (audio or video) two 20–25-minute sermons on theology of disability or inclusion. They may be independent or a two-part series. These sermons must be written specifically for this course and must not be recycled material. They should demonstrate insights that you have gained from the course. Typed manuscripts of the sermon must also be submitted. Be sure to cite material appropriately in your manuscripts.
 - b. Prepare a sensory-sensitive service, including details such as lighting, sound, content and length of elements, instrumentation, and purpose and content of the sermon that will be delivered. The service may be traditional, contemporary, or blended. Prepare a bulletin listing the sermon topic, music, songs, prayers, etc. Provide the text of prayers and links to the music/songs. Include a 2–3-page explanation of why you chose these elements for your service.

E. FINAL REFLECTION (10%; due WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3 at 11:59 P.M.)

Write a 5-page reflection as to what has been learned from this course, especially how it has shaped your theology of disability and attitude toward inclusion.

CLASS SESSIONS

Each session will begin with Scripture reading, exposition of the passage, and discussion.

SESSION		TOPIC
MONDAY	PM	Purpose of the Church What is Worship?
TUESDAY	AM	Theology of Disability
	PM	Historical Context of Disability Characteristics of Disabilities
WEDNESDAY	AM	Biblical Mandate
	PM	Inclusion Universal Design for Learning

THURSDAY	AM	Biblical Ethics and Hermeneutics
	PM	Application of Principles of Leadership to Promoting an Inclusive Church Assessing Church Culture
FRIDAY	AM	Theology of Healing Sensory-Sensitive Chapel Service

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

- **ATTENDANCE:** Students should be on time to class or be prepared to offer an explanation to the professor. Students are expected to stay for the entire class session, unless otherwise arranged in advance. Students are both expected and encouraged to attend classes regularly. The lack of attendance may affect your grade. The professors reserve the right to levy a penalty of not more than one letter grade based on attendance alone or recommend to the Registrar that a student with excessive absences be withdrawn from the course.
- **PARTICIPATION:** Students who fail to respect these guidelines will be dismissed from class with consequences.
 - Please respect the opinions of others without disrespect or ridicule, even if you do not agree with them. However, feel free to respond logically and critically in an orderly manner.
 - Students are not expected to be doing work on any other subject or using electronic devices except for that which is appropriate in the course outline.
 - Students are not to carry on off-topic conversations in class.
 - Students may eat or drink in class if they do not distract others and they clean up their desks.
- **GENDER INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE:** Students should adopt respectful and gender-inclusive language for human beings throughout all academic coursework, inclusive of classroom presentations and conversations as well as written and oral student assessment materials. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings.
- **ACADEMIC HONESTY:** Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Student Handbook.
- **LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** Extensions for papers will not be given except in very exceptional circumstances (serious illness, family crises, etc.). Busyness, computer problems, etc., are not legitimate reasons to grant extensions and in the interests of fairness any request for extensions will take into account the entire class. Late assignments will be docked at the rate of 2% per day for the first 7 days (including weekends) and 4% per day after that. All assignments must be received by the last day of the term in order to avoid a failing grade in the class.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

Please contact the Registrar, Nina Thomas, thomn@mcmaster.ca, one month before the beginning of class if you require accommodations.

DISCLAIMER

This syllabus is the property of the instructors and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions as necessary. In the event that a correction to the syllabus is made, timely notification will be made and the correction supersedes the original syllabus.