Course Syllabus
TRP2661 – The Church of the Margins: Ministering to Christ in the Poor, the Sick, the Alienated, and the Imprisoned
Trinity College
Toronto School of Theology
May-June 2022

Instructor Information

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Course Identification

Course Number:	TRP2661
Course Format:	*Mainly asynchronous with six recommended live sessions online*
Course Name:	The Church of the Margins: Ministering to Christ in the Poor, the Sick, the Alienated, and the Imprisoned
Class Times:	Wednesdays 7pm-9pm on 4 May, 11 May, 18 May, 25 May, 1 June and 8 June
Prerequisites:	None

Course Description

The biblical and patristic tradition of the Orthodox Church is clear that the church is to advocate for the poor and the marginalised in the world, caring for their needs and pursuing justice on their behalf. We are not to neglect spiritual needs for social ones, nor social needs for those that are spiritual. This course will explore how the church, as the ongoing body of Christ in the world, should follow Christ in his self-sacrificing identification with all who are cast out or suffering, and care for the whole person, body and spirit. It will explore the theological significance of suffering and illness, and develop a holistic and pastoral understanding of mission that situates the church in the margins of this present age, ministering to Christ in the poor, the sick, the alienated and the imprisoned.

Students will be evaluated on their class participation through six short response papers and engagement with other students' papers, and a final creative pastoral project.

Course Resources

Required Course Texts

All articles and book excerpts will be made available via the course portal.

Course Website(s)

- Quercus: https://q.utoronto.ca/

This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at https://q.utoronto.ca/ and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus.) Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701.

Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Students successfully completing this course will be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

(A) IN RESPECT OF GENERAL ACADEMIC SKILLS

- the ability to provide a plausible analysis of a primary source in theological studies according to its genre, purpose, assumptions or tendency, and intended audience
- the ability to give an accurate summary of the substance of a secondary source in theological studies, to give a plausible account of its place in the discussions or controversies of an academic or faith community, and to evaluate whether its approach to solving a problem is appropriate
- the ability to pose a clear substantial question for reflection or research
- the ability to apply learning from one or more areas outside theological studies
- an understanding of the limits to his or her own knowledge and ability, and an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits to knowledge and how these might influence analyses and interpretations
- to read texts closely and to gather, analyse and prepare materials for reflection and engaged class discussion
- to prepare and respond to short reflection papers
- to develop and present a creative pastoral application project in a specific ministry context

(B) IN RESPECT OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTENT OF ONE OR MORE THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES

- to describe the biblical and patristic foundations of the Orthodox Church's ministry to the poor, the sick, the alienated and the imprisoned
- having studied practical modern and contemporary examples of ministry to the marginalised, to assess and argue how their spirit and methods can be applied in a more holistic Orthodox mission today
- to explain the significance of suffering and illness in Orthodox Christian perspective and combine theological reflection on suffering into practical pastoral care in the local context

(C) IN RESPECT OF PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

  • to manage his or her own learning
  • to demonstrate behaviour consistent with academic integrity and social responsibility

(D) IN RESPECT OF MINISTERIAL AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

  • to demonstrate qualities and skills necessary for ministry, further study, and community involvement
  • to exercise initiative, personal responsibility, and accountability in both personal and group contexts
  • to work effectively with others

Evaluation

Requirements

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in two areas:

1. *Response Papers (60%):* each week students will prepare a short (400-500 word) paper responding to specific texts or themes of that session and post it to the discussion forum; students will respond briefly to at least two of their peers' papers (each paper is worth 10% of the final grade)
   Due date for papers: the Monday following each class session
   Due date for responses: the Tuesday following each class session

2. *Creative Pastoral Application Project (40%):* drawing on one or more core themes in the course, students will complete a creative project in an area of contextual mission and ministry (see details below)
   Due date: Friday 12 August

Creative Pastoral Application Project

1,000 word text + creative performance (OR) 1,500 word text
+ formatted bibliography of 4-5 research sources

Your project should be crafted in the format most conductive to your vocational and scholarly lives outside the classroom. This includes a 20-minute sermon, a professional presentation, an ecumenical reflection, a devotional reading, reflective poetry, prose, or draft of a hymn. This could also include compiling a prayer guide for a difficult subject, a revised liturgical service, or a hospital or military chaplain's guide for a complex care scenario. The sky is the limit regarding how you shape your final product.

For this project, first person tense and personal tone are encouraged as applicable. Other creative project options can be considered—scheduling office hours to brainstorm your projects is highly recommended.

For dramatic or presentation-based projects, a transcript of no shorter than 1,000 words is required. Note: 1000 words is half the length of a 20-minute presentation, so this assumes a performed element to your sermon or presentation. If you prefer to write a sermon but not perform it, refer to the guidelines for written work below. For sermons, sermon outline and notes of the same amount is also

required but may be reflective of inspiration or summaries of source material rather than a transcript of the sermon itself if an expository homiletic style is used. A time to perform your project should be arranged with the instructor in advance; the possibility of group audiences is available to you, where your presentation would be presented to a group rather than the instructor alone.

For written projects, the final product should be no shorter than 1,500 words total. If poetry or prose, there should be descriptions of the background work to create the piece that explains how the citation material was used and digested. This can be done as footnotes (in which case the 1,500 words is inclusive of footnotes) or as in-text citations noted in brackets and separated on the page from the creative work with two-paragraph spaces and an indentation. For example:

Profound and amazing work of reflective prose ends here.

> [Bracketed explanation of method and development of creative written work begins here, using parenthetical citations for reference material (McCray, 10). Questions about format are welcome via email.]

A note on research works: please consult University of Toronto library guidelines for appropriate scholarly source material. No blogs (including academic blogs like *Public Orthodoxy*), crowd sourced materials (like *Wikipedia*), or basic reference citations (dictionaries, encyclopedias, concordances) will be considered as scholarly citations.

Focus on achieving the qualities of an A project:

- creative, original, contributes something new
- shows direct application and usefulness
- meaningfully analyzes the ethical topic
- digests research and shows mastery of concepts used

Grading System

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalents	Grade Point	Grasp of Subject Matter	Other qualities expected of students
A RANGE: Excellent: Student shows original thinking, analytic and synthetic ability, critical evaluations, and broad knowledge base.				
A+	90-100	4.0	Profound and Creative	Strong evidence of original thought, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound and penetrating critical evaluations which identify assumptions of those they study as well as their own; mastery of an extensive knowledge base
A	85-89	4.0	Outstanding	
A-	80-84	3.7	Excellent	Clear evidence of original thinking, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound critical evaluations; broad knowledge base
B RANGE: Good: Student shows critical capacity and analytic ability, understanding of relevant issues, familiarity with the literature.				
B+	77-79	3.3	Very Good	Good critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; good familiarity with the literature
B	73-76	3.0	Good	
B-	70-72	2.7	Satisfactory at a post-baccalaureate level.	Adequate critical capacity and analytic ability; some understanding of relevant issues; some familiarity with the literature
FZ	0-69	0	Failure	Failure to meet the above criteria

Please see the appropriate handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

Late work (BD). Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. [The instructor should stipulate the penalty for late work.] The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of exam week for the semester in which the course is taught, whichever is sooner.

This penalty is not applied to students with documented medical or compassionate difficulties or exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness); students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor and request an SDF. The absolute deadline for obtaining an SDF for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of examination week, whichever is sooner.   An SDF must be requested from the registrar's office in the student's college of registration no later than the last day of exam week in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted to ACORN. Grades are not official until they are posted to ACORN. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy found at www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf, policies found in the TST conjoint program handbooks, or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility*.* Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism*.* Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks (linked from http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4871. A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm.

Other academic offences*.* TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of *Behaviour on Academic Matters* http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm.

Back-up copies*.* Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

Obligation to check email*.* At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at www.utorid.utoronto.ca. The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. *Students should check utoronto email regularly* for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

Email communication with the course instructor*.* The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students in conjoint programs must be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

Course Schedule

Specific themes and readings to follow.

Week 1 – God with Us / Incarnational Mission and Ministry

Week 2 – Being with Oneself / Being with Others

Week 3 – Being with the Afflicted

Week 4 – Being with the Challenged

Week 5 – Being with the Hurt and Troubled

Week 6 – Being with the Dying

Please note that this syllabus is subject to change in accordance with the regulations in the TST *Basic Degree Handbook*.