

Reformed Theological Seminary
Abuse and the Church—PT6530
Orlando, FL
Summer 2019

Instructor: Justin S. Holcomb
E-mail: jholcomb@rts.edu
Schedule: July 5 (3-9pm) and July 6 (8am-5pm)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores how to prevent, recognize, and respond to sexual and domestic abuse. Specifically, it will focus on how to minister to those who are victims of abuse, how to respond to perpetrators of abuse, how to respond in a crisis, and how to build a healthy church culture before there is a particular crisis.

This course will be a study of various forms of violence and abuse and the theological and practical implications of the Gospel for these topics. We will investigate sexual assault and domestic violence to better understand each issue as well as the prevalence of the issue and effects on victims. We will explore the how the Gospel offers help, hope, and healing to victims. This course will focus on theological engagement and practical engagement.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

For the student to understand the numerous dimensions of sexual assault and domestic abuse.

For students to be aware of the scope of the problems of sexual assault and domestic violence 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 how 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

Justin S. Holcomb and Lindsey A. Holcomb, *Rid of My Disgrace: Hope and Healing for Victims of Sexual Assault* (288 pages)

Justin S. Holcomb and Lindsey A. Holcomb, *Is It My Fault?: Hope and Healing for Those Suffering Domestic Violence* (240 pages)

Justin S. Holcomb and Basyle Tchividjian, *Caring for Survivors of Sexual Abuse* (15 pages)

Basyle Tchividjian and Shira Berkovits, *The Child Safeguarding Policy Guide for Churches and Ministries* (320 pages)

RECOMMENDED READING

Recommended Books

Justin S. Holcomb and Lindsey A. Holcomb, *God Made All of ME: Helping Children Protect Their Bodies*

Victor Vieth, *On This Rock: A Call to Center the Christian Response to Child Abuse on the Life and Words of Jesus*

Recommended 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

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Write a 2,500-word paper focusing on domestic abuse, sexual assault, or child sexual abuse and how a particular biblical or theological theme (sin, image Dei, creation, doctrine of God, Christology, eschatology, etc.) relates to that particular violence and abuse. Due Feb 19, 2017. Due August 9, 2019.

GRADING SCALE

The paper grade will determine your final course grade.

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.

Do not submit a paper that you submitted for another course. This will result in a grade of 0 for that assignment.

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Abuse and the Church

Professor: Justin Holcomb

Campus: Orlando

Date: July 5-6, 2019

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<p><i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None 	
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	Course requires application of theology to abuse and violence.
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Strong	Course requires understanding sin, violence, hope, and healing from scripture.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	Course explores and applies Reformed theology broadly, but not the Westminster Standards specifically.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	Course will influence how students honor God by caring for image bearers.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Strong	Course is focused on confirming church and church to Word of God regarding abuse.
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Strong	Course focuses on hope and healing from abuse to all.
Preach	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Minimal	Course will influence preaching and teaching, but is not focus
Worship	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	None	
Shepherd	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both	Strong	Course will focus on the need for wise, biblical shepherding

	in America and worldwide.		
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	Course is focused on confirming church and church to Word of God regarding abuse.