

Preliminary Syllabus Fall 2011
MNST 5131 Spiritual Issues in Chronic Illness and Disability
Cross listed as NURS 5920

North Park Theological Seminary
3225 W. Foster Ave.
Chicago, Illinois 60625-4895

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Class taught online with fall weekend in Chicago October 21-22

THE FACULTY

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This interdisciplinary course explores the spiritual issues faced by the individual, family, congregations and communities living with chronic illness and disability. Particular attention will be given to the concerns of professional caregivers and the church seeking to provide effective ministry. Throughout the course we will proceed with a lens toward a hospitality of embodiment taking care to address spiritual issues for the “disabled” of body and the “disabled” of acceptance.

The social and personal construction of meaning within the experience of chronic illness and disability, as well as cultural dynamics and ethical issues will provide an overarching course framework. The disciplines of practical theology, nursing, social and human sciences will inform our discussion, drawing upon resources from the Bible, Christian tradition and the experiences of class participants.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will apply a theological anthropology in such a way as to integrate being in the image of God yet living with a disability or chronic illness.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the factors impacting one's growing capacity to discern the difference between identifying with one's illness without becoming identical with it.
- Students will utilize an interdisciplinary approach to the study of spirituality, chronic illness and disability.
- Students will consider the socio-cultural construction of our understanding of chronic illness and disability with a lens toward an increasing ability to discern the significance of race, gender, class, and ethnicity for appropriate and effective healthcare and pastoral care responses.

- Students will explore and integrate issues of spirituality faced by caregivers, families, congregations and those who identify as chronically ill and/or living with a disability.

FORMAT

The class is offered as a hybrid combining online coursework with a weekend on campus October 21- 22, scheduled around the Healing Arts show at Swedish Covenant Hospital. The time on campus will be from 9 AM – 8 PM Friday, October 21 and from 9 AM – 3 PM on Saturday, October 22. Students attending the on campus segment of the course will have the full course three credits applied towards their residency for seminary degrees.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1) Attendance and participation: Full and constructive participation is expected in both online work and our time together on campus. 20% of the course grade.

2) Required Reading:

1. Arthur Frank, *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness and Ethics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. ISBN 978-0226259932 **Note: This book should be read before conducting your interview
2. Reynolds, Thomas E. *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008. ISBN 1587431777
3. Sayantani DasGupta & Marsha Hurst, ed. *Stories of Illness and Healing: Women Write their Bodies*. Kent: Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2007. ISBN 978-0-87338-916-7
4. **See Final Project instructions to determine 4th book to read**

3) Recommended Reading

1. Erik Carter, *Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities*. Baltimore: Brooks Publishing, 2007. ISBN 978-1-55766-743-4
2. Hauerwas, Stanley, and Jean Vanier. *Living Gently in a Violent World: The Prophetic Witness of Weakness*. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2008. ISBN: 0830834524
3. Nouwen, Henri. *Adam: God's Beloved*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997. ISBN 9781570751332

4) Many Voices: Words and Images from the Arts

Choose a film that has a main character living with a chronic illness or disability. View the film in full. Write a 500 word essay discussing; 1) key themes in the film, 2) how the main character was portrayed, i.e is he/she a hero or victim? Is the story line plausible? 3) discuss any spiritual or theological applications 4) discuss how you might use this film in a ministry or health care setting. 10% of the course grade. **Due Friday, September 23**

5) *Interview*

Conduct an interview in person with someone to whom you are not related who has a chronic illness or disability or is a primary caregiver for someone with a chronic illness or disability, **following the guidelines at the end of the syllabus**. Prepare a comprehensive written summary of the interview 5-7 pages in length that will be shared and discussed with the class. 20% of the course grade. **Due Monday, October 10**

6) *Response to Vulnerable Communion*

Vulnerable Communion: Write a 3-4 paragraph personal response to this book, quote in full a few sentences that are significant to you, and formulate a question which arises out of this reading. Include page numbers where appropriate. A personal response should be your interaction with the material and not a summary. The paper should be submitted via email to Dr. Chase-Ziolek mchase-ziolek@northpark.edu. Come prepared to discuss your reading reflections in class. 10% of course grade **Due October 21.**

7) *Creative Response*

In response to the text *Stories of Illness and Healing: Women Write their Bodies*, choose a specific chronic illness or disability. Consider how various people in a congregation or ministry setting might respond as an individual with this chronic illness or disability begins participating regularly. Then create two or more poems, drawings or paintings, short stories, sculptures, or multi-media PowerPoint (or Keynote) that portray the contrasts in spiritual formation if this individual experiences more exclusion or more inclusion. This resource from the Covenant Dept. of Christian Formation may be helpful:

<http://www.covchurch.org/justice/files/2010/08/Disability-Manual-1.pdf> 15% of course grade. **Due Friday, November 11**

8) *Final Project*

Students are to choose one of the two following options that will provide an opportunity to integrate course readings and class work. Choose an area of interest within the experience of chronic illness and disability. **For either option, select one book to read on the topic with the professor's approval.** Choose one of the two following options:

Option #1 Ministry Site Visit

Schedule a visit with a ministry addressing this issue. Interview a key leader in the program and if possible participate in a group activity.

The write up should be 7-9 pages doubled spaced, not including title page or references and include the following:

1. Describe the following:
 - a. Your interest in this area of ministry

- b. Site
- c. Program provided
- d. Philosophy of care
- e. History of care provided
2. Summarize your interview and any participation in group activities
3. Reflect on the book you read in light of your visit drawing on any other course materials as appropriate
4. Discuss implications for the church

Grading for the ministry site visit will be based on interaction and analysis of site visit and reflection demonstrating integration of reading and discussion of implications for ministry or health care settings.

Option #2 Resource Development

Choose a biblical story about a person with a chronic illness or disability. Create one of the following teaching presentations using the chosen scripture and drawing on the additional book you read:

- A Sunday School lesson for adults using PowerPoint (or Keynote) including photos, symbols, and/or music
- A week of written devotions, using *The Covenant Home Altar* as a model
- A slide show or picture book with text
- A sermon in manuscript format (not an outline)

Grading for the Bible and disability will be based on interaction with the scriptural text, appropriate development of material for the target audience, integration with reading and course materials and creativity.

This assignment is 25% of the course grade. **Due Friday, December 2**

The paper should be submitted via email to Dr. Chase-Ziolek mchase-ziolek@northpark.edu They will be posted on the class website for students to read and discuss as desired.

Course Grading

Class Participation	20%
Many Voices Assignment	10%
Vulnerable Communion Response	10%
Creative Response	15%
Interview	20%
Final Project	25%

For grading scale refer to seminary catalogue.

Students with disabilities North Park Theological Seminary provides services for students with documented disabilities to ensure equal access to programs, services, facilities, and activities. Students with a disability who believe that they may need

accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Seminary Academic Services as soon as possible. 773-244-6217. If desired or necessary, discussion pertaining to documentation and accommodation can take place at another suitable location or by telephone. Further information about the American Disabilities

Course Content

Framing the Issues

Body, Self and Society -

Medical and Social Paradigms for Understanding Chronic Illness and Disability –

Mis-use of Faith in the Experience of Chronic Illness and disability

Exploring Topics

Role of Narrative in Sharing the Experience of Illness

When the Body Hurts

Mental Illness

Many Voices: Words and Images from the Arts

Chronic Illness and Disability in Context

Gender and Illness

Cultural Perspectives on Chronic Illness and Disability

Experiencing Chronic Illness and Disability within the Family

Synthesis

Redefining Wholeness for Individuals, Families, Congregations and Communities -

On campus October 21-22

The Community of Faith Responds to Chronic Illness and Disability

Inclusive Worship and Liturgy

Images of Healing: Swedish Covenant Hospital Art Show

Normalcy and Otherness

Spiritual Issues in Chronic Illness/Disability

- For those living with chronic illness or disability
- For those who are “temporarily able bodied”
- Pastoral and clinical responses

The Psalms of Lament – Giving Voice to Experience

Art as a Lens for Suffering

The Meaning and Experience of Illness and Disability in Aging

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Confidentiality

When people share their lives and experiences with us it is important to remember that even if they are very comfortable with us, these are personal stories and we should treat them with the utmost respect. Towards that end, the following are guidelines for the treatment of interview material:

1. The interview should take place in person and in a setting that offers privacy.
2. You should inform the person you are interviewing that a written summary of the interview will be shared with class and that all identifying information will be removed. If the interview is taped, you should let the person know that the taped version will not be shared with the class.
3. The information of the interview should not be shared outside of this class setting whether or not you deem it to be private.

Person to be Interviewed

You should select someone to whom you are not related (either through blood or marriage) who is either:

1. a person with a chronic illness or disability (some examples would be multiple sclerosis, lupus, spinal cord injury, cerebral palsy or other disabilities related to birth, or sensory impairment such as being blind or deaf)
2. Family caregiver of a person with a chronic illness or disability

Prior to the interview

Reflect on your assumptions about what you think about persons with a chronic illness or disability. What assumptions do you have about what it would be like to be a family caregiver? Keeping an open mind and minimizing preconceived notions about the experience of having or caring for someone with a chronic illness or disability will enhance the interview experience for both you and the person you interview. Read “What Students Wish Educators Understood About Disability” by Linda Treloar in The Forum, 1999, volume 7, number 2 found online at <http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/labyforum/Spr99/forum4.html> You should read The Wounded Healer by Frank before the interview.

The interview

The interview must be conducted in person. It can not be by phone or email. You should allow 45 minutes to one hour for the interview. Taping the interview is probably best for capturing what is said if you have good equipment. Another option is to take extensive notes.

Questions

You are required, but not limited to covering the following questions in the course of your interview, making adjustments in the wording depending on if the person you are interviewing has a chronic illness or disability or if they are a family caregiver.

1. Identifying information: age, gender, race, ethnicity, religious background. Give us a picture of who this person is. Where does this person live? Is it an urban, rural, or suburban community? Do they live in a house or apartment? Do they live alone or with family. This information should provide a picture of the person’s social context.
2. Ask the person about the history of their chronic illness or disability or caregiving activities.
3. Describe a typical day in your life.
4. What has been the impact on your life of having the chronic illness or disability or of being a caregiver?
5. Where do you find your greatest support?
6. What are the challenges and opportunities of your situation?
7. How would you describe your spiritual life? How has your experience of living with chronic illness or disability impacted your spiritual life?
8. What has your experience been with the church and local community in relationship to your chronic illness or disability or caregiving work?
9. What has your experience been with the health care system?
10. What is it like to live with people who do not share your chronic illness or disability? Or what is it like to live with someone with a chronic illness or disability?
11. If you were giving the introduction to your autobiography, how would you describe your life?
12. What would you like to say to the church and/or the health care system?

Writing up interviews

You are to provide a written discussion of your interview, approximately 5-7 pages that includes the following:

1. Brief description of the environment in which the interview occurred.
2. Personal description of the interviewee, summary of their story and why you chose this person to be interviewed.
3. Narrative summary of the interview. While the whole interview should not be transcribed verbatim, quote sections of the interview for illustrative purposes to identify key points.
4. Arthur Frank in The Wounded Storyteller identifies three dominant themes in illness narratives, the quest, restitution or chaos. Describe any ways that these themes were reflected in your interview.
5. What was your overall response to the interview? What challenged you? What surprised you?
6. What did you learn from the interview?

Questions about conducting and writing up the interview should be directed to Dr. Mary Chase-Ziolek at mchase-ziolek@northpark.edu

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