

“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centered graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”

Course	BIBLICAL AND SPIRITUAL RESOURCES IN TIMES OF GRIEF PAST TH52 1S
Date, Time, and Delivery Format	MAY 13 – JUNE 24, 2024 MONDAYS & THURSDAYS, 6:30 PM – 9:20 PM SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE
Instructor	DR. BLAIR BERTRAND, PhD Telephone/voice mail available in class Email: bbertrand@tyndale.ca
Class Information	The classes will be livestreamed (Zoom) Monday and Thursday 6:30 PM – 9:20 PM with the exception of statutory holidays. Students may participate in online office hours by appointment.
Course Material	Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores with biblical and theological resources in the face of death, grief and loss. Topics include how the Bible and the Christian tradition portray death, grief and lament, how Christians over the centuries have practiced spiritual care for the dying and grieving, and how to extend care to others in times of sorrow, including the use of the Psalms as a resource for encouragement.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Recall from memory at least one Psalm;
2. Outline at least two theologically sound positions regarding heaven and hell;

3. Explain, using their own words, a cogent Christian answer to the question of evil in relation to dying;
4. Assess the implicit theology of death in both written (sermons, memoirs etc.) and living (those in grief, pastoral leaders etc.) sources;
5. Create a resource that either prepares individuals for grief and dying or helps them to respond.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Billings, J. Todd. [Rejoicing in Lament: Wrestling with Incurable Cancer and Life in Christ](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2015. 201 pages. ISBN 9781587433580

Bowler, Kate. *Everything Happens for a Reason: and Other Lies I've Loved*. New York, NY: Random House, 2018. 178 pages. ISBN 9780399592065

Root, Andrew. *The Church in an Age of Secular Mysticisms: Why Spiritualities without God Fail to Transform - Volume 6 – Ministry in the Secular Age Series*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2023.

Either:

Sprinkle, Preston (ed). *Four Views on Hell* (Counterpoints Series) 2nd edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016. 220 pages. ISBN 9780310516460

OR

Wittmer, Michael E. (ed). *Four Views on Heaven* (Counterpoints Series). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2022. 218 pages. ISBN 9780310093886

One of:

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Notes on Grief*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2021. ISBN 9781039001558

OR

Deraniyagala, Sonali. *Wave*. Toronto, ON: Random House, 2013. ISBN 9780771025372

OR

Hubbard, Robert. *Scenes with My Son*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2023. ISBN 9780802883445

OR

Kalanithi, Paul. *When Breathe Becomes Air*. New York, NY: Random House, 2016. ISBN 9780812988406

OR

Lewis, C.S. *A Grief Observed*. London: Faber and Faber, 1961. ISBN 9780571066247

OR

Sittser, Jerry. *A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows Through Loss*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995. ISBN 9780310219316

OR

Wolsterstorff, Nicholas. *Lament for a Son*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987. ISBN 9780802802941

OR

Yip-Williams, Julie. *The Unwinding of the Miracle: A Memoir of Life, Death, and Everything that Comes After*. New York, NY: Random House, 2019. ISBN 9780525511359

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Tyndale recommends www.stepbible.org – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

C. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM AND/OR HYBRID COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
- Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes*
- A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building*

*exceptions with permission from the professor

D. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to “Guidelines for Interactions” on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

E. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. **Theological Exegesis of Psalm: Due on Friday, May 24; 20 % of final grade**

Using a format and rubric provided by the instructor in the first class, give a theological exegesis of a Psalm that Christians might use as a spiritual resource in times of grief. Students will not do a historical-critical exegesis of a Psalm and, as such, do not require any prior Biblical studies. Part of the assignment includes memorizing all or parts of the chosen Psalm. The final exegesis will be 3-4 pages in length, double-spaced. It meets Learning Objectives 1 and 3.

2. Memoir Reflection: Due on Monday, June 3; 20% of final grade

Students will select a memoir from the Required reading list (Adichie, Deraniyagala, Kalanithi, Hubbard, Lewis, Sittser, Wolsterstorff, Yip-Williams), read it, and write a reflection on it. Students may select a memoir not on the list (excluding Bowler) with prior approval of the instructor. Reflections will focus on three main aspects: how does the author incorporate their own biography into their understanding of death/grief, what are key theological assumptions (implicit or explicit) that the author makes, and what kind of person would find this resource spiritually helpful in a time of grief. The instructor will provide a rubric on May 27. Reflections will be 3-4 pages in length, double-spaced. Meets Learning Objective 4

3. Hell/Heaven Presentations: Week of June 17 & June 20; 20% of final grade

Students will select one position regarding Hell (eternal conscious torment, terminal punishment, a universalist view, hell and purgatory) and one regarding Heaven (traditional evangelical, new earth, heaven on earth, catholic) that they most strongly identify with personally. In addition, students should choose one position that was unfamiliar to them previously but might offer some help in understanding others that they work with. During class students will have an opportunity to share with fellow students their rationale. The intent is not to debate but to appreciate and perhaps persuade. More details for this verbal assignment will come in the June 3 class. Meets Learning Objective 2

4. Spiritual Resource (liturgy/sermon or education): Due on Friday, June 30; 40% of final grade

Students will create a spiritual resource that either prepares individuals for death and grief or responds to death and grief. This resource will take the form of either a liturgy/sermon or an educational resource. The weight of evaluation focuses on the theological and spiritual foundations of the resource and not the actual performance of the resource. Students should focus on who they view as the primary audience and on the beliefs and assumptions around death and grief of that group. From this analysis, students will carefully select theological and spiritual resources discussed in the class

that can comfort and challenge their chosen audience. These two tasks, analysis and selection, form approximately half of the assignment. The other half is to create either a liturgy/sermon or educational resource in response. Throughout the class students will examine exemplars of prayers/sermons and educational resources that they can use as the basis for the creation of their unique resource. More details for this 10–12 page (double-spaced) assignment will come in the first class. Meets Learning Objective 5.

F. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

G. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Theological Exegesis	20 %
Memoir Reflection	20 %
Heaven/Hell Presentation	20 %
Spiritual Resource	40 %
Total Grade	100 %

H. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

1. Your work should demonstrate the following characteristics:

- 12 pt Arial or Times New Roman
- Double spaced
- Student name and assignment title in the header
- Page number in footer
- 1-inch margins
- Footnote using the Chicago Manual of Style

For proper citation style, consult the [tip sheet, “Documenting Chicago Style”](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially ch. 14. For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.44 to 10.48 and 14.238 to 14.241 from the *Chicago Manual of Style* or reference the [tip sheet, “How to Cite Sources in Theology”](#).

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism (including improper use of artificial intelligence programs). Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity website](#) for further details.

Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#). Citation and other [tip sheets](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office (aa@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

I. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

#	Date	Topic(s)	Reading	Assignment
1	May 13 (Monday)	Introduction; Practical Theology		
	May 16 (Thursday)	Psalms as Theological Resource	<i>Rejoicing in Lament</i> , Chapters 1-3, pgs. 1-54 (54)	
2	May 23 (Thursday) *only one class this week due to statutory holiday	Providence; Eschatology; Creation	<i>Rejoicing in Lament</i> , Chapters 4-7, pgs. 55- 130 (75)	Exegesis of Psalm (due Friday, May 24)
3	May 27 (Monday)	Memoir as Theological Resource	<i>Root, The Church in an Age of Secular Mysticisms</i> , Chapters 5-6, pgs. 81-162 (81)	
	May 30 (Thursday)	Reading Memoirs on Death and Grief	<i>Everything Happens for a Reason</i> , whole book (178)	
4	June 3 (Monday)	Education as Memento Mori	<i>Rejoicing in Lament</i> , Chapters 8-10, pgs. 131-189 (58)	Reading Reflection on Memoir (due Monday, June 3)
	June 6 (Thursday)	Pop Culture as Theological Resource		
5	June 10 (Monday)	What is a Life and Why is it worth Living?		
	June 13 (Thursday)	Preaching/Liturgy as Theological Resource		
6	June 17 (Monday)	Hell (and Heaven):	<i>Four Views on Hell</i>	In-class presentations on Hell
	June 20 (Thursday)	Heaven (and Hell):	<i>Four Views on Heaven</i>	In-class presentations on Heaven
7	June 24 (Monday)	Conclusion		Theological Resource for Grief (due Friday, June 30)

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

[Tyndale Library](#) supports this course with [e-journals, e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).

Anderson, Ray S. *Theology, Death and Dying*. New York, NY: Basil Blackwell, 1986. ISBN 9781881266013.

Becker, Ernest. *The Denial of Death*. New York, NY: Free Press, 1973. ISBN 9780684832401

Billings, J. Todd. *The End of the Christian Life: How Embracing Our Mortality Frees Us to Truly Live*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2020. 239 pages. ISBN 9781587434204

Blount, Brian K. *Invasion of the Dead: Preaching Resurrection*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2014. ISBN 9780664239411

Bush, Michael D. (ed). *This Incomplete One: Words Occasioned by the Death of a Young Person*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2006. ISBN 9780802822277

Brueggemann, Walter. *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1984. ISBN 0806621206

Chapell, Bryan (ed). *The Hardest Sermons You'll Ever Have to Preach: Help from Trusted Preachers for Tragic Times*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011. ISBN 9780310331216

Childstrom, Corinne. *Andrew, You Died Too Soon: A Family Experience of Grieving and Living Again*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1993. 9780806626840

Cole, Allan Hugh. *Good Mourning: Getting Through Your Grief*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2008. ISBN 9780664232689

Gawande, Atul. *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End*. New York, NY: Picador, 2014. ISBN 9780805095159

Guthrie, Nancy. (ed). *O Love That Will Not Let Me Go: Facing Death with Courageous Confidence in God*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011. ISBN 9781433516184

Hughes, Robert. *A Trumpet in Darkness: Preaching to Mourners (Fortress Resources for Preaching)*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1985. ISBN 0800611411

Jacobson, Rolf and Karl Jacobson. *Invitation to the Psalms: A Reader's Guide for Discovery and Engagement*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013. ISBN 9781441241399

Jinkins, Michael. *In the House of the Lord: Inhabiting the Psalms of Lament*. Collegeville, MN: Order of St. Benedict, 1998. ISBN 0814624944

Jüngel, Eberhard. *Death: The Riddle and the Mystery*. St. Andrew's: St. Andrew Press, 1975. ISBN 9780715202562

Long, Thomas and Thomas Lynch. *The Good Funeral: Death, Grief, and the Community of Care*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2013. ISBN 9780664238537

Osmer, Richard. *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008. ISBN 9780802817655

Scheffler, Samuel. *Death and the Afterlife (The Berkeley Tanner Lectures)*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013. ISBN 9780199982509

Swinton, John, Richard Payne. (eds). *Living Well and Dying Faithfully: Christian Practices for End-of-Life Care*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009. ISBN 9780802863393

Waltke, Bruce K., James M. Houston, and Erika Moore. *The Psalms as Christian Lament: A Historical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2014. ISBN 9780802868091

Weems, Ann. *Psalms of Lament*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1995. ISBN 9780664220747

Wright, N.T. *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church (Participant's Guide)*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010. ISBN 9780310324706

Young, Kevin. (ed). *The Art of Losing: Poems of Grief & Healing*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2010. ISBN 9781608194667