War destroys. It doesn’t just rip through bone and muscle, stone and steel; it fragments the mind as a fist to a mirror might create thousands of bloodied, glittering shards.—Benjamin Piercy, in his review of The Yellow Birds by Kevin Powers.

3 Options for Credit:

- **Week 1** (1.5 credits/2.0 CEUs):
  M-F 1:30-5:30pm, July 14-18

- **Weeks 1 & 2 & Conference** (3.0 credits / 5.0 CEUs):
  M-F 1:30-5:30pm, July 14-18;
  M-W 1:30-5:30pm, July 21-23;
  Th 1:30pm-9pm July 24; 9am-5:00pm July 25-26

- **Conference Only** (0 credits / 1.5 CEUs):
  Th night - Sat., July 24-26

**Course Description:**

We will study the new concept of moral injury, especially in veterans of war, but also in other forms of socially sanctioned violence and nonmilitary occupational contexts. Recent works by Veterans Affairs clinicians have suggested that moral injury, which remains largely unaddressed, may be a greater factor than PTSD in struggles with mental health and the alarmingly high veteran suicide rate. We will explore precipitating experiences that lead to moral injury, pathways to recovery, the role of communities, and theological, ritual, and biblical implications of understanding it.

We will explore moral formation and military training, as well as the impact of combat on conscience, bringing to bear, as well, neuroscience research on empathy and ritual. We will reflect on theological understandings of soul and conscience, biblical understandings of moral injury, the power of the arts and ritual in soul repair, and civilian moral responsibility for the aftermath of war.

The goal of the first week of the seminar will be to study these ideas as they assist in helping communities in the work of soul repair after war, violence, and other conditions of extremity that challenge moral conscience. During the second week, participants will continue researching areas of interest with a focus on effective pedagogies for educating religious leaders and their communities, designing rituals for soul repair, and creating a two-day conference to implement this work. The creation of a conference will address not only content, but also the implicit pedagogy of conference design. The last two days of the course will be the conference itself, which will conclude with a course evaluation process.

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand moral injury and its consequences especially in military veterans, but
also in civilian professions such as law enforcement and health care.
2. Articulate spiritual resources for addressing moral injury in relation to military training.
3. Reflect upon and assess the relationship between Post Traumatic Stress and moral injury and differing protocols for recovery from each.
4. See the implications of using moral injury as a lens to understanding sacred texts, theological ideas, and spiritual resources.
5. Become more creative in the use of the arts and ritual in supporting recovery.

**Common Required Resources:**

**Books**


**Articles and Videos:**

13. Aristotle Papnikalaou, "The Aesthetics of War: The Undoing and Redoing of Virtue” to be provided as a pdf by the instructor.

**Recommended Readings:**


**Grading Procedures:**

- **Week 1 Students:**
  - Attendance & Participation (includes Final Evaluation & Critical Response Papers): 50%
  - Final Project: Paper, Sermon, Adult Ed Project, etc. for those taking 1.5 credits 50%

- **Weeks 1 & 2 Students:**
  - Attendance & Participation (includes Final Evaluation & Critical Response Papers): 50%
  - Conference (for those taking 3 credits): 50%

- **CEU Students:** Attendance & Participation (includes Final Evaluation & Critical Response Papers): 100%

**Requirements:**

*Attendance & Participation* – Attendance and active, informed participation at all class meetings. Some time will be spent in small group discussion, and each group will take leadership in leading class discussion.

*Daily Critical Reflection Papers* – Each night, you should write a one-page critical reflection paper on the readings and class discussion. To do this, set a timer for ten minutes and write (or type) *nonstop for the full ten minutes, without any pause*. Just keep writing while ignoring the mechanics of writing (spelling, punctuation, etc.). Then, read what you wrote. Select your best thoughts, reflect on why they matter to you, and compose a reflection paper of 300 words, based on key insights of the ten-minute freewriting exercise.

*Final Project for 1.5 credit course* – A sermon, adult education lesson/curriculum, research paper, or another major project, in consultation with the instructor and others in the class.

*Final Evaluation of 3 credit course* – After the conference, the class will meet to evaluate the two week period and the conference itself.

**Course Schedule:**

Because of the pace of an intensive course, I recommend that you read all the required reading and view the video resources before the class begins. The general flow of the first week of class will be (may be adjusted based on what happens each day):

For Monday: Introduction to the class and its members, Discussion of Class Flow and Requirements

Introduction to Moral Injury
For Tuesday: Veteran Testimony
   Viewing of film “Soldiers of Conscience”
   Introduction to Deep Listening
   Voices of Veterans
For Wednesday: Gender, Rape, Loss
   Military Sexual Trauma
   Voices of Veterans
   Loss, Grief, Lamentation, and “Holy Saturday”
   Theological, Textual, Spiritual Resources for Understanding Moral Injury and Recovery
For Thursday: Coming Home
   Resources and Processes for Recovery
   Storytelling
   Arts and Ritual Practices
For Friday: Long Term Living
   Community Responsibility
   Support Systems
   Rituals to Reverse Boot Camp
   Play and Equilibrium

Week Two: TBA, based on processes of first week, ending with a conference