Collaborative on Faith & Disabilities

ONE SEMINARY'S INITIATIVE

The Graduate Certificate in Disability and Ministry at Western Theological Seminary

Ben Conner
Prof. Tom Boogaart
Abby DeZeeuw
Rev. Julie Myers
Matt Nelson-Rogalski
Rev. Randy Smit

[Dis]abling Theological Education

Preparing the next generation of leaders

- Nearly one in five U.S. citizens identify as having a disability
- Of 118 ATS institutions, 74.1% believe their graduates are "not at all" or "only a little prepared to respond to spiritual and theological questions resulting from disability-related human experiences"
- Most courses that address disability do so in the context of pastoral care, not as a critical lens for re-examining scripture, theology, or mission.

Annandale and Carter, "Disability and Theological Education: A North American Study," *Theological Education* 48. 2

[Dis]abling

Rosemarie Garland Thompson: Expose values that have become "neutral in an environment created to accommodate [them]."

Extraordinary Bodies, p. 24

Defamiliarize the Familiar or Complexity the Common Sense

[Dis]abling

Simi Linton: "A disability studies perspective adds a critical dimension to thinking about issues such as autonomy, competence, wholeness, independence/dependence, health, physical appearance, aesthetics, community, and notions of progress and perfection."

"Disability Studies: Expanding the Parameters of Disability," p. 5

One Approach to [Dis]abling Theological Education

"If it's a level playing field, I die."

- Presence
- Intention
- Dimension

Presence

- Gilkison Fund
- Nouwen Fellow
- Friendship House

Intention

- Graduate Certificate in Disability and Ministry
- Lectureships and workshops
- Summer Institute on Theology and Disability

SUMMER INSTITUTE on THEOLOGY & DISABILITY
2018
June 11-14
Raleigh, N.C.

Dimension

- Cultural Competency Training and "disability as diversity"
- External conversation partners and internal competency
- Pedagogy
  - Universal Design for Learning
  - Inclusive Design
  - "culturally relevant disability pedagogy"
  - Stephen Brookfield, bell hooks, Kathleen Cahalan, Richard Foster, Parker Palmer, Craig Dykstra, Simi Linton