

2019 INSTITUTE FACULTY

The following group provides ongoing leadership, direction, and training for the Summer Institute. Not every faculty member is present at each Institute.

SUMMER INSTITUTE
on **THEOLOGY**
& **DISABILITY**



JULIA WATTS BELSER

Rabbi Julia Watts Belser, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies in the Theology Department at Georgetown University. Her scholarship focuses on rabbinic Jewish culture in late antiquity, with particular expertise in disability, gender, and sexuality. Belser co-chairs the American Academy of Religion's Program Unit in Religion and Disability Studies, and heads the AAR's Committee on the Status of People with Disabilities in the Profession. Belser is the co-author of *A Health Handbook for Women with Disabilities* (Hesperian Foundation, 2007). Her forthcoming book, *Power, Ethics, and Ecology in Jewish Late Antiquity: Rabbinic Responses to Drought and Disaster*, (Cambridge University Press) was published in the fall of 2015.



ERIK CARTER

Erik Carter holds a Ph.D. in special education from Vanderbilt University and a B.A. in Christian education from Wheaton College. As an associate professor of Special Education at Vanderbilt, Carter's research and teaching focuses on strategies for supporting meaningful inclusion and promoting valued roles in school, work and community settings for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Among the books he's authored is the influential *People with Disabilities in Faith Communities: A Guide for Service Providers, Families, and Congregations* (2007 Brookes Publishing).



BENJAMIN CONNER

Benjamin Conner, Ph.D., is Professor of Practical Theology and creator and Director of the Graduate Certificate in Disability and Ministry at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, MI. He worked in youth ministry for 20 years, several of those ministering to and with young adults with intellectual disabilities. He currently serves on the Mission-Wide Board of Young Life Capernaum. His writings include *Amplifying Our Witness: Giving Voice to Adolescents with Developmental Disabilities* (Eerdmans, 2012) and *Disabling Mission, Enabling Witness: Exploring Missiology through the Lens of Disability Studies* (IVP Academic, 2018), among others. He is an occasional horse-leader, side-walker, stall-mucker, and general support for his wife, Melissa, who runs *Renew Therapeutic Riding Center*

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WILLIAM C. GAVENTA

The Rev. Bill Gaventa, Waco, Texas, is the director of the Summer Institute on Theology and Disability. He has been a frequent speaker, trainer, and workshop leader on the intersection between faith and disability. Gaventa is an associate editor of the *Journal of Disability and Religion* (formerly the *Journal of Religion, Disability and Health*) and edits the AAIDD e-newsletter, *Gleanings*. In 2013, he retired as director of Community and Congregational Supports and Associate Professor at the Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities, UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.



HANS S. REINDERS

Hans S. Reinders, Ph.D., is professor emeritus of Ethics at VU University Amsterdam. He has published widely on disability issues in both secular and theological circles. Among his books are *The Future of the Disabled in Liberal Society* (Notre Dame Press, 2000), *Receiving the Gift of Friendship* (Eerdmans, 2008), and *Disability, Providence, and Ethics: Bridging Gaps, Transforming Lives* (Baylor Press, 2014). He served as the editor of the *Journal of Disability and Religion* (formerly the *Journal of Religion, Disability and Health*.) from 2010=1016. Reinders is from the Reformed Church tradition.



THOMAS E. REYNOLDS

Thomas E. Reynolds, Ph.D., is associate professor of Theology at Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of Toronto. Committed to an interdisciplinary and relational vision of theology, Reynolds' teaching and research explore a range of topics related to Christian engagements with diversity in a global context. He authored *The Broken Whole: Philosophical Steps Toward a Theology of Global Solidarity* (SUNY Press, 2005); and *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality* (Brazos Press, 2008). He is member of a United Church of Canada congregation in Toronto.

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DARLA SCHUMM

Darla Schumm is the John P. Wheeler professor of religion at Hollins University - a small liberal arts women's college nestled in the midst of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Darla received her B.A. in interdisciplinary studies with concentrations in history, psychology, and women's studies from Goshen College, her M.A. in Social Ethics from the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, CA, and her PHD in Religion, Ethics, and Society from Vanderbilt University. Darla's current research focuses on intersections between religious studies and disability studies. She is the co-editor of four volumes on religion and disability, most recently *Disability and World Religions: An Introduction*, Baylor University Press, 2016. She is currently writing a book tentatively titled: *Religion and Disability in America, which is a sociologically based study of the experiences of people with disabilities in religious communities and organizations in the U.S.*



DEVAN STAHL

Devan Stahl, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Clinical Ethics in the Center for Ethics and Humanities in the Life Sciences at Michigan State University. Dr. Stahl teaches ethics and medical humanities to medical students and residents. She also performs ethics consultation services for hospitals throughout the state of Michigan. Dr. Stahl's research interests include bioethics, disability theology, and medicine and the visual arts. Dr. Stahl has recently published an edited volume titled, *Imaging and Imagining Illness: Becoming Whole in a Broken Body* (Cascade, 2018), which examines the power of medical images and their impact on patients and the wider culture.



JOHN SWINTON

John Swinton is Professor in Practical Theology and Pastoral Care and Chair in Divinity and Religious Studies at the University of Aberdeen. For more than a decade John worked as a registered mental health nurse. He also worked for a number of years as a hospital and community mental health Chaplain alongside of people with severe mental health challenges who were moving from the hospital into the community. In 2004, he founded the University of Aberdeen's [Centre for Spirituality, Health and Disability](#). (John is the author of a number of monographs

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including *Becoming Friends of Time: Disability, Timefullness and Gentle Discipleship*. His book *Dementia: Living in the memories of God* for which he won the Archbishop of Canterbury's Ramsey Prize for excellence in theological writing (www.michaelramseyprize.org.uk).



AMOS YONG

Amos Yong, Ph.D., is the director of the Center for Missiological Research and Professor of Theology and Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary. He authored *The Bible, Disability, and the Church* (2011) and *Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining Disability in Late Modernity* (2007), among others. His graduate education includes degrees in theology, history, and religious studies from Western Evangelical Seminary (now George Fox Seminary) and Portland State University, Portland, Ore., and Boston University, Boston, Mass., and an undergraduate degree from Bethany University of the Assemblies of God. Yong and his wife, Alma Yong, reside in Chesapeake. They are members of New Life Providence Church in the Virginia Beach–Chesapeake area.