

Trauma: Interdisciplinary Perspectives
First-Year Seminar: One Credit

ARTSCI 1138.xx

Day: TBA

Time and Place: TBA

Professor Neil Tennant
Department of Philosophy
Office Hours Thursday 1-2 p.m.
322 University Hall

Course Description: What sorts of awful experiences cause trauma? What are the somatic and psychological effects of trauma on those who have suffered and survived it? How might (certain kinds of) trauma be prevented? How might it be treated and alleviated? How can we understand, and be compassionate towards, and protect the interests of, those who have suffered trauma? How might one develop resilience to trauma?

One can think about and discuss trauma from a multitude of disciplinary perspectives. There are philosophical issues about self, identity and free will; epistemological issues about narrative memory, repression, and self-understanding; metaphysical conceptions of the mind-body relationship; moral issues about agency, responsibility, and normative support for victims. There is neurobiological theorizing about disruption to the neural structures involved in both emotion and cognition. There is psychoanalytic and psychiatric theorizing about etiology and symptomology.

There is also socio-political theorizing about the systemic oppression (of various groups) that can be a serious source of trauma; but this broad topic will be reserved for a follow-up seminar that will study some works of protest literature, and memoirs of survivors.

Course Objectives: To better understand and appreciate the complex and growing interdisciplinary research on the commonalities and differences among various kinds of trauma. This course will provide a safe space both for those who might have suffered some kind of trauma, and for those who wish sympathetically to learn about trauma and its effects.

A note of caution: Students are advised that some of the readings listed below, especially in the list of *optional supplementary* readings, contain graphic or harrowing content. Students might, for a variety of blameless reasons, find them difficult to read. If they wish to have more tractable alternatives assigned, they need only request this from the instructor.

Required texts:

Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence--From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror, by [Judith L. Herman](#).

The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma, by [Bessel van der Kolk M.D.](#)

These two texts speak to the opening questions under the Course Description above.

Course Requirements: You are expected to attend class and participate in discussion to the extent to which you feel capable. You should have read in advance the assigned reading for each class. The questions you bring to class will form an important basis for discussion. Your written assignments should be well documented and researched, and composed in very clear prose.

Grading: S/U. You will be required to write one ‘term paper’, which can be a book report or a discussion of journal articles, with these materials chosen in consultation with the instructor. Your term paper can, if you wish, confine itself to just the assigned readings. The paper should be approximately 3,000 words long. To earn a Pass, the student should display a sound grasp of assigned material relevant to their topic, and an ability to think critically and creatively about the problems addressed. The paper will count for 90% of one’s grade, with the other 10% coming from attendance and participation. We shall have a humane policy on excuses for absence, and for reticence in discussion of certain topics.

Resources of which students should be aware:

Psychological Services Center
<https://psychology.osu.edu/psc>
Call 614-292-2345 or email psc@psy.ohio-state.edu.

Office of Student Life Counseling and Consultation Service
Younkin Success Center (4th Floor), 1640 Neil Avenue, Columbus, OH 43201
<https://ccs.osu.edu/>
Call 614-292-5766 or email Email Counseling and Consultation Service

Academic Misconduct: It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions) that have been certified by the Office of Student Life Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Student Life Disability Services is located in 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue; telephone 614- 292-3307, slds@osu.edu; slds.osu.edu.

Weekly Readings:

The two main texts for the course will be *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence-- From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*, by [Judith L. Herman](#), and *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*, by [Bessel van der Kolk M.D.](#) (One can purchase both these books in paperback on Amazon, for a total cost less than \$30.)

The following is a provisional assignment of readings for each week. This could be subject to change, depending on how students process the material. There is also the prospect of having one or two guest speakers, starting at Week 5, in which case the assigned reading for that day would be carried forward to the next meeting.

- Week 1: Herman, Chapter 1, 'A Forgotten History'
van der Kolk, Chapter 1: 'Lessons from Vietnam Veterans'
- Week 2: Herman, Chapter 2, 'Terror'
- Week 3: Herman, Chapter 3, 'Disconnection'
- Week 4: Herman, Chapter 4, 'Captivity'
- Week 5: Herman, Chapter 5, 'Child Abuse'
van der Kolk, Chapter 8: 'Trapped in Relationships: The Cost of Abuse and Neglect'
- Week 6: Herman, Chapter 6, 'A New Diagnosis'
van der Kolk, Part Two: 'This is your brain on trauma'
- Week 7: Herman, Chapter 7, 'A Healing Relationship'
- Week 8: Herman, Chapter 8, 'Safety'
- Week 9: Herman, Chapter 9, 'Remembrance and Mourning'
- Week 10: Herman, Chapter 10, 'Reconnection'
- Week 11: Herman, Chapter 11, 'Commonality'
van der Kolk, Part Four: 'The Imprint of Trauma'
- Week 12: Consultation and discussion about individual writing projects
- Week 13: van der Kolk, Part Five: 'Paths to Recovery'
- Week 14: van der Kolk, Part Five: 'Paths to Recovery' (cont.)

Further Readings (optional, not required):

A few supplementary or further readings *might* be assigned, students willing and as need be, and in an order to be determined, from the following interdisciplinary list of sources. This list contains an over-supply of items in order to make students aware of ones that they might wish to read, given their own backgrounds and interests, and on which they might wish to write, in fulfilment of their assessment requirement.

Books from which chapters might be assigned, or on which students might choose to write

Trauma and Cognitive Science: A Meeting of Minds, Science, and Human Experience, edited by Jennifer J. Freyd and Anne P. DePrince. Routledge, New York and London. 2012. First published in *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma*, Volume 4, No. 2 (#8), 2001.

Blind to Betrayal: Why We Fool Ourselves We Aren't Being Fooled, by [Jennifer Freyd](#) and [Pamela Birrell](#)

The Body Remembers: The Psychophysiology of Trauma and Trauma Treatment, by Babette Rothschild.

Healing Developmental Trauma: How Early Trauma Affects Self-Regulation, Self-Image, and the Capacity for Relationship, by [Laurence Heller Ph.D.](#) (Author), [Aline LaPierre Psy.D.](#)

Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others, by [Laura van Dernoot Lipsky](#) (Author), [Connie Burk](#) (Author)

Healing from Trauma: A Survivor's Guide to Understanding Your Symptoms and Reclaiming Your Life, by [Jasmin Lee Cori](#) (Author), [Robert Scaer](#) (Foreword)

Trauma and Memory: Brain and Body in a Search for the Living Past: A Practical Guide for Understanding and Working with Traumatic Memory, by [Peter A. Levine Ph.D.](#) (Author), [Bessel A. van der Kolk M.D.](#) (Foreword)

Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma, by [Peter A. Levine](#) (Author), [Ann Frederick](#) (Contributor)

Journey Through Trauma: A Trail Guide to the 5-Phase Cycle of Healing Repeated Trauma, by [Gretchen L. Schmelzer PhD](#) (Author)

The Evil Hours: A Biography of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, by [David J. Morris](#)

The Trauma Spectrum: Hidden Wounds and Human Resiliency, by [Robert Scaer](#)

Asking for It: The Alarming Rise of Rape Culture—and What We Can Do about It, by Kate Harding

Susan J. Brison, *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self* (Princeton University Press, 2002)

Karyn L. Freedman, *One Hour in Paris: A True Story of Rape and Recovery* (University of Chicago Press, 2014)

Journal articles and chapters from anthologies that might be assigned, or on which students might choose to write

Carly Parnitzke Smith and Jennifer J. Freyd, 'Dangerous Safe Havens: Institutional Betrayal Exacerbates Sexual Trauma', *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, vol. 26, 20013, pp.119-124.

Kessler, R.C. (2000). Posttraumatic stress disorder: The burden to the individual and to society. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 61, 4-12.

Jennifer McErlean, 'Sexual Assault in Principle and in Practice: One Philosopher's View', in Michele A. Paludi, ed., *Campus Action Against Sexual Assault*, Praeger, 2016, pp. 83-87

Whiffen & Oliver (2004). The relationship between traumatic stress and marital intimacy. In Catherall D. R. (Ed.) *Handbook of Stress, Trauma and the Family*, pp. 139-159, New York: Bruner-Routledge.

Hart, H. and Rubia, K. (2012). Neuroimaging of child abuse: A critical review. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 6(52), pp. 1-24

Internet sources

<https://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/PTSD-overview/basics/how-common-is-ptsd.asp>

<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-kraft-border-separation-suit-20180503-story.html>

Maura McNerney, Esq. and Amy McLindon, MSW, ‘Unlocking the Door to Learning: Trauma-Informed Classrooms and Transformational Schools’.

<https://www.elc-pa.org/resource/unlocking-the-door-to-learning-trauma-informed-classrooms-and-transformational-schools/>

https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/ptsd-overview/dsm5_criteria_ptsd.asp

<https://aeon.co/essays/how-philosophy-helped-one-soldier-on-the-battlefield>

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/09/140902092947.htm>

<https://theconversation.com/when-sexual-assault-victims-speak-out-their-institutions-often-betray-them-87050>

Biographical Statement: As a Professor in the Department of Philosophy, I have been working at Ohio State since January 1992. I have taught courses at all levels, from introductory undergraduate courses through advanced research seminars for graduate students. My main areas of specialization are Logic (Philosophical, Mathematical and Computational), Philosophy of Mathematics, Philosophy of Science (especially Biology), and Philosophy of Language. A list of my published works can be found at <https://u.osu.edu/tennant.9/publications/>. I have approached a range of problems in philosophy from the standpoint of a naturalizing world view, seeking illumination from our best scientific theories, especially those concerning human nature and our intellectual faculties. My interest in the topic of trauma is a new development, but it is a further outgrowth of my interdisciplinary interests, into an area of acute contemporary concern.