

APPL/SPIR 540: DEMENTIA LIVING IN THE MEMORIES OF GOD

John Swinton

May 10 – 14; 8:30 – 11:30 am

1 or 2 graduate credit hours; or 1 audit hour

Live online & Recorded

COURSE DESCRIPTION

It is an obvious fact that the number of people living with dementia is increasing at a significant rate nationally and internationally. It has also been noted that people tend to fear dementia more than they fear cancer. Why might this be? One reason is that we tend to equate memory with personhood, assuming that when we can't remember certain things, we are no longer the person that we used to be. The fear is that we somehow lose ourselves to the condition. Such thinking leads to alienation and dehumanization of people with dementia and a reduction of personhood, citizenship, and discipleship. But there are other ways of looking at dementia. Ways that bring healing and new possibilities in a situation that sometimes looks and feels hopeless. In this course we will move beyond stigmatizing assumptions that frame dementia as just another problem to be solved, towards an understanding that emphasises what it means to live well with dementia. The course will engage in a theological exploration of key issues around the nature of dementia, memory, personhood, citizenship, community and discipleship. It will wrestle with questions such as: Are we just our brains? What does it mean to remember and forget? What does it mean to love Jesus when we have forgotten who God is? What does it mean to be a disciple when one loses one's memory? What kinds of community of belonging do we need to become in order to support people with dementia, their families, carers and supporters? What theological and practical understandings and strategies do we need to engage in to make the inclusive reality of the Body of Christ a reality for people living with dementia?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon the successful completion of this course, students should have a clearer understanding of:

1. To develop a practical theological understanding of dementia and dementia care
2. To explore and understand the critical interface between theology, medicine and health and social care.
3. To learn new ways of thinking and practicing care with people living with dementia, their families and those who support them.

COURSE OUTLINE

Day 1 May 10 Understanding Practical Theology and the Theology of Disability

Day 2 May 11 Re-Imagining Dementia: Theology, Faith, and Care

Day 3 May 12 Love in the Time of Dementia: Enabling Love in a Time of Change

Day 4 May 13 The Ethics of Dementia and Dementia Care: Personhood, Citizenship, and Euthanasia

Day 5 May 14 Creating Communities and Care

REQUIRED TEXTS

John Swinton. *Dementia: Living in the Memories of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012 (The student should, if possible, acquaint themselves with the arguments of this book prior to the course.)

Looking for textbooks? Please [contact](#) the Regent Bookstore, or check out their [direct-fulfillment website](#). [Aerio](#).

Note: Aerio prices are in USD.

Please Note: This Course Information Sheet is meant to assist in selecting courses. The official syllabus should be consulted for more detailed information. A full syllabus with drop deadlines, policies, and course assignment details is available on Moodle for registered students: moodle.regent-college.edu/login

