



ANSWERING GOD'S CALL

PHIL6305 THE PROBLEM OF EVIL
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Division of Theological and Historical Studies
Defend Apologetics Conference—January 8-12, 2018

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Mission Statement

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Core Value Focus

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. These values shape both the context and manner in which all curricula are taught, with “doctrinal integrity” and “mission focus” especially highlighted in this course. The core value focus for the 2017-18 year is ***Servant Leadership***: “*We follow the model of Jesus and exert leadership and influence through the nurture and encouragement of those around us.*”

Curriculum Competencies

All graduates of NOBTS are expected to have at least a minimum level of competency in each of the following areas: Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Disciple Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual and Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. The curriculum competencies addressed in this course are: ***Christian Theological Heritage*** and ***Spiritual and Character Formation***.

Course Description

The course introduces students to contemporary philosophical issues related to the Christian concept of God and the problem of evil. Issues addressed include the nature of evil, the cause of evil, the intelligibility and coherence of the Christian concept of God in light of evil, solutions offered by various world religions to the problem of evil, as well as representative solutions offered by a selection of contemporary philosophers addressing the topic of evil. The thrust of the course will focus upon personal reading, research, and writing.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will read broadly on God and evil as understood and studied in contemporary philosophy of religion.
2. Students will become familiar with issues related to evil and the Christian concept of God.
3. Each student will demonstrate an understanding of an issue related to the subject by writing a research paper on a selected topic.

Required Textbooks

Jeremy A. Evans, *The Problem of Evil: The Challenge to Essential Christian Beliefs*. B&H Studies in Christian Apologetics. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2013.

Daniel Howard-Snyder, ed. *The Evidential Argument from Evil*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996.

Suggested Textbooks

Marilyn McCord Adams and Robert Merrihew Adams, *The Problem of Evil*. Oxford Readings in Philosophy. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Michael Bergmann, Michael J. Murray, and Michael C. Rea, *Divine Evil? The Moral Character of the God of Abraham*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

John Bowker, *Problems of Suffering in Religions of the World*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Gregory Boyd, *Moving Beyond Pat Answers to the Problem of Evil*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003.

Gregory Boyd, *Satan and the Problem of Evil: Constructing a Trinitarian Warfare Theodicy*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001.

D. A. Carson, *How Long, O' Lord? Reflections on Suffering and Evil*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991.

John Claypool, *Tracks of a Fellow Struggler: How to Handle Grief*. Waco: Word, 1974.

Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.

Horton Davies, *The Vigilant God: Providence in the Thought of Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin and Barth*. New York: Peter Lang, 1992.

Stephen T. Davis, *Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy*. New Edition. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2001.

R. Douglas Geivett, *Evil and the Evidence for God: The Challenge of John Hick's Theodicy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993.

Peter van Inwagen, *The Problem of Evil*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Timothy Keller, *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*. New York: Dutton, 2013.

Elmar J. Kremer and Michael J. Latzer. *The Problem of Evil in Early Modern Philosophy*. Toronto Studies in Philosophy. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002.

Mark Larrimore, *The Problem of Evil: A Reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000.

C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed*. New York: Bantam, 1983.

C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.

Michael L. Peterson, *God and Evil: An Introduction to the Issues*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998.

D. Z. Phillips, *The Problem of Evil and the Problem of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005.

Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.

William Rowe, *God and the Problem of Evil*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001.

John G. Stackhouse, Jr., *Can God Be Trusted: Faith and the Challenge of Evil*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Richard Swinburne, *Providence and the Problem of Evil*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Heath A. Thomas, Jeremy Evans, and Paul Copan, *Holy War in the Bible: Christian Morality and an Old Testament Problem*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2013.

Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Lament for a Son*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

Course Teaching Methodology

This is an event course tied to attending the *Defend* Conference at NOBTS. The Breakout sessions for this course will include lectures and class discussions, and will be taped for the conference. Following the Conference, students will continue to learn through reading and writing assignments, examination, and audio resources.

Course Requirements

The course will utilize reading assignments, a reading report, a research paper, and a personal perspective paper.

Lecture Attendance. Students are required to attend all plenary sessions as well as one breakout presentation for each breakout session, and listen to audio recordings of all breakout sessions they cannot physically attend.

Book Reviews. Each student is required to review **3 books** from the *Suggested Texts* list. The reviews should include: (1) some biographical data concerning the author; (2) an identification of the major elements of content; (3) an assessment of the author's aim or purpose and of the degree of its fulfillment; and (4) a critical evaluation of the book. The reviews should be 5-7 double-spaced pages and follow Turabian form. **The book reviews are due 7 weeks after the last day of the Defend the Faith Apologetics Conference (Friday, March 2, 2018).**

Research Paper. Students will write a 2,500-3,000 word (not including notes or bibliography) research paper on an approved theme in relation to the problem of evil.

Basic guidelines regarding the research paper are as follows:

- **Exhaustive:** Research should be exhaustive. The bibliography should contain *at least* 12 non-electronic sources.

- **Biblical:** The researcher should demonstrate the use of biblical texts and hermeneutical skill in his or her evaluation of the issue.
- **Organization:** The organization and structure of the paper should grow out of the research and should be the best possible means for explicating the topic.
- **Implications:** The researcher should be able to demonstrate the “so what” of their research topic as far as it pertains to evangelical faith, practice, and evangelism.
- **Form and style:** Careful attention should be given to all matters of subdivisions, paragraphing, quoted matter, footnotes, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, spelling, sentence structure, word usage, bibliography, etc. Papers (15-20 pages) should be double-spaced, in Turabian format, in Times New Roman 12 pt font, and should contain a bibliography and an NOBTS title page.
- **Critical evaluation:** Critical evaluation—not just superficial treatment of the sources—and accurate exposition of the topic should characterize your paper. It goes without saying that “critical evaluation” requires the use of proper logic.

Topics for your papers are listed in the section *Possible Research Topics*. **Papers due 11 weeks after the last day of the Defend the Faith Apologetics Conference (Friday, March 30, 2018).**

Here is a rough guide to paper grades.

A Paper: Demonstrates a *superior* grasp of ideas, arguments, or theories it discusses, and presents very good, clear, and thoughtful arguments, with very few, if any, significant grammatical and/or form and style problems.

B Paper: Demonstrates a *good* grasp of ideas, arguments, or theories it discusses, presents an argument that exhibits good reasoning, with minimal significant grammatical and/or form and style problems.

C Paper: Demonstrates an adequate though perhaps limited understanding of ideas, arguments, or theories it discusses, mixed with a significant number of incorrect claims, presents weak arguments, contains significant grammatical or structural problems.

D Paper: Demonstrates significant misunderstandings of factual matters, uses poor logic or fallacious reasoning (if any) to argue points (e.g., merely makes a series of unconnected assertions), fails significantly with respect to technical specifications.

F Paper: Failure to submit a paper, a paper that commits plagiarism, or a paper that presents no argumentation.

Session Summaries. Students will write one-page, single-spaced summaries of 12 different sessions from the *Defend* Conference. Summaries may be submitted via Blackboard. **Due 14 weeks after the last day of the Defend the Faith Apologetics Conference (Friday, April 20, 2018).**

Possible Research Topics

David Hume's Argument from Evil
Alvin Plantinga's Freewill Defense
John Hick's Soul-Building Theodicy
C. S. Lewis on Evil and Suffering
Marilyn McCord Adams on Evil, Justice, and the Goodness of God
J. L. Mackie's Atheistic Argument from Evil
John Feinberg's Evangelical Theodicy
David Ray Griffin's Process Theodicy
William Rowe's Inductive Case from Evil for the Non-Existence of God
Augustine of Hippo on Evil and God's Existence
The Problem of Evil and the Reality of Hell
Gregory Boyd's Warfare Theodicy
The Problem of Evil in Islam
Marxism and the Problem of Evil
Hinduism and the Problem of Evil
Evil and Suffering in Christian Science
Evil and Suffering in Latter-day Saint Theology
Buddhism and Suffering
Clement of Alexandria on Evil and Suffering
The Freewill Defense Assessed
The Question of the Best Possible World and the Problem of Evil
What of Natural Evils?

Evaluation of Grade

Grades will be assigned on the basis of the NOBTS grading scale: 93-100, A; 85-92, B; 77-84, C; 70-76, D; 0-69, F.

The final grade will be determined accordingly:

Book Report #1	10%
Book Report #2	10%
Book Report #3	10%
Research Paper	40%
<u>Reading Summaries</u>	<u>30%</u>
	100%

Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard Learning Management System NOBTS.Blackboard.com.
3. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer.

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Selected Bibliography

- Adams, Marilyn McCord and Robert Merrihew Adams, eds. *The Problem of Evil*. Oxford Readings in Philosophy. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
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- Cullmann, Oscar. *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection from the Dead?* New York: Macmillan, 1958.
- Davis, Stephen T., ed. *Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1981.
- Griffin, David Ray. *Evil Revisited*. Albany: SUNY, 1991.
- . *God, Power and Evil: A Process Theodicy*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976.
- Hauerwas, Stanley. *Naming the Silences: God, Medicine, and the Problem of Suffering*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Hick, John. *Death and Eternal Life*. New York: Harper and Row, 1976.
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- . *The Problem of Pain*. New York: Macmillan, 1977.
- Moreland, J. P. and Gary Habermas. *Immortality: The Other Side of Death*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992.
- Peterson, Michael L. *God and Evil: An Introduction to the Issues*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998.
- Pinnock, Clark H. "The Destruction of the Finally Impenitent," *Criswell Theological Review* 5 (Spring 1990), 243-259.
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- Plantinga, Alvin. *God and Other Minds: A Study of the Rational Justification of Belief in God*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990 (1967).
- . *God, Freedom, and Evil*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *The Symbolism of Evil*. Boston: Beacon, 1967.
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- Suchocki, Marjorie Hewitt. *The End of Evil*. Albany: SUNY. 1988.
- Summers, Ray. *The Life Beyond*. Nashville: Broadman, 1959.
- Surin, Kenneth. *Theology and the Problem of Evil*. Malden: Blackwell, 1986.
- Swinburne, Richard. *Providence and the Problem of Evil*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
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- Yancey, Philip. *Where Is God When It Hurts?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977.