The Problem of Evil PHIL6305
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Defend Conference
January 6-10, 2020
Office: Dodd 112, extension #3245
rstewart@nobts.edu
Administrative Assistant
stewartsec@nobts.edu

Seminary 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
The seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. The core value focus for this academic year is Spiritual Vitality: We are a worshiping community emphasizing both personal spirituality and gathering together as a Seminary family for the praise and adoration of God and instruction in His Word.

Core Values Addressed
The course will address the core values Doctrinal Integrity and Mission Focus by giving attention to defending and presenting Christian beliefs particularly as they relate to Christian evangelism. Servant Leadership will be addressed as well in that Christian apologists must model humility.

Competencies Addressed
The competencies of Christian Theological Heritage, Disciple Making, and Spiritual and Character Formation will be addressed.

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
By the end of the course, students should:
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**


**Course Requirements**

1. **Lecture Attendance.** Students are required to attend all sessions of the *Defend 2020* Christian Apologetics Conference. **Students must take a picture of themselves wearing their conference name badges on stage in front of the conference backdrop and post it to Blackboard.**

2. **Required Reading.** Students are required to read all of the two required textbooks. Students are not required to review these two books, nor may they review either of the required books in lieu of one of the books listed for book reviews. **Students must affirm on Blackboard that they have done this.**

3. **Book Reviews.** Each student is required to review 2 of the following books. **Students may not duplicate book reviews from any other course for this course.** If a student wishes to substitute another book in place of one of the books on the list below, he or she must get the professor’s permission in an email to do so.

   Reviews should include: (1) some professional biographical data concerning the author; (2) a summary of the book; (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. All grammar and citations in the reviews should follow Turabian form. Reviews should be 5-7 double-spaced pages (which won’t be difficult if students include all of the above criteria). **Book Reviews are due 7 weeks after the final day of the Defend 2020 Apologetics Conference (February 21, 2020).**

Books for Book Reviews


4. **EMNR/ISCA Conference Attendance OR Session Summaries.** Students must do **ONE** or the other:

- **Attend the joint conference of the International Society of Christian Apologetics (ISCA) and Evangelical Missions to Non-Christian Religions (EMNR).** The ISCA/EMNR conference will be on the NOBTS campus March 26-27, 2020. In addition to registering for and attending the conference, the students will need to send an email with a picture of themselves and a non-NOBTS conference speaker (it can be a selfie) to Robert Stewart at rstewart@nobts.edu with a sentence or two stating that the picture demonstrates that they attended the conference. **Confirmation email and picture is due one week after the ISCA/EMNR Conference April 3, 2020.**

- **Write one-page, single-spaced summaries of 12 different breakout sessions from the Defend 2020 Christian Apologetics Conference.** Students taking more than one Defend 2020 course for NOBTS credit may not use any session summaries that they use for another course. Summaries should be submitted via Blackboard. **Summaries are due 15 weeks after the conclusion of the Defend 2020 Apologetics Conference (April 24, 2020).**

5. **Research Paper.** Each student is required to submit a research paper on a topic related to the problem of evil. The paper should be not less than 3,000 words nor more than 5,000 words in length (double spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font). Papers must adhere to the Turabian style guide. Students may NOT submit the same paper for this course and another NOBTS course. **Research papers are due 13 weeks after the final day of the Defend 2020 Apologetics Conference (April 10, 2020).**

Research papers should be:

- **Well-Rounded:** 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 29, 2019).**

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.

**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:

- Conference Attendance: 10%
- Required Reading: 10%
- Book Reviews: 20%
- Research Paper: 30%
- ISCA/EMNR Conference or Session Summaries: 30%
- Final Grade: 100%

**Extra Credit** may be earned for: (1) additional book reviews (students taking more than one course will not receive extra credit for book reviews from another class), additional session summaries, or attendance at approved apologetics events; or (2) attending the EMNR/ISCA conference AND writing the session summaries; or (3) attendance at ad hoc apologetics events in the spring semester for which the student has previously received the approval of the professor of record.
Suggested Bibliography


