



**PHIL6305 The Problem of Evil**  
**New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary**  
**January 4-8, 2021**  
**January 4, 1:00-4:00 p.m. CST**  
**January 5-8, 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. CST**  
**Hardin Student Center 277**

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### **Mission Statement**

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

### **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 be introduced to some basic issues related to the problem of evil by attending class lectures.
2. Students will be introduced to some basic issues related to the problem of evil by reading the primary texts and assigned readings.
3. Students will be introduced to the basic issues related to the problem of evil through completing the assignments.

### **Required Textbooks**

All readings will be posted on Blackboard.

### **Course Teaching Methodology**

The course will involve the following methodologies:

Students will meet for class on the NOBTS main campus or via Bluejeans. Assignments will be turned in at a later date and evaluated via Blackboard.

## Course Requirements

1. Students are expected to attend class, read the assigned materials and participate in class discussion.
2. Students are expected to complete the required assignments.

## Assignments:

- **Attendance/Participation:** Students shall be graded on both their attendance and on their actively engaging the material in class. 20%
- **Two Book Reviews:** 20% each
- **Final Exam or Research Paper:** 40 %

## Due Dates for Assignments

Book Review 1 is due on Friday, February 14, 2021 (Happy Valentines!)

Book Review 2 is due on Friday, April 1, 2021

## Technical Assistance

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

1. [Selfserve@nobts.edu](mailto:Selfserve@nobts.edu) - Email for technical questions/support requests with the [Selfserve.nobts.edu](http://Selfserve.nobts.edu) site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. [BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu](mailto:BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu) - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard Learning Management System [NOBTS.Blackboard.com](http://NOBTS.Blackboard.com).
3. [ITCSupport@nobts.edu](mailto:ITCSupport@nobts.edu) - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. [www.NOBTS.edu/itc/](http://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.

## Tentative Course Schedule and Readings

### Monday, January 4<sup>th</sup>: Introducing the Problem

- The “Grand Inquisitor” from Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*
- Mackie “Evil and Omnipotence”

### Tuesday, January 5<sup>th</sup>: The Downfall of the Logical Problem and the Rise of Evidential Problem

- Plantinga Selections from *God, Freedom and Evil*
- Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism"

### Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>: The Freewill Defense (and some lagniappe)

- Swinburne Chapter 6 in *Is There a God?*
- Lewis: “Evil for Freedom’s Sake”

### Thursday, January 7<sup>th</sup>: Two Alternatives to Freewill Defense (and some Job)

- Hick: Selections from *Evil and the God of Love*
- Wykstra: “The Humean Obstacle to Evidential Arguments from Suffering: On Avoiding the Evils of ‘Appearance’”
- Job: 38:1-42:6

### Friday, January 8<sup>th</sup>: The Best of All Possible Worlds

- Adams “Must God Create the Best?”
- Stewart: “Anti-Leibnizianism and the Problem of Pointless Evils”

## 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) a summary of the book; (2) an assessment of the author(s)'s aim or purpose and of the degree of its fulfillment; and (3) 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).

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

Howard-Snyder, D. (Ed.). (1996). *The Evidential Argument from Evil*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

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

Plantinga, A., & Tooley, M. (2009). *Knowledge of God*. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons.\*\*

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

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

\*NOTE! The second half of *God, Freedom, and Evil* focuses on arguments for God's existence, primarily the ontological argument. If you choose to review this book, you should focus primarily on the first half, which deals with the Problem of evil. You may touch on the later chapters, but your primary focus should be on the first half.

\*\*As with the other Plantinga book, this touches on more than the problem of evil. Your review should focus on that. Also, be aware that this book is very complicated, sometimes in ways that are unnecessary. (Tooley's use of probability bears much of the blame for the unnecessary complexity)

## **NOLA2U LIVE**

If you are taking this course as a NOLA2U Live student, please note the following attendance policies:

1. The course on the New Orleans campus will be connected synchronously via Web conferencing with Internet students. These courses will require weekly attendance at the stated class meeting times.

2. Students are only allowed to miss the amount of class time specified in the NOBTS attendance policy as stated in the graduate catalog. (See page 184 in the graduate catalog: <https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/academics/GraduateCatalog.pdf> ).

## **Bibliography**

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

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

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

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

Crenshaw, Robert. *Theodicy in the Old Testament*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.

- 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.
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- 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.
- . *Evil and the God of Love*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1978.
- Jones, Clay. *Why Does God Allow Evil?: Compelling Answers for Life's Toughest Questions*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2017.
- Keller, Timothy. *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*. New York: Dutton, 2013.
- Kremer, Elmar J. and Michael J. Latzer. *The Problem of Evil in Early Modern Philosophy*. Toronto Studies in Philosophy. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002.
- Kvanvig, Jonathan. *The Problem of Hell*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Lambrecht, Jan and Raymond F. Collins. *God and Hume Suffering*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Larrimore, Mark. *The Problem of Evil: A Reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000.
- Leming, Michael and George Dickinson. *Understanding Death, Dying, and Bereavement*. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1997.
- Lewis, C. S. *A Grief Observed*. New York: Bantam, 1980.
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- Meister, Chad and James K. Dew, Jr. eds. *God and Evil: The Case for God in a World Filled with Pain*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2012.
- . *God and the Problem of Evil: Five Views*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2017.
- Moreland, J. P. and Gary Habermas. *Immortality: The Other Side of Death*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992.
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- Swinburne, Richard. *Providence and the Problem of Evil*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
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- Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Lament for a Son*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.
- Yancey, Philip. *Where Is God When It Hurts?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977.