



**Course Syllabus  
FALL 2013**

**EVIL AND SUFFERING  
THEO 0836**

**TUESDAYS 1:00 – 3:50 PM  
SEPTEMBER 10 – DECEMBER 3, 2013**

**INSTRUCTOR: PROFESSOR JAMES A. BEVERLEY, PhD**

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Email: [jbeverley@tyndale.ca](mailto:jbeverley@tyndale.ca)

Office Hours: To reach me by phone use my cell phone number. Leave a message on my cell phone. When sending me an email please put Tyndale in subject line.

I am available on campus by appointment, usually Monday-Thursday. I can see students before or after class on Tuesdays. The most effective way to make an appointment is by email.

To access your course materials, go to your Tyndale email account: <http://mytyndale.ca>. Please note that all official Tyndale correspondence will be sent to your <@MyTyndale.ca e-mail account. For information how to access and forward Tyndale e-mails to your personal account, see <http://www.tyndale.ca/it/live-at-edu>.

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course examines philosophical, theological, biblical and pastoral perspectives on the problem of evil and suffering. The problems related to Christian theodicy will be introduced by classical readings in Scripture and theology, by key philosophical texts and by literary and artistic explorations of pain and evil. Evil and suffering represent the biggest obstacle to belief in Christian theism, not only in an intellectual sense but in

terms of deep personal reaction as one faces the realities of evil and suffering in one's life and/or in the lives of others. Addresses the intellectual and personal aspects of evil and suffering in light of Christian theism.

## **II. LEARNING OUTCOMES**

At the end of this course, students should be:

- acquainted with the most important readings in the church and the academy related to the problem of evil
- able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of various theodicies as they are proposed to deal with evil and suffering
- able to develop and improve their own theological and philosophical framework in response to pain and evil
- competent in the spiritual task of responding sensitively as a Christian to the presence of pain and evil in individual, family, social, and church settings

### **Important Note:**

This class involves reading and careful examination of documents that demand a very sophisticated understanding of English. The professor advises that this course is not for students who have serious problems reading complex English documents involving heavy philosophical and theological language.

## **III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. REQUIRED TEXT**

Stephen Davis, ed. *Encountering Evil* (Westminster John Knox, rev. edition, 2001)  
ISBN: 9780664222512

### **B. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

The course will follow a seminar format in terms of assignments where the whole class reads and reports on the same literature or issues weekly. Individual students will lead on assigned readings through the course. Professor Beverley will also lecture/teach on specific topics each class.

#### **1. Completion of Assignments and Class Participation 20%**

The schedule for assignments will be decided in the first class. Students will choose from a number of varied topics and tasks during the course. The assignment might be to report on a film, work of art, article, book, internet site, interview, or personal research.

## **2. Review of two books 30%**

Read and report on two different books on evil and suffering. Length: 1500 words on each book. The professor will provide a number of books for students and the review will consist of a reaction to the main views of the book under analysis.

## **3. Major Research Project 30%**

This can be on any topic related to evil and suffering but please get guidance from Professor Beverley as you choose topic. Length: 2500 words. Professor Beverley will provide specific criteria for whatever topic is chosen by the student in order to aid in successful completion of the research topic. A list of research topics will be given out in the first class.

## **4. Take Home 20% To be done at end of course, possibly in interview format.**

### **C. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK**

#### **Academic Integrity**

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University College & Seminary takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students should consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

For proper citation style, consult the [Chicago-Style Quick Guide](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially [ch. 14](#). For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.46 to 10.51 and 14.253 to 14.254.

#### **Late Assignments**

Assignments are expected when due and a penalty will be imposed for late submissions unless exceptional circumstances arise. Please inform me of situations that warrant extra time for completion of work.

#### **Plagiarism**

Please credit all sources in research. Plagiarism is a serious offense to high standards of

academics and morality.

### **Notice on Written Assignments**

On every assignment please put your name, phone number(s), and, if relevant, why assignment is late

**Please submit all assignments by e-mail to Rebekka Paul—she is Prof. Beverley’s administrative assistant. Her email is bekkaries@yahoo.ca**

### **D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments

|                                     |       |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Assignments and Class Participation | 20 %  |
| Review of two books                 | 30 %  |
| Major Research Project              | 30 %  |
| Take Home Exam                      | 20 %  |
| Total Grade                         | 100 % |

### **IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS**

The course will cover major theological and philosophical writers on theodicy issues, including classical theologians like Origen, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Kierkegaard, and Barth. The philosophical literature will involve some reading from ancient and medieval writers, but will focus on contemporary writers like Alvin Plantinga, Nicholas Wolterstorff, John Hick, John Roth, Stephen Davis, Marilyn McCord Adams, Eleonore Stump, William Lane Craig, John Cobb, Greg Boyd, William Rowe, among others.

The course will also give considerable attention to literary and artistic expressions of evil and suffering as a vehicle for the emotional expression of the problem. We will utilize works of art and literature and clips from classics in cinema to convey the depth and range of human response to pain and evil.

| <b>Date</b>  | <b>Topic</b>           | <b>Assignments</b> |
|--------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| September 10 | Introduction to Course |                    |
| September 17 |                        |                    |
| September 24 |                        |                    |
| October 1    |                        |                    |

|             |                              |                         |
|-------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| October 8   |                              | Response to first book  |
| October 15  |                              |                         |
| October 22  |                              |                         |
| October 29  | <b>No Class Reading Week</b> |                         |
| November 5  |                              | Response to second book |
| November 12 |                              |                         |
| November 19 |                              |                         |
| November 26 |                              |                         |
| December 3  | Last Class                   | Research Project Due    |
|             |                              | Take Home Exam          |

## V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

There are many sources on the Internet that cover the most significant works on evil and suffering. Here are four links for further study.

1. Randy Alcorn has a great annotated bibliography relating to his work *If God is Good*. Go to

<http://www.epm.org/resources/2010/Mar/26/if-god-good-partial-annotated-bibliography/>

2. Barry Whitney, a scholar from Windsor, Ontario, has compiled the most comprehensive bibliography ever done on evil and suffering. You can see samples of his resources at <http://drbarrywhitney.com/blw-7theodicy-2.html>

3. The Philpapers site has a useful section:

<http://philpapers.org/browse/the-argument-from-evil>

4. The Hedgehog Review devoted a whole journal issue to Evil. You can see an overview of the issue here:

[http://www.iasc-culture.org/THR/hedgehog\\_review\\_2000-Summer.php](http://www.iasc-culture.org/THR/hedgehog_review_2000-Summer.php)

Note the bibliography can be downloaded.

<http://www.iasc-culture.org/THR/archives/Evil/2.2KBibliography.pdf>