Course Description
This course will examine the way in which Scripture connects with the philosopher’s Argument from Evil. Historically, philosophers have drawn on the presence of suffering to argue that the traditionally understood Judeo-Christian God cannot exist. If there be any god, he’s either wicked or culpably incompetent. By contrast, Scripture clearly teaches that God is good and perfect in wisdom. Where does this leave us? The course is designed to teach students to competently synthesize philosophical arguments with scriptural exposition. (Three semester hours)

Course Objectives
Students will be taught to critically evaluate a variety of philosophical theses and arguments in light of Scripture. This will require that they develop competence in and harmonize the various methods of (i) analytic thinking, (ii) critical reading and exposition, and (iii) systematic thinking. Ultimately, students will be equipped with a broad apologetical palette to be used in evangelism or discipleship training.

Course Format
The course will be taught as a wrap-around course in conjunction with the 2017 Xenos Summer Institute (XSI). The student will attend XSI, as well as special workshops and class sessions specifically for TEDS students enrolled in ID6000 (see schedule below for special class and workshop sessions). Class sessions will include a significant amount of student-teacher interaction, group discussion, and reporting on student assignments.

Pre-Course Reading and Assignments
Required Pre-Course Reading


Pre-Course Assignments
All pre-course assignments are due by email to <grader> no later than the beginning of the first class session on Wednesday, July 11, at 4:00pm. It counts 40% toward the course grade.

Summary of Stump’s Wandering in Darkness
For each of the four parts of Stump’s book, write a single paragraph summary. Summaries with either more than one paragraph per book part or more than 500 words total will be docked points. The point of the exercise is to be concise! Shallow summaries will also receive poor marks, viz. those that indicate the student is simply looking at the table of contents but did not read the book.
Assessing Ehrman’s Use of Scripture

Ehrman’s title boldly proclaims that the Bible fails to answer why we suffer. Students must write a 1500-2500 word paper (double spaced, 1” margins, 12 point Times New Roman font) assessing this claim along the following two axes:

- Most students will not agree with Ehrman’s exposition. Select a passage of Scripture that Ehrman discusses and do the following: (i) summarize the passage; (ii) summarize Ehrman’s reading of the passage and its relevance to suffering; (iii) critically assess Ehrman’s reading. Be careful to interpret Ehrman charitably. It’s not interesting to make him into “Straw Man.” It’s far more powerful to give a skeptical author the benefit of the doubt and still defeat them.

- Ehrman does not cover all portions of Scripture relevant to suffering. Select a portion of Scripture that is relevant to suffering but ignored by Ehrman and do the following: (i) summarize the passage; (ii) explain why it's relevant to the question of suffering; (iii) suggest a possible response from Ehrman or like-minded skeptic.

Students should be prepared to discuss their thoughts along the lines of these two assignments once the class has started.

Class Participation

Participation in class discussions is a significant part of the learning experience. Students should be prepared to interact with the professor and other students on readings and written assignments. Meaningful participation in class discussion demonstrates that the student has read and thought about the required readings. Class attendance and participation counts 10% towards the course grade.

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<td>Dinner After</td>
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<td>July 12</td>
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<td>Noon–1:45PM</td>
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<td>July 12</td>
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<td>8:00AM–1:00PM</td>
<td>Breakfast*</td>
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* These sessions begin with a catered meal provided by Trinity followed by lecture/discussion. Please arrive early to get food and find your seat.

Post-Course Assignment

Integrative Reflection Paper

Each student will write 3,000-4,000 word (double spaced, 1” margins, 12 point Times New Roman font) on only one of the following prompts:

- Authority of Scripture Ehrman exhibits a very low view of Scripture. Identify 2 or 3 broader trends of this phenomenon within God’s Problem, citing examples. (An example of such a trend would be disparaging commentary on traditional authorship of a given book which has numerous individual remarks from Ehrman). Indicate how each trend influences his philosophical conclusions and additionally how a more elevated view of Scripture would have led to different philosophical conclusions.
• Evil Stumped? Stump defends a Thomistic theodicy (defense) that outweighs evil with various goods, both subjective and objective. She uses four narrative episodes from Scripture to illustrate her position. For this paper, explicitly articulate how Stump’s Thomistic theodicy (defense) engages the argument from evil. Then, pick two of the four narrative episodes she presents and for each of them, do the following: (i) summarize the illustrative work Stump takes it be doing in the light of the argument from evil; (ii) critically evaluate whether Stump succeeds; (iii) offer an alternative interpretation of the narrative or a distinct biblical narrative that you believe does a comparable or better job of illustrating the same point. Be sure to defend your positions throughout.

• Missing Defense In the course readings, you might have felt that a biblically-based philosophical defense is missing—something the various authors overlooked or dismissed. This is not simply a passage that wasn’t mentioned (though it could be rooted in one). The point would be to supply a philosophical counterargument to a premise of either the logical or evidential argument from evil. Articulate this defense and how it is distinct from those examined in class. What does it add to the discussion that those miss? Be sure to offer clear summaries of the contrasted defenses. I recommend speaking to me (Reeder) first to help you find some additional literature along the lines of your idea.

The Integrative Reflection Paper must be emailed to <grader> no later than midnight (11:59:59 PM EST) on Monday, August 5. Late assignments (without special permission) will receive a reduced grade.

Grading

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<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation and Attendance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stump Summaries</td>
<td>July 11</td>
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<td>Ehrman Response Paper</td>
<td>July 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrative Reflection Paper</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Grading Scale

Additional Reading (recommended but not required)