

<b>Course ID:</b>	<b>Course Title:</b>	<b>Winter 2019</b>
<b>BT 633</b>	<b>A Biblical Theology of Suffering and Hope</b>	<b>Prerequisite: n/a</b>
		<b>Credits: 3</b>

Class Information		Instructor Information		Important Dates	
<b>Days:</b>	Jan 15, Feb 12, Mar 11	<b>Instructor:</b>	Beth Stovell, Ph.D.	<b>First day of classes:</b>	Thu, Jan 3
<b>Time:</b>	9:30am-2:30pm	<b>Email:</b>	Bstovell@ambrose.edu	<b>Last day to add/drop, or change to audit:</b>	Sun, Jan 13
<b>Room:</b>	Off campus, Foothills Alliance	<b>Phone:</b>	403-410-2000 ext. 3995	<b>Last day to request revised exam:</b>	Mon, Mar 11
<b>Lab/ Tutorial:</b>	n/a	<b>Office:</b>	L2077	<b>Last day to withdraw from course:</b>	Fri, Mar 22
		<b>Office Hours:</b>	By appointment via e-mail	<b>Last day to apply for coursework extension:</b>	Fri, Mar 29
<b>Final Exam:</b>	No Final Exam; Instead the Final Paper is due April 1.			<b>Last day of classes:</b>	Fri, Apr 5

### Course Description

Suffering is experienced both individually and in communities all over the world. How does Scripture help us to understand the nature of suffering and how to respond to suffering? How is the Christian hope understood in light of suffering? This course will explore how Scripture addresses these questions. Examining the powerful message of the Old and New Testaments will demonstrate the continuing impact of the Bible's picture of suffering and hope for the Church today, for our spiritual lives, and for the world.

### Expected Learning Outcomes

1. Identify and examine the theological themes of suffering and hope in the Old and New Testaments with an awareness of their historical, social, and literary background.
2. Evaluate the impact of these themes on their own spiritual journey, the Church, and the world and propose approaches that lead toward redemptive action.

*Elements of this course are part of the Science for Seminaries grant funded by American Association for the Advancement of Science/Templeton Foundation in consultation with the Association of Theological Schools. The project helps a diverse group of seminaries integrate science into their core curricula. One sessions of this course will include discussions with a science advisor about explorations of science and faith in relation to biblical themes of suffering and hope. The goals of this session are to help students faithfully engage with science in their faith*

communities, whatever their perspectives are on ideas about Creation and on science and faith more broadly.

Students will provide a pre-course and post-course survey based on the elements associated with science in the course as part of this grant.

Here's the pre-course survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Science4SeminariesPreCourse>

Here's the post-course survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Sci4SemPostCourseSurvey>

They are also available on Moodle.

## Textbooks

Required:

1. Thompson, Michael E. W. *"Where Is the God of Justice?": The Old Testament and Suffering*. Eugene, Or.: Pickwick Publications, 2011.
2. Wright, N. T. *Evil and the Justice of God*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Books, 2006.
3. Beker, Johan Christiaan. *Suffering and Hope: The Biblical Vision and the Human Predicament*. Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1994.

A modern English translation of the Bible is required reading. Students may use the following translations: NRSV, NASB, NIV 2011, ESV. Students may also use modern translations like the NLT and the Message to complement their reading.

## Course Schedule

The readings for the "Reading for Session" should be read prior to class for the designated day. References to parts of Scripture indicate sections from the Old and New Testaments to be read (e.g., Genesis, Exodus, etc.). "Thompson" refers to Thompson, Michael E. W. *"Where Is the God of Justice?": The Old Testament and Suffering*; "Wright" refers to Wright, N. T. *Evil and the Justice of God*; and "Beker" refers to Beker, Johan Christiaan. *Suffering and Hope: The Biblical Vision and the Human Predicament*.

Date	Topic	Reading for Session	Assignments Due
Prep for the workshops: Jan 5-Jan 14	Introduction to the course	See reading below	No assignments prior to the first workshop
Workshop #1: Wednesday, January 15 Foothills Alliance Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 9:30-10:30 - Session 1 - "How do we think about suffering and hope based on the Bible? The Broad Biblical Picture (1)</li><li>• 10:30-10:45 – Break</li></ul>	Thompson, 22-84; 100-156 (Psalm Interludes);  Wright, 9-74;	Small group discussion (in person):  1. Why does suffering matter to you? What are the major themes associated with the problem of suffering? 2. How does Ecclesiastes describe some of these major themes? How is this helpful to us today? 3. What role do Psalms of lament play in your current ministry/church context?
What does the Bible say	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10:45-11:45 - Session 2 - How do we think about suffering and</li></ul>	Beker, 1-58	

<p>about suffering and hope? Themes in the Old Testament</p>	<p>hope based on the Bible? The Broad Biblical Picture (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12:00-12:45 – Lunch</li> <li>• 12:45-1:30 - Session 3 - Guest speaker: Dr. John R. Wood on ecological responses to death and lament</li> <li>• 1:45-2:30 - Session 4 – “Ecclesiastes and Jeremiah: All that Withers”</li> </ul> <p>(Job and Psalms available via online videos)</p>		<p>How might the psalms of lament help us deal with suffering today?</p>
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**Reflection Paper #1 due on Wednesday, February 5 by midnight, Turn in via Moodle**

<p>Workshop #2: Wednesday, February 12 Foothills Alliance Church</p> <p>What does the Bible say about suffering and hope? The Prophets and the Gospels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:30-10:30 – Session 1 Guest speakers: Ernie and Marilyn Klassen, Ambrose International Workers in Residence</li> <li>• 10:30-10:45 – Break</li> <li>• 10:45-11:45 - Session 2 - The Prophets: Visions of Hope amidst Suffering</li> <li>• 12:00-12:45 – Lunch</li> <li>• 12:45-1:30 - Session 3 – The Gospels: The God who Sends His Son: The Story of Jesus in a Suffering Time</li> <li>• 1:45-2:30 - Session 4 - The Gospels: Christ Has Died, Christ is Risen: Christ’s Suffering and the Hope of the Resurrection</li> </ul>	<p>Thompson, 85-100, 157-198;</p> <p>Wright, 75-100;</p> <p>Beker, 59-76</p>	<p>Small group discussion (in person):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In what ways does the book of Job explore the idea of theodicy? Does Job offer a picture of hope for today? Why or why not?</li> <li>2. What message do the prophets have related to the experience of suffering and hope for people in their time? How does that message impact us today?</li> <li>3. How were the Gospels “good news” to those suffering in the 1<sup>st</sup> century? How are the Gospels “good news” to those suffering today?</li> <li>4. What is the impact of Christ’s death on our view of suffering? How does the resurrection provide a new hope?</li> </ol>
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**Reflection Paper #2 due on Wednesday, February 26 by midnight, Turn in via Moodle**

**Draft of Final Paper due on Wednesday, March 4, by midnight, Turn in via Moodle.**

<p>Workshop #3: Wednesday, March 11 Foothills Alliance Church</p> <p>What does the Bible say about suffering and hope? Paul's Letters and Revelation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:30-10:30 - Session 1 - Paul's Letters: Gospel of Redemptive Suffering</li> <li>• 10:30-10:45 – Break</li> <li>• 10:45-11:45 - Session 2 - Paul's Letters: Response to Tragic Suffering</li> <li>• 12:00-12:45 – Lunch</li> <li>• 12:45-1:30 - Session 3 - Revelation: Ultimate Visions of Suffering and Hope</li> <li>• 1:45-2:30 - Session 4 – What do we do with this? Practical implications for Suffering Today</li> </ul>	<p>Wright, 101-166;  Beker, 75-123</p>	<p>Small Group discussion (in person):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What experiences of suffering did the early church in Acts face? What forms of hope did the early church cling to? Are these notions of hope still relevant for today? Why or why not?</li> <li>2. How did Paul's letters approach the question of suffering and hope in new ways? How do these approaches connect with the world today?</li> <li>3. How did the book of Revelation provide a picture of hope for the people of its time during their suffering? Is the book of Revelation a hopeful or difficult book for today? Why?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Final paper due Wednesday, April 1 by midnight via Moodle.</b></p>			

**Requirements:**

- Small Group Participation (10%): Each workshop, students will be given a question to discuss in small groups related to the topics covered in class. This participation is part of how students are evaluated on whether they are reading their textbooks for the course in a timely fashion. This requires student be present at all workshops and be ready to participate in their small group work. The discussion questions for the course are included in the syllabus. Students will also participate in small group exercises as part of their in-person workshops.
- Reflection Papers (2 papers at 25% each): **Due Dates: Wednesday, Feb 5; Wednesday, Feb 26, by midnight. Submitted online via Moodle**
  - Students will write a 3-5 page reflection paper (roughly 900-1500 words) by choosing one of the discussion questions from the class small group discussion and writing a reflection on this question. (These questions will be provided for you in class in an additional document). This reflection should have two core aspects: 1. Answering the question itself; 2: applying the topic to three spheres: 1. the student's own spiritual journey, 2 their ministry (current or future), and 3. the modern world. Students should engage with the course notes and readings as they answer this question and apply it. Students must choose different questions from the syllabus for each of their two papers.

- These papers must use reading materials and course notes to engage the course discussion question. Thus, these papers demonstrate a student’s awareness of their course readings and course notes and their reflection upon these course materials.
  - Because these papers are “reflection papers,” they should use the 1<sup>st</sup> person (“I”) to describe the student’s personal journey during that section of the paper. However, the style of the paper should remain academic in all other aspects.
  - These papers need to use Times New Roman, 12 point font, double spaced. The formatting should be in Chicago Manual of Style in the footnotes and bibliography style. See [https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html)
- Final Paper and Draft Paper: Final Paper (30% + Draft of final paper: 10%=Total 40%):
  - Writing your final paper is a two-stage process-**Draft of final paper due Wednesday, March 4; Final paper due Wednesday, April 1. All papers are due by midnight. Both stages are required for an optimal grade in this course. Submitted online via Moodle.**
  - Draft of Final Paper (10%): Students will turn in a draft of their final paper on March 4 to gauge their progress. **The minimum requirement for this assignment is a thesis statement, outline, and bibliography of books.** However, this draft may be a full paper, an outline with a clear thesis, or whatever stage of notes the paper is currently in. More comprehensive drafts will be easier to gauge progress and likely provide higher overall grades compared to less comprehensive drafts. This draft will receive an initial grade, which will be 10% of their overall grade for the course. However, if the student’s overall grade on the final paper exceeds this draft paper grade, the draft paper grade will be replaced with their final paper grade.
    - Based on the feedback from the draft of their final paper, students will revise their draft and complete their final paper.
    - The draft will need to use Times New Roman, 12 point font, double spaced. The formatting should be in Chicago Manual of Style in the footnotes and bibliography style. See [https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html)
  - Final Paper/Creative Project (30%): **Due by midnight on April 1, Submitted online via Moodle**
    - Each credit student will write/create a final paper/project. This final paper/project may come in one of two types: an interpretive essay or a creative project of equivalent depth and breadth.
    - Type 1: Interpretive Essay: For the interpretive essay, a student will do the following: 1) Choose a real world example of suffering in the world today. This example may be personal, local, or global. Research this real world problem using at least 3 solid academic sources. 2) Write a paper that uses one of the biblical texts studied in this course to address this real world problem.
    - Final papers in the “interpretive essay” style should be written as to an academic audience similar to a research paper. They must include applications to three spheres: student’s faith journey, ministry context, and the world. Additions to this final application section will be partially determined by the topic of real world suffering the student chooses to discuss.
- OR**
- Type 2: Creative Project: Creative projects can take two forms: either a: a project associated with a ministry session such as teaching or preaching or b: an art piece with a written explanation of its meaning and the foundational research behind it.

- Creative projects must: 1) Choose a real world example of suffering in the world today. This example may be personal, local, or global. Research this real world problem using at least 3 solid academic sources. 2) Create a project that uses one of the biblical texts studied in this course to address this real world problem.
- Creative projects may include:
  - a) a project for a ministry session such as teaching, preaching. **Examples of types of presentations/sermons:** The paper may be a sermon or a ministry presentation which may include a teaching session for a Bible study, a small group study, a Sunday School course, or a ministry conference/gathering/retreat, etc.. **When student discusses the topic/theme with instructor, the format for this delivery should be discussed as well.**
    - a. **Short Context Abstract:** Students must specify in a short abstract at the top of the document who the real or imagined target audience is for this project (e. g., urban church, multi-cultural, low-income, para-church organization such as InterVarsity, a service organization, etc.) as well as any other pertinent information (e. g., a sermon for a special occasion such as a communion service, or a Bible study for a three day women’s retreat, etc.) This counts towards the total word count/page count for the paper.
    - b. This course is not a homiletics course, but rather a Scripture course. The purpose of this assignment is to assess each student's ability to move from “doing theology” in an academic setting to “applying theology” in a pastoral setting. While I will *not* be assessing this assignment for homiletic prowess, I still expect each student to practice sound homiletic and teaching principles.
    - c. All papers include application and this is particularly true in the sermon/ministry presentation paper: Application should include these three areas: 1. the student’s own spiritual journey, 2. their ministry (current or future), and 3. the modern world. This application should propose ways that their theme or passage could move towards redemptive action. (See instructor if clarification is needed).

OR

- b) Alternatively, students may choose to create an art piece for example creating a worship song or liturgy, a story, a drama, or some other kind of artwork. These artistic pieces need to have an appended discussion of the research behind the artistic piece and an explanation of its implications and meaning.
- **Requirements for all interpretive essays and creative projects:**
    - This paper/project will examine a real world problem in light of one of the theological themes or one of the biblical texts related to suffering and/or hope in the Old Testament or the New Testament (based on whether you are listed as OT or NT for this course. NT students will use NT texts or themes and OT students will use OT texts or themes). **The text or topic must be approved by the instructor as well as whether students will be doing the paper or creative project option.** A knowledge of Hebrew or Greek is not required to write these papers and it will not be expected that students will have these language skills. However, if students have taken Hebrew or Greek language courses, they are encouraged to use these skills on their papers.

- Whether focusing on your specific theme or biblical text, these papers (or creative projects) should set their discussion of the theological theme or biblical text in its original historical and cultural background and include discussion of the literary elements associated with the biblical text or theme. Discussion should include a variety of different positions on the specific passage or topic from academic articles and books. To ensure this engagement with other scholars, the paper should include **at least 10 solid academic sources** (course materials, when used, should exist in the bibliography, but will not count to this total).
- Each paper or creative project must include an “application” section. This section must explore the implications for the student’s own faith journey, for the Church today, and for the world. These sections will be adapted based on the real world problem the paper/project is examining.
- Students will be provided with a rubric identifying the major components of the paper and how they will be graded. The rubric and checklist for this assignment will be included in the folder “Rubrics for Course Assignments” in the “General” section of Moodle.
- This paper needs to use Times New Roman, 12 point font, double spaced. The formatting should be in Chicago Manual of Style in the footnotes and bibliography style. [https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html)

**All course assignments will be posted via Moodle.**

**Attendance:**

1. Course sessions will begin in a timely fashion. To receive full points for course participation, you are expected to arrive by the time class begins and stay until class ends. If for some valid reason you will be unable to attend class or will be late, please notify me by phone or email in advance of the class session.
2. **Students with unexcused absences will be dropped a full letter grade from their final grade.** This means an A+ student can only receive a B+ after three unexcused absences, a B after four, a B- after five, etc. To excuse an absence, you need to contact me by e-mail in advance and in some cases a note will be required.
3. Due dates for assignments in this class are firm. They are set up for the overall success of the class - that is, for both students and the instructor. Late work drops one letter grade (10 pts) per day late unless other arrangements are made in advance. Please stay on top of your assignments and do not procrastinate. If you realize that you will be late in turning in an assignment for a legitimate reason, please see the “Extensions” policy below.

If you feel that you are falling behind or getting into trouble, please come see me early. There are things that can be done early on to get things back on track before it is too late.

**Grade Summary:**

Assignment	Percentage
Small Group Discussion Questions	10%
Reflection papers (2 X 25%)	50%

Draft of Final Paper/Creative Project	10%
Final Paper/Creative Project	30%
<b>TOTAL:</b>	100%

The available letters for course grades are as follows:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Description</u>
A+	Excellent
A	
A-	
B+	Good
B	
B-	
C+	Satisfactory
C	
C-	
D+	Minimal Pass
D	
F	Failure

Because of the nature of the Alpha 4.00 system, there can be no uniform University-wide conversion scale. The relationship between raw scores (e.g. percentages) and the resultant letter grade will depend on the nature of the course and the instructor's assessment of the level of each class, compared to similar classes taught previously.

Please note that final grades will be available on student registration system. Printed grade sheets are not mailed out.

## Ambrose University Academic Policies:

### Communication

All students have received an Ambrose e-mail account upon registration. It is the student's responsibility to check this account regularly as the Ambrose email system will be the professor's instrument for notifying students of important matters (cancelled class sessions, extensions, requested appointments, etc.) between class sessions. If students do not wish to use their Ambrose accounts, they will need to forward all messages from the Ambrose account to another personal account.

### Registration

During the **Registration Revision Period** students may enter a course without permission, change the designation of any class from credit to audit and /or voluntary withdraw from a course without financial or academic penalty or record. Courses should be added or dropped on the student portal by the deadline date; please consult the List of Important Dates. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees.

Students intending to withdraw from a course after the Registration Revision Period must apply to the Office of the Registrar by submitting a "Request to Withdraw from a Course" form or by sending an email to the Registrar's Office by the **Withdrawal Deadline**; please consult the List of Important Dates on the my.ambrose.edu website. Students will not receive a tuition refund for courses from which they withdraw after the Registration Revision period. A grade of "W" will appear on their transcript.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

### Exam Scheduling

Students, who find a conflict in their exam schedule must submit a Revised Examination Request form to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date; please consult the List of Important Dates. Requests will be considered for the following reasons only: 1) the scheduled final examination slot conflicts with another exam; 2) the student has three final exams within three consecutive exam time blocks; 3) the scheduled final exam slot conflicts with an exam at another institution; 4) extenuating circumstances. Travel is not considered a valid excuse for re-scheduling or missing a final exam.

### Electronic Etiquette

Students are expected to treat their instructor, guest speakers, and fellow students with respect. It is disruptive to the learning goals of a course or seminar and disrespectful to fellow students and the instructor to use electronics for purposes unrelated to the course during a class session. Turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during class. Laptops should be used for class-related purposes only. Do not use iPods, MP3 players, or headphones. Do not text, read, or send personal emails, go on Facebook or other social networks, search the internet, or play computer games during class. Some professors will not allow the use of any electronic devices in class. The professor has the right to disallow the student to use a

laptop in future lectures and/or to ask a student to withdraw from the session if s/he does not comply with this policy. Repeat offenders will be directed to the Dean. If you are expecting communication due to an emergency, please speak with the professor before the class begins.

### Academic Policies

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Academic Calendar. Personal information (information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual) may be required as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at [privacy@ambrose.edu](mailto:privacy@ambrose.edu).

### Extensions

Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a course Extension from the Registrar's Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date; please consult the List of Important Dates. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise "due to circumstances beyond the student's control."

### Appeal of Grade

An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Registrar's Office in writing and providing the basis for appeal within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

### Academic Integrity

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's ideas, words, or work as one's own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to acknowledge to another person's ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student's permanent record.

**Note:** Students are strongly advised to retain this syllabus for their records.