

DN 983 THE PROBLEM OF PAIN

18-21 January 2010

MEDCOM

Due West, SC

Monday-Thursday Four-Day Intensive

Start Time: 0900

3 Semester Credit Hours

Professor: R.J. Gore, Jr., Ph.D.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course addresses the intellectual questions which arise as to why and how there can be suffering if God is all powerful and all-loving. Students explore these questions from biblical, theological, and pastoral perspectives, developing the implications for effective ministry to those who are suffering.

COURSE PURPOSE:

To introduce the student to the problems of evil and pain and to consider appropriate pastoral care for those who suffer, including the use of ritual theory as a means of healing.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for ministry in the Christian Church. As a part of that mission, one goal is to teach students how to think theologically and act biblically in providing pastoral care to persons who are experiencing the deep hurts of life. In this course, students explore their own understanding of the biblical and theological data in order to obtain an angle of vision on evil, pain, and the goodness of God.

Specific objectives for this course are that, by the end of the course, students will:

1. **Identify** significant issues related to the problem of evil and **develop** responses to the challenges raised by those issues.
2. **Examine** biblical teachings on suffering and **apply** them to the issues raised by the problems of evil and pain.
3. **Apply** theological insights to the pastoral care of those who suffer from the deep hurts of life.
4. **Understand** the basics of ritual theory and implications for ministry to the wounded.
5. **Create** rituals that bring healing to war-scarred soldiers and their family members.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS: REQUIRED

Carson, D.A., *How Long, O Lord?* Reprint. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006.

Davis, Stephen T., ed. *Encountering Evil, Live Options in Theodicy*. New ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001.

Lewis, C.S. *The Problem of Pain*. New York: Macmillan, 1944. Reprint, San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.

_____. *A Grief Observed*. 1961. Reprint, San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.

Locke, Hubert G. *Searching for God in Godforsaken Times and Places*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

Ramshaw, Elaine. *Ritual and Pastoral Care*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987.

ARTICLES: REQUIRED

Bell, Robby. *Lament for a Wounded Faith*. Speech at Erskine Theological Seminary, November 17, 2005. <http://acad.erskine.edu/facultyweb/gore/Lament.pdf>

Boice, James M. *Special Announcement by Boice*. Philadelphia: Tenth Presbyterian Church, May 7, 2000.

<http://acad.erskine.edu/facultyweb/gore/Special Announcement By Boice.pdf>

RECOMMENDED TEXT:

Card, Michael. *A Sacred Sorrow: Reaching Out to God in The Lost Language of Lament*. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 2005.

COURSE COMPONENTS AND REQUIREMENTS:

The purpose and objectives of this course will be achieved through four learning components. The first is the **Content Component**, the student's own mastery of material, accomplished by completing the required readings. The ability to apply biblical and theological principles in effective pastoral ministry is determined largely by the student's mastery of the biblical, theological, and philosophical data associated with the problem of pain.

The second is the **Reflection Component**. Students will complete one **Applied Project** during the residence phase. The **Applied Project** provides students opportunity to interact with the readings, evaluate the issues, and through a group process, develop a "Ritual of Healing" that will be shared with other students.

The third is the **Discussion Component**. Each class will incorporate discussion and lecture. A vital exchange of ideas is essential to the process of exploration. Students will build on their classroom preparation (the Content Component) and collaborative learning (Reflection Component) by participating in the discussion of issues raised in a seminar format.

The fourth is the **Integration Component** which will be completed after the student returns to his or her ministry setting. The student will complete a second **Applied Project** making use of 1) the student's theological tradition, 2) the learning accomplished during the residence phase, and 3) the student's experiences in the clinical setting. The student will identify a particular setting where a "Ritual of Healing" has NOT been done, but is needed. The purpose of this assignment is to integrate the various objectives of this course and provide the student an opportunity to develop an appropriate ministry response to an identified need.

These four learning components will provide a well-rounded learning experience for the thoughtful student.

RITUALS OF HEALING <http://acad.erskine.edu/facultyweb/gore/rituals.pdf>

Clicking this link will take you to the webpage where you will find three important items that provide resources for this class. There is a section on Morning Prayers that were used to model possible rituals of healing for the class. There is a second section that provides the two rituals offered up as group projects. The last section is for final individual projects that demonstrate how the student has integrated the classroom instruction into the student's own ministry context. Feel free to use any resources found as long as your properly credit the source.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Requirement One: All students will read the required volumes prior to arriving on campus during January, 2010. Classroom discussion will assume familiarity with

these texts. After the residence phase, students will complete a series of Reflection Papers on the readings, each 250-300 words in length, single-spaced, with NO footnotes (Times New Roman 11,12 font). The student is to select one key concept from each of the textbooks, explain briefly what that concept involves, and how it has stretched the student's understanding of the Problem of Pain and pastoral responses to those who suffer. **Due Date: NLT 1 April 2010.**

Requirement Two: Students will work in groups to complete Applied Projects, ("Rituals of Healing") that will be celebrated Thursday afternoon of course week. Guidelines for this project will be distributed at the beginning of the course. **Due Date: 21 January 2010**

Requirement Three: Attend class regularly and participate in the discussions. There are no excused absences.

Requirement Four: After the residence phase of the course, students will complete a second "Ritual of Healing." Students will identify a particular ministry need in their clinical setting, prepare an appropriate "Ritual of Healing," and celebrate that ritual with the target audience. There are a number of possible settings, such as: an inpatient setting involving a wounded soldier (or soldiers), a Warrior Transition Unit, a unit that has recently redeployed from theater, a family that needs help re-uniting, or some other similar setting. Students will email the following items: 1) An introductory essay (350-500 words) that describes the ministry need, 2) the "Ritual of Healing," and 3) a concluding essay (600-750 words) that explains the student's rationale for the parts/shape of the ritual, describes the celebration event, evaluates the effectiveness of the ritual, and considers possible improvements for future rituals. **Due Date: 1 July 2010**

GRADING CRITERIA:

-The Readings/Reflection Papers each will count 10% of the course. (6 x 10%=60%)	
-The Group "Ritual of Healing" will count 20% of the course grade.	20%
-The Individual "Ritual of Healing" will count 30% of the course grade.	20%
	TOTAL: 100%

SEMINARY POLICIES:

Drop/Add/Withdrawal

Once a student has completed, signed, and submitted his/her registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a binding contract and billing will be based on this registration. If the student decides not to take this class, he/she must complete a "drop/add" form and secure the appropriate signatures prior to the drop/add deadline during the second week of the semester or term. If one wishes to withdraw from the course after the drop/add deadline, one must complete a withdrawal form, and tuition will be refunded on a pro rated basis. Failure to withdraw from the class properly will result in the student's receiving a grade of "F" for the course and full tuition charges will apply. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

Incompletes

The grade of "I" or incomplete is given at the discretion of the professor. A grade of "I" is normally given when a student has substantially completed the requirements for a course but has been prevented by extraordinary circumstances from completing the remainder of the course requirements. A student who wishes to request an incomplete should normally

complete an incomplete form prior to the end of the semester and ask the professor to grant the request. (Under unusual circumstances, the student may communicate with the professor by phone or email rather than in person, and the professor may then agree to fill out the form at the student's request. Under exceptional circumstances, the professor may initiate the process by filling out the form on the student's behalf.) If the professor grants the request, he/she will sign the incomplete form and turn it in with his/her final grade report. An "I" in any course must be removed by March 1 for the Fall Term, April 1 for the January Term, August 1 for the Spring Term, and November 1 for the Summer Term. Only the Dean may grant extensions of incompletes beyond the established completion date. Otherwise, these grades automatically become "F." This policy may be relaxed somewhat for MEDCOM students.

Language about God and Humanity

Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church's historic creeds and confessions use masculine language in reference to God. Thus, the Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females, they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing "humanity" rather than "man" or "people" rather than "men").

Conduct in Theological Discussions

Erskine Seminary is committed to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and it expects its students to show respect for all who identify with that one Church. In all written work, oral presentations, and discussions both inside and outside the classroom, the Seminary expects students to conduct discussions of controversial issues in a context of respect for those with whom one disagrees. Please see the Community Life Statement in the Catalog for more information.

Official Seminary Class Attendance Policy

Class participation is considered an important part of the total educational experience at Erskine Seminary. Students are expected to attend classes on a regular basis and are responsible for the mastery of all materials required in the course. As this is a modular class, normally, no one who misses more than three hours will be allowed to continue in this course. If you plan to take this course, clear your schedule. If students have to be absent for any reason, they are still responsible for all work missed and all work due. A student who misses as much as one full class day or its equivalent in late arrival or early departure should consult with the professor to see whether it is still possible to pass the course.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use in writing of wording or ideas produced by others without crediting the author and/or source from which the material was taken. As the following statement indicates, plagiarism is a serious offense that undermines both the witness and integrity of the Christian community:

Plagiarism injures the community by inhibiting the recognition and cultivation of gifts imparted by the Spirit. Clearly unattributed use of the words and/or ideas of others

fails to give appreciative recognition of their gifts. But this illegitimate appropriation of the gifts of others also blocks the recognition and cultivation of the actual gifts of the person engaged in plagiarism.

Plagiarism creates an atmosphere of falsehood in the community's discernment and cultivation of gifts, both within the Christian community and in God's larger creation. Since freedom comes only by way of truth (Jn. 8:32), such falsehood can only result in captivity, and therefore has no place in the Christian community.

On this basis, the Seminary adheres to the following general requirements for the acknowledgement of sources of academic work. These requirements apply to both print and electronic media.

1. Quotations. Any sentence or phrase that a student uses from another source must be placed in quotation marks or, in the case of longer quotations, clearly indented beyond the regular margin. Any quotation must be accompanied (either within the text or in a note) by a precise indication of the source.

2. Paraphrasing. Any material that is paraphrased or summarized must also be specifically acknowledged in a note or in the text.

3. Ideas. Specific ideas that are borrowed should be acknowledged in a note or in the text, even if the idea has been further elaborated by the student.

4. Bibliography. All the sources consulted in the preparation of an essay or report should be listed in a bibliography.

In addition to plagiarism, the following related practices are also unacceptable compromises of the truth requisite to a free community:

1. Multiple submission. Failure to obtain prior written permission of the relevant instructors to submit work which has been submitted in identical or similar form in fulfillment of any other academic requirement at any institution.

2. False citation. The deliberate attribution to, or citation of, a source from which the material in question was not, in fact, obtained.

3. Submission of work done by someone else, either with or without that person's knowledge. Neither ignorance of the regulations concerning academic violations nor personal extenuating circumstances are an adequate defense against charges of plagiarism. The Seminary's provisions for "due process" apply in cases of alleged plagiarism.

[The italicized statement above is used by permission of The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, based upon a document adapted by LTSP, with permission, from "Princeton University Rights, Rules and Responsibilities," 1990 Edition. Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey.]

Occurrences of plagiarism shall be considered 'documented' when the instructor is able to produce documentary evidence that plagiarism has occurred, and when the instructor has reason to believe that the plagiarism was motivated by a deliberate attempt to receive credit for ideas or work not the student's own. Where such plagiarism involves the theft of the academic work of another student, whether at Erskine or any other institution, it shall be designated 'documented theft of another student's work.'

The instructor involved, in consultation with the Dean, may recommend measures deemed appropriate. In cases of documented plagiarism or documented theft of another student's work, the offending student will automatically receive the following penalties:

Failure of the course(s) in which plagiarized or stolen work is submitted

Dismissal from the Seminary for a minimum of one semester

Forfeiture of the right to tuition refunds during the semester(s) affected

Before such penalties are imposed, a committee of at least three faculty members

must agree that they are appropriate to the case. Appeals in such cases may only be addressed, in writing, to the President of Erskine College and Theological Seminary.

REMEMBER- if you can GOOGLE IT, SO CAN I!