In my 10 years of pastoral ministry (and most other pastors will note the same thing in their ministries), the most common question I get is "Why?" It comes after something bad – maybe even terrible – has occurred, and it means, "Why God? Why did this terrible thing happen to me? Are you turning away from me? Are you displeased with me?" No, He's not. But the answers in such situations are hardly simple, nor easy. The book of Job explores the believer's response to a tragically and deeply fallen world, a world where evil often seems to have free reign. How do we see God as fully good, and fully in control, when evil occurs?

COURSE DESCRIPTION: A one-credit intensive study of the book of Job, including its language, structure, exegesis, message, and implications. Specific attention will be paid not only to the message of the book of Job, but also to its use in pastoral settings, both preaching and counseling.

Specific topics will include:
- The difficult language of Job
- The prose “frame” and its relationship to the poetic sections
- The structure of the dialogs
- Yahweh’s Answer to Job
- Wisdom in Job
- Proposed Ancient Near Eastern Parallels to Job
- The Nature and Meaning of the Book of Job
- Pastoral Use of the Book of Job
**Course Objectives:**

**Comprehension:**
1. To increase your knowledge of the English Bible of the book of Job.
2. To increase your understanding of the message(s) of the book of Job.
3. To introduce the basic trends in scholarly research regarding this book.

**Competence:**
1. To sharpen your ability to interpret the book of Job given its theological and literary contexts.
2. To sharpen your ability to teach and preach the book of Job in the context of the local church.

**Character:**
1. To sharpen your application of the themes of the book of Job in your personal spiritual life.
2. To be a person of growing faith, hope, and love based on the work of God as revealed in this book.

**Requirements:**

*Attendance:* Students are required to attend class lectures and discussions.

*Reading:* Students are required to complete all readings.

**Before Class:** Students should read the book of Job completely in the following translations: NIV, ESV, KJV. Take note of significant differences between these translations.

**After Class:** Students should read the following secondary literature as part of preparing their assignments. These will be provided to the students in .pdf form.

- Crenshaw, J. “Job, book of” *ABD*
- Thomas, Derek. “A Christological Focus?” ch. 5 in *Calvin’s Teaching on Job.* pp. 305-334.
**Reflection Papers:**

**Before** Class: Students should prepare a two page paper answering the question: “What is the meaning of the book of Job?” This should include specific Scripture references and citations from the book of Job. Failure to do so will materially impact a student’s grade in the class. (due: start of class on Friday)

**After** class: Students should prepare a five page paper answering the same question: “What is the meaning of the book of Job?” This paper may represent a change or a reaffirmation of the first reflection paper. In either case, it should demonstrate interaction with both the text of the book of Job as well as the class discussions and the secondary reading assigned for this class. Please note: This paper MUST include Scripture references and citations. Failure to do so will materially impact a student’s grade in the class. (due: Nov. 10 at 11:00 PM by email to bill@mcleanpres.org)

**Sermon/Teaching Preparation:**

Students should choose ONE of the following options:

A) Prepare a series of 4 sermons covering the book of Job. This assignment should include:
   - Which passages will be preached and why they were chosen
   - Sermon manuscripts
   - Each sermon should clearly lead to Christ from the chosen text

B) Prepare an 8-10 session small group Bible study covering the book of Job. This assignment should include:
   - Which passages will be studied and why they were chosen
   - A participants’ guide, which indicates the passage to be studied and discussion questions for that passage
   - A leader’s guide, which provides substantial answers to those questions, including verse references from the passage
   - Each section should clearly lead to Christ from the chosen text

(due: Nov. 10 at 11:00 PM by email to bill@mcleanpres.org)

Note: Students who are interested in doing **additional graduate study** beyond their RTS degree **MUST** contact the instructor in advance, as these requirements may be adjusted to better prepare the student for his or her future course of study.

**TOTAL GRADE:** The final grade for the course will be the total of each of the required assignments listed above.

Reflection Papers (50%)
Sermon/Teaching Outlines (50%)

Grades will be assigned according to the RTS grading system. The instructor reserves the right to adjust grades based on each student’s attendance at class and participation in classroom discussion.

Late papers without **advance** excuse from the instructor will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade per 24 hours late. Advance excuse will only be given in exceptional cases.
OFFICE HOURS:

The contact information given above is for your use, and you should feel free to contact me as much as you wish. I enjoy sharing thoughts with students, so do not hesitate to contact me. I will respond as promptly as possible.