

GOT 540 JOB ONLINE COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor Information:

Office Hours: 1:30-2:30 daily (Central time).
Phone Numbers: Office – 920-206-2361
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Textbooks

Layton Talbert, *Beyond Suffering: Discovering the Message of Job*. Greenville: BJU Press, 2007.

John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, NICOT, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.

Course Description/Prerequisites:

A study of the structure and contents of the book of Job, with an emphasis on the issues of revelation and faith in the patriarchal period and the theological crisis caused by traumatic life events coupled with poor counsel (3 hours credit).

Institutional Objectives: This course addresses the following institutional objectives:

1. Communication Skills: Students will demonstrate competence in written, oral, and aesthetic communication.
2. Critical Thinking: Students will apply a framework for logical decision-making in various contexts.
5. Historical and Cultural Understanding: Students will recognize and evaluate the ideas, trends, and cultures of various social groups.
6. Biblical Knowledge: Students will acquire skills related to biblical study methods, interpretation, and doctrine.
7. Biblical World View: students will articulate a world view that will tie all fields of study to the Scriptures “to the praise of His glory.”

Course Goals:

1. To gain a basic understanding of how Hebrew poetry should be read and interpreted.
2. To learn the underlying reasons for human suffering and how to assess whether suffering is “deserved” or “undeserved” in the life of any particular person
3. To understand the extreme long-term emotional effects of suffering.
4. To develop an understanding of what qualifies as correct and sinful responses to extreme suffering.
5. To understand how scripture may be misapplied in any given situation.

6. To understand what someone should and should not say regarding those who are not responding to God correctly in the midst of suffering.
7. To understand limit of human wisdom and perception in light of the inscrutable wisdom of God.

Course Objectives:

1. Given the accepted principles for interpreting Hebrew poetry, students should be able to define the types of parallelism and imagery and identify their occurrence in specific passages in the book of Job.
2. Given the dialogues between the Lord and Satan, students should be able to delineate the specific relationship of both to various forms of suffering.
3. Given the speeches of Job's friends in Job 4-15, students should list and explain the 3 ways in which correct theology may be misapplied in counseling or preaching.
4. Given Job's poetic descriptions of his situation, students should be able to describe the emotional effects of extreme suffering.
5. Given the dialogues between Job and his friends in chapters 4-31, students should be able to explain how poor applications of scripture may actually encourage a person to sin against the Lord.
6. Given the content of Job's speeches in Job 16-31 and a basic understanding of lament Psalms, students should be able to differentiate between a person who is inappropriately demanding that the Lord handle a crisis situation in a specific way vs. one who is praying appropriately.
7. Given the content of Elihu's speeches in Job 32-37, students should be able to articulate what one can do to help a sufferer.
8. Given the content of God's speeches in Job 38-41, students should be able to explain how the creative activity of God can encourage one to remain faithful to Him in the midst of suffering.

Course Requirements:

1. **Reading:**
 - a. The course notes should be read carefully in conjunction with each weekly assignment
 - b. The book of Job – each student should read through the entire book at least twice during the course (preferably in 2 different versions).
 - c. Read Talbert's *Beyond Suffering* in its entirety as per the course schedule (@280 pages – Talbert includes a number of rich content endnotes. I do not require that you read them, but you may wish to peruse them to gain maximum benefit from the book).
 - d. Read Hartley's commentary as assigned (@500 pages)
 - e. Read the following articles (both available as PDFs in website):
 - Paul Randolph, "Post-Traumatic Distress," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* (Summer 2007): 8-15.
 - Marcia Webb, "The Book of Job: A Psychologist Takes a Whirlwind

Tour,” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 44 (Winter 2015): 155-74.

- f. Read an additional 200 pages in conjunction with preparing your research paper. Reading should come from the better commentaries on Job and works relevant to counseling people suffering extreme trauma.
- g. All reading should be reported on a weekly basis in the course website (click on the Weekly Reading Report Tab)

2. **Discussion forums:**

- a. Generally, each student makes an initial post @ 400 words.
- b. You should respond to at least 2 other student posts.
- c. Finally, respond to any responses to your posts.
- d. Discussion Forums are graded according to the discussion forum rubric (see the course website for the rubric)

3. **Videos**

- a. Each week’s material contains a video designed to fill in some of the gaps in the notes.
- b. Videos are generally 30-40 minutes long.

4. **Tests:**

- a. There will be 2 exams.
- b. They are based on the course notes.
- c. Tests are generally closed book and timed unless otherwise noted

5. **Research Paper:** You will write one paper for this course. The paper must be 15-18 pages in length (text, not including title page, bibliography, etc.). Note: You may not write a paper on chapters 1-2, 30, or 42.

- Option #1 – an “Exegetical Paper” on a passage in Job. Explaining the paper: This paper is designed to move you through the steps of interpretation all the way through to contemporary applications of the text. Contemporary works on Job can suffer from one of two shortcomings. First, some discussions of Job major on exegetical issues without ever bringing specific applications to bear. This has the effect of making them seem irrelevant to modern life. Second, some works (counseling books in particular) major on practical applications without discussing the interpretation on which they are based. This gives the impression that the work does not have any solid exegetical basis in scripture (and sometimes, it may not). The goal in this paper is for you to demonstrate how your applications actually issued from the text you chose. You should deal with the following elements in the following order. Try to do a complete speech, if possible (my recommendation is that you deal with one that is 20-25 verses in length). You may **not** choose chapters 1-2 or 42.
 - a. Introduction and Preceding Context (1 ½-2 pages). Begin by summarizing the preceding context leading up to the present passage. End with a brief statement of the relevance of the passage (e.g. to what facet of our lives will you apply the passage). Given the nature of this paper, it is not necessary to state the thesis at this point

- b. Poetic Parallelism and Imagery of the Text (1 ½ -2 pages). In this step, you will identify the parallelism and imagery of the text. This is probably the most “academic” section of the paper. You may wish to construct a table for this and use that format.¹
 - c. Argument of the text (8-10 pages). This step should begin with a thesis that summarizes what you are trying to say in the paper. The thesis should indicate the main emphasis of the passage. You should have clear supporting points for your thesis. These will provide the structure for your paper and should be included as subheadings within the body of the paper. Main headings should be stated as timeless truths (much like the main points in a sermon outline). This should not be in the form of a verse by verse commentary, though you will want to include analysis of some of the relevant details. Organize the paper around the thesis and supporting statements.
 - d. Applications from the Text (3-5 pages). For this step, you will want to suggest legitimate points of correspondence between the ancient text and modern life. Applications are specific, time sensitive extensions of the timeless truths stated in the main body. Books on counseling various topics may be particularly helpful. Psychology texts might be helpful here as well (Remember, Psychology observes human behavior and can often describe the thought processes that accompany various actions. It is deficient, however, when it seeks to prescribe the remedies for sin problems). Some books on “Christian Counseling” will include secular material if they are written from an eclectic perspective. A helpful source from this perspective is the *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology & Counseling*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999. We also have *The Journal of Pastoral Practice* and *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* available through the MBU library. These searchable resources should be particularly helpful for you. Though it deals with issues most relevant for Job 2, H. Norman Wright, *Crisis Counseling: What to do and Say During the First 72 Hours*, p. 9-100, 283-313, may also be helpful.
- Option #2: A topical paper from Job on one of the following:
 - a. Successful counseling: Given the roles of Elihu and the Lord in Job 32-41, students should construct a plan to help a person who is experiencing a painful situation embrace it as an outgrowth of the wisdom of God. The plan should consider the roles both Elihu and the Lord exercised to help Job, and it should be formulated with specific reference to one of the following issues: an 32 year old female who wants to be married but isn’t, a 57 year old employee who lost his/her job (not due to poor performance), a grieving church that an extremely good pastor 6 years ago in an auto accident but has had 3 mediocre replacements in the meantime, a couple in their late 30’s who had a

¹ Normally, exegesis begins with a translation of the text in question. I am not going to require you to translate out of the Hebrew, but you may wish to use footnotes and note/explain any substantial differences that you find at this point. Some poetic texts are very difficult to translate and in such cases the English translations may be somewhat interpretive. Technical commentaries may be of help here, but do not go to them until after you have done your own comparative work with the text itself.

child die from cancer, a 24 year old soldier who has PTSD after a 3 year tour in Afghanistan, a 23 year old woman who was sexually abused from age 12-18 by her father.

- b. Diagnosing the reasons counseling fails: There are two options for this assignment. Using the dialogue between Job and his friends in Job 3-31, students should generate and defend a list of at least five diagnostic questions/characteristics indicating counseling is failing because the counselee has started to handle a crisis situation in a sinful way. Or students may generate and defend a list of at least five diagnostic questions/characteristics indicating that the counseling is failing because the counselor is giving inappropriate advice to the counselee. You may formulate it with reference to one of the specific counseling issues above, but since this is a much longer section of scripture, I am not requiring it.
- Option #3 – a Biblical Theology paper tracing the development of a theme or character in Job.
 - a. Students choosing to focus on one of the characters in Job will focus on how the mindset of one of the 4 principal characters (Job, Eliphaz, Bildad or Zophar) changes throughout the dialog.
 - b. Students choosing a theme will focus on the use of a theme that was mentioned by multiple characters throughout the dialogue. Here are a few suggestions:
 - Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu all begin with some lead in statement trying to win a hearing from Job before making their argument. Compare and contrast the opening statements of each man in Job 4:1-6, 8:2-7, 11:1-6, and 32:6-33:11. Be sure the paper includes a good argumentative thesis and clear main points. In your conclusion, discuss what does the contrast taught you about the way that hurting people should be approached
 - Job, the 3 friends, and Elihu all argued that the others were wrong. As part of their argument, they note that if the other person had considered the wisdom of God as demonstrated in creation, then he would understand that he is wrong. The ironic part of this argument is that God too will use it. In Job 38:31-33 God states, if you had considered my creation, you might have understood that your conclusions about either Job's suffering (the friends) or divine justice (Job) were wrong. In this paper, compare and contrast how the friends, Job and God make use of the heavenly bodies (Orion and the Pleades in particular) to make their case. In your conclusion, be sure to draw some applications to help guide us avoid using incorrect arguments as we engage in theological debate.
 - Third, you may choose another theme that has caught your attention during the study.
 - Paper form requirements:
 - a. Paper must be done according to standard Seminary format (see Nancy Vyhmeister, *Quality Research Papers*, Zondervan.

- b. Headings for the main points must be used in the body of the paper.
 - c. Include title, and bibliography pages. Do not split the paper up into chapters or use chapter headings.
 - d. The footnote method of citation must be used. Do **not** use endnotes or in-text citations (exception: scripture references are cited in parentheses within the text and a footnote is used only if you are citing a version other than the KJV).
- A minimum of ten sources must be cited in the footnotes of the paper (not including the Bible). List any additional sources that you consult in the bibliography. For your academic sources use some of the better commentaries, theological works, periodicals, etc. You must consult the commentaries by Hartley, Andersen, Alden, Longman and Clines. You should also check the collection of essays entitled *Sitting with Job*, edited by Roy Zuck to see if there is an article helpful for your topic. Commentary authors such as Oliver B. Green, Matthew Henry, John R. Rice, etc. are good men, but write from more of a devotional perspective and should not be used for this assignment. Standard reference works are recommended, as long as they are Graduate level material. For example, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* is a graduate level source, Bible Handbooks and Study Bibles generally are not due to their brevity. For the application section you have greater latitude in source material, but be sure that your applications flow legitimately from the text. As a graduate paper, this should reflect synthesis of material without relying heavily on one or two sources. The quality and number of sources that you consult does influence your grade.

Course Grade

1. Grading Scale

A	94	B+	88	C+	79	D	65
A-	91	B	85	C	76	F	64.9-0
		B-	82	C-	73		

Note: Grades within ½ percent of the next highest grade are generally not rounded up (for example, 90.8 [a high B+] is not rounded up to an A-). The exception might be cases where the exam and/or research paper scores were high (a 94%, for example), and there were no late assignments.

2. Breakdown (subject to change)

10%	Reading and Reports	35%	Research Paper or project
20%	Discussions	35%	Exams

“A” indicates that the work was superior in comparison with the general seminary and graduate school population.

“B” indicates that the work was good work, on par with that done by the average seminary student.

“C” generally indicates that the student grasped the essential concepts vital for the completion of the assignment, but that the work was lacking in some significant area.

“D” and “F” indicate that the student did not complete the assignment at an adequate level to receive graduate credit.

NOTE: A student must earn a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in order to graduate with an M.A. Only two Cs may be applied to any M.A. degree.

3. Makeup Work:

- **THE GENERAL LATE POLICY:**

You are now studying at a graduate level; expectations are, therefore, high. The Seminary expects you to perform your academic work in a timely fashion. The development of time management skills while in Seminary will greatly benefit you in the future, both in your personal life and in your ministry. Ministry involves managing numerous activities at one time. You are preparing for a life ministry which will focus primarily on serving people. This demands a serious consideration of your own schedule and the schedules of those whom you serve. To encourage you in the development and strengthening of your time management skills, the Seminary has established a Late Academic Work Policy. This policy is the minimum penalty for work not turned in on time. The professor may impose a greater penalty, but not a lesser. Work not turned in on the day it is due will have its grade reduced 4% for each calendar day that it is late. [I count Saturday in the computation of the penalty, but not Sunday]. The Seminary realizes that serious extenuating circumstances, such as a lengthy illness or a death in the family, may prevent some students from completing class projects on time. Requests for appropriate extensions for these types of serious circumstances may be made to the Seminary Academic Senate, via a written petition submitted to the Seminary Office. Extensions will only be given for valid excuses. Everyone is busy; therefore, being busy is not an excuse for an extension. Projects turned in under an allowed extension will not be graded higher than a B.

- **LATE POLICY FOR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.**

- a. Since answering these questions requires interaction with other students during the week they are assigned, late submissions for discussion questions are not accepted.
- b. In cases where there is a legitimate emergency, students will be assigned makeup work in the form of a reading with a reading summary.

4. Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

- Research papers must be completely new papers written by the student for this course (you may not turn in a reworked paper from another class). Turning in a paper written by someone else is adequate grounds for dismissal from seminary. Students should also be careful to guard against other forms of plagiarism. These include (but are not limited to) failure to use quotation marks around quoted material and the use of incomplete paraphrases. If you paraphrase an author, you may not use either language or sentence structure from the original source.

- Students should do their own preparation for tests and discussion questions. It is acceptable to engage in group study efforts for tests, but only after you have done your own initial work by filling out study guides, preparing your own essay responses, etc.
- Tests must be taken as directed by the instructor. The use of notes, books or other materials during tests is generally not allowed.
- Failure to observe good academic ethics may jeopardize your enrollment in the seminary.

Available Services

Academic Success Center. One source for academic help in any course is the Academic Success Center. If you require specific academic help for any reason contact the Student Success Center located in the Cedarholm Library at academicsuccess@mbu.edu

ADA Policy- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, the law requires that all students with disabilities be given a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Student Success Center director at academicsuccess@mbu.edu

Technical Support: If you need technical support due to problems with the course website, email support@mbu.edu or call 920-206-2322.

Library Resources: By clicking on “Library” from within your MyMaranatha website page you gain access to the MBU Library. It includes full text articles from most of the best theological journals and over 100,000 eBooks.

Course Schedule

DATE	Material	Assignment Due
Tues., 1/21	Poetry, Intro to Job	Syllabus Quiz
Sat., 1/25	Video – Poetry	Discussion 1 – Welcome Post Talbert, 3-24 (ch. 1-2) / Hartley, 3-50
Tues., 1/28	Chapters 1-2	Assignment – Poetry
Sat. 2/1	Video	Discussion 2 Talbert, 27-78 (ch. 3-7) / Hartley, 64-87
Tues., 2/4	Chapters 3-7	Discussion 2 Response
Sat., 2/8	Video	Discussion 3 Talbert, 79-111 (ch. 8-10) / Hartley, 88-154
Tues., 2/11	Chapters 8-14	Discussion 3 Response
Sat., 2/15	Video	Hartley, 154-241 Randolph, “Post Traumatic Distress”
Tues., 2/18	Chapters 15-21	Test 1
Sat., 2/22	Video	Talbert, 112-47 (ch. 11-12)/ Hartley, 241-323 Discussion 4
Tues., 2/25	Chapters 22-31	Discussion 4 Response
Sat., 2/29	Video	Discussion 5 Talbert, 148-62 (ch. 13) / Hartley, 324-426
Tues., 3/3	Chapters 32-37	Discussion 5 Response
Sat., 3/7	Video	Discussion 6 Talbert, 163-94 (ch. 14-15) / Hartley, 427-86
Tues., 3/10	Chapters 38-42	Discussion 6 Response
Sat., 3/14	Video	Discussion 7 – Devotional Talbert, 198-240 (ch. 16-19)/Hartley, 487-545
Tues., 3/17		Discussion 7 Response
Sat., 3/21		Final Exam Due date for reading Job 2x
<p>Tuesday, March 24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised Devotionals Due • Research Paper Topic Due <p>Tuesday, April 14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Paper due. • 200 pages reading in conjunction with research paper due • Talbert, 241-81 (ch. 20, 21 and appendix) due. 		

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note: An additional 10 page supplemental bibliography is available in the course website. It is **highly recommended that you consult the supplemental bibliography when preparing your research paper.

Important Commentaries

- Alden, Robert L. *Job*. The New American Commentary, vol. 11. Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1993.
- Andersen, Francis I. *Job: An Introduction and Commentary*. The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1976.
- Anderson, Hugh. *The Book of Job*. In The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible. Edited by Charles M. Laymon. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971.
- Clines, David J. A. *Job*, 3 vols. Word Biblical Commentary 17-18B. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1989-2011.
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- Driver, Samuel R. and Gray, George B. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job*. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1921.
- Habel, Norman C. *The Book of Job*. The Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985.
- Hartley, John E. *The Book of Job*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988.
- Kline, Meredith G. *Job*. In The Wycliffe Bible Commentary. Chicago: Moody Press, 1962.
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Poetry and Literary Analysis

- Berry, Donald K. *An Introduction to Wisdom and Poetry of the Old Testament*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1995.

- Fee, Gordon D. and Stuart, Douglas. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982.
- Freedman, David Noel. The Elihu Speeches in the Book of Job: A Hypothetical Episode in the Literary History of the Work. In *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy: Studies in Early Hebrew Poetry*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1980.
- Gladson, Jerry A. Job. In *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*. Edited by Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993.
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- Kidner, Derek. *An Introduction to Wisdom Literature: The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985.
- Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1993.
- LaSor, William Sanford; Hubbard, David Alan; and Bush, Frederic Wm. *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form and Background of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982.
- Macky, Peter. *The Centrality of Metaphors to Biblical Thought: a Method for Interpreting the Bible*. Lewiston, NY: The Edward Mellon Press, 1990.
- Longman, Tremper, III. *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation*. Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation, vol. 3. Edited by Moisés Silva. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987.
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