

COURSE SYLLABUS

CA211: Ten Reasons to Believe in a God Who Allows Suffering

An Our Daily Bread Ministries *Day of Discovery* Study

Course Description

Ten Reasons to Believe in a God Who Allows Suffering is intended to challenge students to wrestle with difficult issues of faith. The Bible calls its readers to “test all things” (1 Thessalonians 5:21), and this course will show that students can do that because the Christian faith is grounded in fact and well-reasoned thought. Difficult questions, such as, “Why does God allow suffering?” can find deep, soul-satisfying answers in the pages of Scripture, resulting in confidence borne out of eternal truth.

Course Objectives

- To introduce students to the basic fundamentals of the Christian faith
- To provide scholarly and historical evidence for the validity of Christianity
- To encourage logical thinking in evaluating the authenticity of the teachings of Jesus and of the Bible

Accessibility

If you have particular accessibility needs, please contact the CUGN Registrar at the beginning of the course. This will allow us to work directly with you to make efforts to accommodate your situation and ensure as full as possible accessibility to the course.

Academic Honesty

At CUGN, we believe all we do is “as unto the Lord” and we thus hold to a high academic standard of honesty; we do not tolerate plagiarism and cheating. Students found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty face consequences ranging from interaction with the Academic Dean to expulsion from CUGN.

Quizzes and Exams: Any student found guilty of cheating on a quiz or exam will automatically receive a score of zero for that quiz or exam. A second offense will result in automatic course failure and possible disciplinary action and/or expulsion from CUGN. Please view the [CUGN Academic Catalog](#) for a full definition and examples of cheating.

Plagiarism: If a student's work is found to be plagiarized, consequences will vary depending on the nature of the plagiarism.

If an offense is deemed unintentional, the student will have an opportunity to resubmit the work. A second offense will result in an automatic score of zero for that assignment, which may also result in failure of that course.

More serious plagiarism offenses could result in automatic course failure, disciplinary action, or expulsion from CUGN. Please view the [CUGN Academic Catalog](#) for a full definition and examples of plagiarism. If you have questions about plagiarism, or would like to request resources for learning how to avoid plagiarism, please contact our Registrar's Office at registrar@cugn.org or toll free at (888) 487-5376 ext. 3.

Course Methods

Throughout this course, a number of methods will be used to engage the students in learning and processing information, interacting with other students (when possible), and applying the learning to their lives. These methods include the following:

Media/Materials

The course will include media presentations of lectures and supplementary materials to be viewed and/or read throughout the lessons of the course.

- **Video-based teaching**

If you do not have the bandwidth required to view the video, we provide the option of listening to the lesson or reading the lesson from a transcript.

- **Multisensory learning**

For students who wish to use a medium other than video, we provide the option of reading the lesson from a transcript of the teaching video (found in the Class Time section). Students can choose the medium (or combination of media) that most closely aligns with their individual learning styles.

- **Readings and other media**

Students should have a copy of the Bible available in order to read the sections of the Bible assigned in each lesson. In addition, Scripture passages are linked to online Bible tools for convenience. These online resources also provide an opportunity for students for whom English is a second language to read the Bible passages in one of numerous international translations available.

For all other required reading assignments, CUGN provides the texts for this course in a downloadable Adobe® PDF format.

Interaction

Whether sitting in a traditional classroom or studying from a distance, students benefit from interaction and collaboration with other students. In order to meet this need in distance theological

education, CUGN offers structures and resources to encourage effective community interaction in this course.

Response Time

This forum fosters peer-to-peer interaction in a global, threaded discussion. Students are required to respond to relevant questions posted by the instructors; students are also encouraged to read and respond to the posts of fellow students.

Personal Reflection Journal

Students will be asked to record their thoughts in a Personal Reflection Journal. These entries can be viewed only by the student and by the site administrator, and are not graded.

Lesson Objectives

At the end of each lesson, students should be able to accomplish the objectives listed below.

Lesson 1: Suffering Comes With the Freedom to Choose

- Discuss the viewpoint that love can be given only by freedom of will
- Explain the relationship between suffering/evil and human free will
- Describe human privilege, responsibility, and boundaries related to suffering

Lesson 2: Suffering Reveals What is in Our Hearts

- Explain the relationship between strength of character and suffering
- Discuss, giving examples, God using suffering to reveal a person's heart
- Explain the relationship between faith and suffering

Lesson 3: Suffering Takes Us to the Edge of Eternity

- Show how dealing with suffering can be affected by an eternal perspective
- Explain how suffering can awaken a person to the reality and inevitability of the eternal
- Identify events in the Bible that contrast human weakness and divine strength

Lesson 4: God Can Turn Suffering Around for Our Good

- Explain how God can turn suffering around for the good of the sufferer
- Discuss the relationship between suffering and wisdom
- Identify the events in Joseph's life that shaped his relationship with his brothers

Lesson 5: Pain Can Warn Us of Danger

- Explain how pain can warn of danger
- Discuss the relationship between habitual sin and decreased sensitivity to spiritual pain

- Identify, using biblical references, the impact of sin upon creation

Lesson 6: In Times of Crisis We Find One Another

- Identify ways in which suffering or crisis brings people together
- Explain how fear and pain respond to human touch
- Discuss the Bible defined link between the ministry of God in a Christian and that Christian's ministry to others

Lesson 7: Suffering Gives Opportunity to Trust God

- Identify the ways pain is used by God to bring people back to Himself
- Explain, using biblical references, the source of confidence that comes from times of suffering

Lesson 8: Pain Loosens Our Grip On This Life

- Explain ways in which pain makes this world less inviting and the next life more appealing
- Discuss reasons that thoughts of heaven produce feelings of peace in the suffering believer

Lesson 9: God Suffers With Us in Our Suffering

- Share how God suffers with humans in their suffering
- Explain the understanding that God has experienced the evil of the world more profoundly than any human being
- Discuss what the cross reveals about God's attitude toward mankind

Lesson 10: God's Comfort Is Greater Than Our Suffering

- Explain ways in which God's comfort is greater than our suffering
- Compare and contrast being with Christ in suffering and being without Christ in good health and pleasant circumstances
- Identify how experiences of pain teach more than times of ease

Course Requirements

In order to receive credit, the student must complete the course requirements within a 90-day period. Course requirements include:

- Viewing the Class Time lectures for each lesson
- Completing the Reading Assignment for each lesson
- Composing adequate responses to all questions in the Response Time forums (see below for details)
- Reading the material in the Further Study section

- Keeping a Personal Reflection Journal in response to reflection questions
- Taking each lesson quiz and a final examination, scoring a 70% or higher average

Additional information about these requirements is provided below.

CLASS TIME

Each of the lessons in this course contains a lecture of approximately four to ten minutes in length. These instructional videos are required viewing, and can be watched as many times as needed. The same content is available in an audio file and a text file (PDF) for students who can benefit from these alternative media. This course includes the following Class Time lectures:

- Suffering Comes With the Freedom to Choose
- Suffering Reveals What is in Our Hearts
- Suffering Takes Us to the Edge of Eternity
- God Can Turn Suffering Around for Our Good
- Pain Can Warn Us of Danger
- In Times of Crisis We Find One Another
- Suffering Gives Opportunity to Trust God
- Pain Loosens Our Grip on This Life
- God Suffers With Us in Our Suffering
- God's Comfort is Greater Than Our Suffering

READING ASSIGNMENT

Complete all readings listed in the Reading Assignment section of each lesson.

RESPONSE TIME

Participants will interact with other students worldwide in an ongoing asynchronous threaded forum of several course topics in each lesson.

In order to get the fullest benefit from the Response Time forum, students should complete the assignment after they have completed the Class Time lecture. Then they should return to the Response Time forum after finishing the lesson to see how others respond. The following steps are instructions to the students for completing the assignment:

- Enter Response Time
- Read the instructions and click the Discussion Question you wish to respond to first.
- Read the Discussion Question and share your thoughts with others.
- Repeat for each Discussion Question.
- Take the time to read other students' postings.

CUGN requires that students' discussion forum posts consist of at least 2 to 3 well-developed paragraphs. Think of posts as mini-essays, where you present an idea and support that idea with details, examples, personal experiences, etc.

Objective: to develop critical thinking skills through personal interaction with the content of the course and the responses of others within a diverse community of learners.

FURTHER STUDY

The Bible reading or study assignments covered in the Further Study section should be read completely at least once and responses to questions are to be recorded in the students' Personal Reflection Journals.

QUIZZES AND EXAM

The quizzes and exam will cover the material from the Class Time lectures, Reading Assignment, and Further Study.

Course Grading and Requirements

QUIZZES AND EXAM

Quizzes	40% of Course Grade
Final Exam	60% of Course Grade

OTHER COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course requirements noted in this syllabus will be validated before credit is awarded to any student.

Notes Regarding This Syllabus

This syllabus is designed to provide learners with an overview of the course. Specific assignments are contained in each lesson.

Individuals taking the class for academic credit are responsible for the syllabus requirements of the specific institution through which the course is offered. Each individual institution has reserved the right to add additional reading requirements and to alter the syllabus to meet their accreditation requirements. Students seeking academic credit should check with their academic institution for details.