

“ZAPPED BY THE GODS: Understanding Human Suffering Through the Ages”

The Rev. Bob Semes, Instructor

6 P.M. – Soup and Salad Supper – Myers Room, Church Ground Fl.

6:30 P.M. – to 8 P.M. – Class meeting

Tuesday nights in Lent, beginning February 28th

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PLEASE READ THIS CLASSIC BOOK EARLY IN THE COURSE:

Harold S. Kushner, *Why Bad Things Happen to Good People* (paperback)

Available at Maggie’s Corner. **ALL THE OTHER READINGS**

BEFORE EACH CLASS ARE ON THE INTERNET – See Below

CLASS SCHEDULE

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TUESDAY, February 28: “THE GREEKS” - Lecture and discussion of readings; **PLEASE READ** the following before class: Euripides’ play “Medea” found at <http://classics.mit.edu/Euripides/medea.html>

TUESDAY, March 6: “THE HEBREWS and THE NEW TESTAMENT” - Lecture and discussion of readings: **PLEASE READ** the following before class: “The Book of Job” – preferably in the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible. You can also find the text at www.bible.oremus.org/?passage=job Read St. Paul’s “Epistle to the Romans” (NRSV) and the St. Augustine selection on last week’s class handout.

TUESDAY, March 13: “The Middle Ages and the Reformation” –
Lecture and discussion of readings; **PLEASE READ** the following
before class: Julian of Norwich: “The Fifteenth Revelation” chapter 64
(LXIV) found at www.2heartsnetwork.org/revelationsofDivineLove.pdf
John Calvin: “Of Bearing the Cross—One Branch of Self-
Denial” (chapter 8) found at www.sacred-texts.cpm/chr/calvin/life/life004.htm and Thomas a Kempis, *Imitation of Christ* – chapter 22 “Of the
Consideration of Human Misery” found at <http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/akempis/imitation/chapter%2022.htm>

TUESDAY, March 20: “Romanticism” – Lecture and discussion of
readings; [also some words about the “Enlightenment.” **PLEASE**
READ the following before class: a selection from Arthur
Schopenhauer’s work *On the Sufferings of the World* found at
<http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/s/schopenhauer/arthur/pessimism/chapter1.html> and the handout from last week from
Nietzsche’s *Beyond Good and Evil* - and if you get a chance, this powerful
piece
from Emile Zola’s classic novel *Germinal* found at www.eldritchpres.org/ez/g73.html

TUESDAY, March 27: “THE TWENTIETH CENTURY and TODAY”
- Lecture and discussion of readings; **PLEASE READ** the following
before class: an interview with Elie Wiesel, distinguished Jewish writer
on the Holocaust found at www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/wie0int-1 - (you may read, watch or listen to this) and “The Apostolic
Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II on the Christian Meaning of
Human Suffering” [*Salvifici Doloris*] found at www.cin.org/suffer.html
[This papal letter is not an easy piece to read, but try to get through it
and think about the major points he makes]