

**Christian Apologetics PHIL5301-01**  
**New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary**  
**Theological and Historical Division**  
**Professor: Robert B. Stewart**  
**Professor of Philosophy and Theology**  
**Classroom: Bunyan 108**  
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[rstewart@nobts.edu](mailto:rstewart@nobts.edu)  
**Fall 2020**  
**Tuesday & Thursday**  
**9:30-10:50 a.m.**

### **Seminary Mission Statement**

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

### **Core Values Focus**

The course will address the core values of *Spiritual Vitality*, *Doctrinal Integrity*, and *Mission Focus*. Christian apologetics is fundamentally about sanctifying Jesus Christ as Lord and as a consequence always being ready to give a reason for our faith (1 Peter 3:15). Being thus equipped is important for evangelism, missions, and disciple-making. **The core value emphasis for the 2020-2021 academic year is Mission Focus.**

### **Course Description**

The course examines barriers to Christian faith as well as efforts to provide convincing presentations of Christian faith. Attention is given to biblical foundations, apologetic method, and contemporary issues related to apologetics.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

In order to obey the biblical mandate found in **1 Peter 3:15**, the student, by the end of course, should:

1. Understand the basics of historic Christian theology and be able to recognize concepts that challenge Christian belief.
2. Value the following concepts:
  - ◆ Intellectual accountability in relation to the issues of ultimate concern to Christian faith.

- ◆ Convincing presentations of Christian faith.
  - ◆ Insightful and effective defenses of the Christian faith.
  - ◆ Clear ways of stating the Christian hope to those who either reject or question the truth claims of Christian theology.
3. Be able to present and defend the Christian faith clearly and rationally.

Accordingly:

1. Students will read broadly on issues in Christian apologetics.
2. Students will become familiar with issues related to Christian apologetics by completing course assignments.
3. Students will demonstrate basic understanding of an issue related to the subject by writing a research paper on a particular apologetic issue.

## **Textbooks**

### **Required**

Forrest, Benjamin K., Joshua D. Chatraw, and Alister E. McGrath, *The History of Apologetics: A Biographical and Methodological Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020.

Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.

### **Optional Texts (for Book Reviews)**

Anderson, Tawa J. W. Michael Clark, and David K. Naugle, *An Introduction to Christian Worldview: Pursuing God's Perspective in a Pluralistic World*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2017.

Bowman, Robert M. Jr., Ed Komoszewski, and Darrell L. Bock, *Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Jesus Christ*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007.

Collins, Francis S. *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*. New York: Free Press, 2007.

Copan, Paul. *True for You But Not for Me: Deflating the Slogans That Leave Christians Speechless*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.

———. *When God Goes to Starbucks: A Guide to Everyday Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.

Evans, Craig A. *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006.

Keller, Timothy. *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*. New York: Dutton, 2008.

Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.

- . *Miracles*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.
- McGrath, Alister E. *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012.
- Stewart, Robert B., ed. *Can Only One Religion be True?: Paul Knitter and Harold Netland in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.
- . *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.
- . *The Reliability of the New Testament: Bart Ehrman and Daniel B. Wallace in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011.
- . *The Message of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and Ben Witherington III in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013.
- Wallace, J. Warner. *Cold-Case Christianity: A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2013.

## Recommended Texts

- Geisler, Norman. *Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999.
- Cowan, Steven B., ed. *Five Views on Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
- Boa, Ken and Robert M. Bowman, Jr., *Faith Has Its Reasons: An Integrative Approach to Defending Christianity*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 2006.
- Campbell-Jack, W. C. and Gavin McGrath, *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006.

## Course Requirements and Class Policies

**Absences** may not exceed more than 2 class days if the student is to receive credit for the course, according to the NOBTS catalog. Students may be penalized for excessive absences. The 3<sup>rd</sup> absence will result in failure of the course.

**Make-up Exams** are not permitted, except in *extreme* situations, to insure that all students have approximately equal time to prepare for exams. The instructor has the final decision regarding the legitimacy of excuses in cases of missed exams. The student who misses the exam bears the responsibility for explaining the absence and arranging for a make-up exam within the prescribed two-week period.

**Late Work** will be penalized 10 points per office day late up to 5 days. No paper may be submitted after 5 office days without prior permission of the professor.

**Grades** will be assigned on the basis of the NOBTS grading scale.

**Quizzes** will cover the readings assigned in the primary text and class lectures. The form of the quizzes will be objective. Quizzes will be taken on Blackboard.

**Book Review**. Students must write a book review of one of the optional texts. **Due October 1**

Book reviews should include: (1) professional biographical data concerning the author; (2) a summary and identification of the major elements of content; (3) an assessment of the author's aim

or purpose; (4) an evaluation of the degree of its fulfillment; and (5) a critical evaluation of the book *which includes some documented research on the general topic*. Students should cite the work of others in the critique section. Parenthetical page numbers are sufficient for quotations from the book being reviewed. All other citations should conform to Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition. **Due October 1**

**Exams** will be a combination of objective questions and take-home questions. The take-home question should be answered as thoroughly as possible in 2-3 typed pages. The take-home portion will be roughly 50% of the grade for each exam.

Each test will be limited to the material in that unit. Guidance may be given in advance concerning the material to be covered and the direction of the questions asked. The exams will test both mastery of content (significant thinkers and their contributions, summaries of apologetic methods, philosophical vocabulary, etc.) and critical thinking skills (the ability to articulate and defend a position in an essay). **If a review sheet is given, it does not mean that only the material on the review sheet will be covered or that all the material on the review sheet will be covered. Review sheets are simply aids to preparation, not restrictions upon the professor.**

**Midterm Exam will be posted online by October 22 (Must be taken by the end of the month. Once opened, it must be completed.)**

**Read Required Texts.** Students must read the required texts during the semester. A statement as to what students have read will be included as part of the final exam.

**Research Paper.** Students will write a research paper on a topic agreed upon by the professor and the student. The paper should be double-spaced with footnotes and bibliography using Times New Roman font size 12 or something very similar. The paper should be not less than 3,000 words nor more than 3,500 words not counting bibliography and footnotes. Guidelines for research papers are given in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition. **Due November 19.**

Here is a rough guide to how research papers will be critiqued.

**A Paper:** Demonstrates a *superior* grasp of ideas, arguments, or theories it discusses, and presents very good, clear, and thoughtful arguments, with very few, if any, significant grammatical and/or form and style problems.

**B Paper:** Demonstrates a *good* grasp of ideas, arguments, or theories it discusses, presents an argument that exhibits good reasoning, with minimal significant grammatical and/or form and style problems.

**C Paper:** Demonstrates an adequate though perhaps limited understanding of ideas, arguments, or theories it discusses, mixed with a significant number of incorrect claims, presents weak arguments, contains significant grammatical or structural problems.

**D Paper:** Demonstrates significant misunderstandings of factual matters, uses poor logic or fallacious reasoning (if any) to argue points (e.g., merely makes a series of unconnected assertions), fails significantly with respect to technical specifications.

**F Paper:** Failure to submit a paper, a paper that commits plagiarism, or a paper that presents no argumentation.

Dr. Gerald Stevens has an online paper designed to help students with Turabian style. Please visit <http://www.drkoine.com> **Due November 19.**

**Grading:**

The final grade will be determined accordingly:

Quiz Average	10%
Book Review	15%
Research Paper	20%
Midterm Exam	25%
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>30%</u>
	100%

**Borderline Grades** will be determined by the numerical grade received, unless the student's promptness and faithfulness in class attendance, positive attitude and contribution in class discussions, and preparedness and attentiveness in class warrants special consideration. These factors will only apply when the student is within one or two points of the next highest grade.

**Extra Credit** may be earned as listed below. All extra credit will be added to the final grade.

(1) *Special Events* sponsored by various NOBTS divisions may also be considered for extra credit with the approval of the professor.

(2) *Additional Reading*. Consideration for extra credit will be given for significant reading over and above the class assignments within the field. Consideration will be given not only to the amount, but also to the quality, of the material read. Students must read all of the assigned readings in order to be eligible to earn extra credit for additional reading.

(3) *Book Reviews* may be done for extra credit. The review must be of a book listed by the instructor for reading reviews unless the instructor has approved another book. The review should include: (1) some biographical data concerning the author; (2) an identification of the major elements of content; (3) an assessment of the author's aim or purpose and of the degree of its fulfillment; and (4) a critical evaluation of the book *which includes some documented research on the general topic*. Footnotes for the reviews should follow Turabian form.

<b>TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE</b>			
<b>CLASS SESSION</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>CLASS LECTURE SCHEDULE</b>	<b>READING ASSIGNMENT</b>
1.1	8/25	Introduction to the Course	
1.2	8/27	The Most Important Thing in Christian Apologetics	
2.1	9/1	Worldviews	
2.2	9/3	Has Jesus Been Misquoted?: NT Textual Reliability	
3.1	9/8	New Testament Criticism	
3.2	9/10	Did Jesus Really Exist?	
4.1	9/15	Did Jesus Really Exist?	
4.2	9/17	The Apologetics of Paul	
5.1	9/22	What About All Those Other Gospels?	
5.2	9/24	What's Wrong with the New Atheism?	
6.1	9/29	Atheism: A Colorless Worldview	<b>Book Review Due</b>
6.2	10/1	Science & Christianity	
7.1	10/6	Science & Christianity	
7.2	10/8	Theistic Arguments: Design and Order Arguments	
8.1	10/13	Cosmological Arguments	
8.2	10/15	Ontological Arguments	
9	10/19-23	<b>FALL BREAK</b>	
10.1	10/27	Pragmatic Arguments	
10.2	10/29	Apologetic Method	
11.1	11/3	The Problem of Evil	
11.2	11/5	The Problem of Evil	
12.1	11/10	Can I Trust a God Who Would Command Genocide?	
12.2	11/12	Different Approaches to the Problem of Evil	
13.1	11/17	Miracles	
13.2	11/19	The Resurrection of Jesus	<b>Research Paper Due</b>
14	11/23-27	<b>THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>	
15.1	12/1	Is Jesus Really the Only Savior?	
15.2	12/3	What About People Who Never Hear of Jesus	
16.1	12/8	Miscellaneous Topics	
16.1	12/8	Miscellaneous Topics	
16.2	12/17	<b>Final Exam Completed by 11:00 a.m.</b>	

## Suggested Bibliography

- Adams, Marilyn, and Adams, Robert, eds. *The Problem of Evil*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Anderson, Tawa J., W. Michael Clark, and David K. Naugle, *An Introduction to Christian Worldview: Pursuing God's Perspective in a Pluralistic World*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2017.
- Bowman, Robert M. Jr., Ed Komoszewski, and Darrell L. Bock, *Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Jesus Christ*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007.
- Brown, Colin. *Christianity and Western Thought*. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 1990.
- . *Miracles and the Critical Mind*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984.
- . *Philosophy and the Christian Faith*. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 1968.
- Bush, L. Russ. *Classical Readings in Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Academie, 1983.
- Clark, Kelly James. *Return to Reason*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Collins, Francis S. *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*. New York: Free Press, 2007.
- Copan, Paul. *True for You But Not for Me: Deflating the Slogans That Leave Christians Speechless*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.
- Copan, Paul. *When God Goes to Starbucks: A Guide to Everyday Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.
- Craig, William Lane. *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*. Third Edition. Wheaton: Crossway, 2008.
- Davis, Stephen T., ed. *Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1973.
- Dyrness, William. *Christian Apologetics in a World Community*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1983.
- Evans, Craig A. *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006.
- Geisler, Norman. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999.
- . *Philosophy of Religion*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974.
- Groothuis, Douglas. *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.
- Keller, Timothy. *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*. New York: Dutton, 2008.
- Kreeft, Peter. *Making Sense Out of Suffering*. Ann Arbor: Servant, 1986.
- Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.
- Lewis, C. S. *Miracles*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.
- McDowell, Josh and Sean McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict: Life-Changing Truth for a Skeptical World*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2017.

- McGrath, Alister E. *Why God Won't Go Away: Is the New Atheism Running on Empty*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011.
- McGrath, Alister E. *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012.
- Mitchell, Basil. *The Justification of Religious Belief*. New York: Seabury Press, 1974.
- Moreland, J. P. *Christianity and the Nature of Science*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989.
- . *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987.
- Nash, Ronald. *Faith and Reason*. Grand Rapids: Academie, 1988.
- Pearcey, Nancy. *Finding Truth: 5 Principles for Unmasking Atheism, Secularism, and Other God Substitutes*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2015.
- . *Saving Leonardo: A Call to Resist the Secular Assault on Mind, Morals, and Meaning*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010.
- . *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2004.
- Ramm, Bernard. *Varieties of Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1961.
- Spitzer, Robert J. *New Proofs for the Existence of God: Contributions of Contemporary Physics and Philosophy*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
- Sproul, R.C., Gerstner, John, and Lindsley, Arthur. *Classical Apologetics: A Rational Defense of the Christian Faith and a Critique of Presuppositional Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984.
- Stewart, Robert B. *Can Only One Religion Be True?: Paul Knitter and Harold Netland in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013.
- . *The Future of Atheism: Alister McGrath and Daniel Dennett in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008.
- . *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.
- . *The Reliability of the New Testament: Bart Ehrman and Daniel B. Wallace in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011.
- . *The Message of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and Ben Witherington III in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013.
- Strobel, Lee. *The Case for Faith: A Journalist Investigates the Toughest Objections to Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
- Swinburne, Richard. *The Concept of Miracle*. London: Macmillan, 1970.
- Wallace, J. Warner. *Cold-Case Christianity: A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2013.