



Christian Apologetics PHIL5301-01
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Division of Theological and Historical Studies
Tuesday-Thursday 12:30-1:50 p.m.
HSC278

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Mission Statement

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

Course Description

Students will study the major issues one encounters when presenting and defending the Christian faith in our contemporary culture, with particular attention given to biblical reliability, the relationship of science and Christianity, the existence of God, problems of evil, and the uniqueness of Christ. They will also learn to develop and present persuasive responses to those challenges.

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.

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.
- Anderson, Tawa. *Why Believe: Christian Apologetics for a Skeptical Age*. Hobbs College Library. Nashville: B & H Academic, 2021.
- 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.
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- 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 Teaching Methodology

The course will involve the following methodologies:

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.
4. Students will be tested over the basics of Christian apologetics.

Course Requirements and Class Policies

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 Canvas.

Book Review. Students must write a book review of one of the optional texts. **Due September 23.**

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*, 8th edition.

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 taken on Canvas. It must be completed once it is started.

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*, 8th edition. **Due November 11.**

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>.

Evaluation of Grade

The final grade will be determined accordingly:

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

(1) **Defend the Faith Apologetics Conference (January 2-6, 2023)**. All students who register for—and attend—the Defend the Faith Apologetics Conference will receive an increase of one letter grade on their final average. (If a student fails to submit all assignments and has a failing average, this does not apply!)

(2) **Special Events** sponsored by various NOBTS divisions, other schools, churches, etc. may also be considered for extra credit with the approval of the professor.

(3) **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.

(4) **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.

Additional Policies and Resources

Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. Canvas.NOBTS.com Click on the “Help” button for technical questions/support requests regarding the NOBTS Canvas System. You can also email questions to Canvas@nobts.edu.
3. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer.

A copy of the approved NOBTS Style Guide can be found in the course Canvas shell, or can be located online at the Writing Center’s page on the seminary website at:

<https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf>

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Attendance Policy

Traditional Classes: Students are expected to attend and participate in the class sessions. Any student missing more than nine hours may receive an automatic grade of “F” for the course. Three tardies will count as one absence.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE			
SESSION	DATE	CLASS DISCUSSION TOPIC	READING
PROLEGOMENA			
1	8/16	Introduction to the Course	
2	8/18	The Most Important Thing in Christian Apologetics	Groothuis, 23-44
3	8/23	Worldviews: What They Are and How They Work	Groothuis, 45-72
4	8/25	Faith and Reason	Groothuis, 155-70
5	8/30	Postmodernism and Truth	Groothuis, 117-54
6	9/1	A Little Lesson in Logic	
7	9/6	Abductive Reasoning	
8	9/8	Knowledge: The Basics	
THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF SCRIPTURE			
9	9/13	Has Jesus Been Misquoted?: NT Textual Reliability	
10	9/15	What About Those Other Gospels? Canonical Issues	
11	9/20	Understanding New Testament Critical Methods: Source, Form, and Redaction Criticism	
12	9/22	Did Jesus Really Exist?	
13	9/27	Why You Should Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus	
	9/27-10/14	MIDTERM EXAM ONLINE	
CHRISTIAN THEISM AND NATURALISM			
14	9/29	Understanding Atheism: A Colorless Worldview	Groothuis, 438-74
	10/3-7	FALL BREAK	
15	10/11	What's Wrong with the New Atheism	Groothuis, 527-66
16	10/13	Arguments for God's Existence: Uses and Limitations; Teleological Arguments	
17	10/18	Arguments for God's Existence: Cosmological Arguments	
18	10/20	Arguments for God's Existence: Ontological and Moral Arguments, Pascal's Wager	Groothuis, 171-84; 240-65
19	10/25	Apologetic Method	Groothuis, 207-39
20	10/27	The Problem of Evil	Groothuis, 185- 206; 330-63
21	11/1	The Problem of Evil	Groothuis, 418-37;
22	11/3	Different Approaches to the Problem of Evil	Groothuis, 614-46
23	11/8	Can I Trust a God Who Would Command Genocide?	
CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE			
24	11/10	Can I Believe in Both Science and the Bible?	
25	11/15	How Science Works & What It Means for Christians	
THE EXCLUSIVITY OF CHRIST			
26	11/17	Is Jesus Really the Only Savior?	Groothuis, 266-96
	11/21-25	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
		Christianity and LGBTQ and Issues	
CHRISTIANITY AND GENDER ISSUES			
27	11/29	Christianity and LGBTQ and Issues	
	12/1-7	FINAL EXAM ONLINE	

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.
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- 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.
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