

Christian Apologetics
PHIL 5301
Dr. Steve Lemke
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Spring 2015

Mission Statement, Core Values, and Key Competencies

- The NOBTS Mission Statement is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.
- The NOBTS core value most addressed in this course is Doctrinal Integrity. The Seminary-wide core value emphasis is Spiritual Vitality.
- As part of the larger Seminary goal of equipping effective leaders of healthy churches, this course addresses the key competency of Christian theological heritage.

Contacting the Instructor

Dr. Lemke may be contacted through any of the following means:

Office: Provost's office, upstairs in Frost Building

Telephone: (504)-282-4455, ext. 3216

E-mail: slemke@nobts.edu

Facebook: Steve Lemke

Course Description

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

Texts

Ron Nash, *Faith and Reason*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988.

Steve Lemke, *Unapologetic Apologetics*. New Orleans: NOBTS, 2005. (Available free through Blackboard, or available by request for \$10 for print edition; \$3 for CD edition).

Class Assignments

Three Unit Tests, 100 points each. Each test is limited to the material in that unit. Guidance will be given in advance concerning the material to be covered and the direction of the questions asked to assist the student in preparing for the exams. (2/12, 3/19, 5/14)

Term Project, 100 points. Choose one of the following options: (Due 4/9)

Option 1: Supplementary Reading Book Review

Read *one* of the following supplemental reading books to provide you with more background in Apologetics. Each book addresses a different aspect of Apologetics. Your book review should reading notes should be thorough, approximately 8-10 pages single spaced, double spaces between paragraphs. The content of the text should be denoted in a modified outline form, maintaining a basic outline format but using sentences or paragraphs to summarize arguments. Document page numbers in the outline headings, and pages of quotes in parentheses. Finish with your review of the strengths and weaknesses of the book.

- Darrell L. Bock, Robert M. Bowman, Jr., and Ed Komoszewski, *Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Jesus Christ*. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007).
- L. Russ Bush, *Classical Readings in Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983).
- David Clark, *Dialogical Apologetics: A Person-Centered Approach to Christian Defense* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999).
- Paul Copan, *When God Goes to Starbucks: A Guide to Everyday Apologetics*. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008).
- William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*, 3rd ed. (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008).
- William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra, *A Reasonable Response: Answers to Tough Questions on God, Christianity, and the Bible*. (Chicago: Moody, 2013).
- Craig A. Evans, *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels*. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006).
- Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011).
- _____, *Truth Decay: Defending Christianity against the Challenges of Postmodernism*. (Downers Grove: IVP, 2000).
- Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*. (New York: Dutton, 2008).
- John Lennox, *Gunning for God: Why the New Atheists Are Missing the Target*. (Oxford: Lion, 2011).
- Craig A. Lozcalzo, *Apologetic Preaching: Proclaiming Christ to a Postmodern World*. (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2000).
- Alister E. McGrath. *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith*. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012).
- _____, *Why God Won't Go Away: Is the New Atheism Running on Empty?* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011).
- Timothy Phillips and Dennis Okholm, eds. *Christian Apologetics in a Postmodern World*. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995).
- Robert J. Spitzer, *New Proofs for the Existence of God: Contributions of Contemporary Physics and Philosophy*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
- R. C. Sproul, John Gerstner, and Arthur Lindsley, *Classical Apologetics: A Rational Defense of the Christian Faith and a Critique of Presuppositional Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984).

Option 2: Apologetics Paper

Research and write a paper on a paper in the area of apologetics (a major thinker or topic). The paper should be approximately 8-10 pages, typed single double spaced, in Turabian form. Adequate research in books and scholarly journals should be reflected in footnotes and bibliography. Plagiarism is strictly prohibited. About two-thirds of the paper should be descriptive, and at least one-third evaluative, reflecting the student's perspective of the strengths and weaknesses of the views presented.

Option 3: Ministry Project -- Prepare a seminar dealing with one of the major topics covered in class that can be taught in four to six one-hour sessions in a church or discipleship study group setting. All teaching materials should be included that would make for an effective presentation, including a full outline of lesson plans and all teaching materials (handouts, presentation program slides, and activities materials). It may be focused on accuracy and depth of the material presented, and the attractiveness and usability of the materials used.

Class Schedule

Unit 1: Basic Apologetics, Apologetic Method, and Defending the Rationality of Christian Belief		
When	Topic	Text Reference
1/20	Introduction to Apologetics	FR, 11-18 UA, 4-12
1/22	Faith and Reason Key Issues in Apologetics	FR, 11-18 UA, 4-12
1/27	Apologetic Method Today: Presuppositionalism, Evidentialism, Foundationalism, and Reformed Epistemology; Apologetics in the Early Church	UA, 13-25
1/29	Apologetics through Church History; Making a Case for the Existence of God	FR, 51-120 UA 16-25, 91-92
2/3	Epistemology and a Little Logic: Analyzing and Attacking Arguments	UA 10-11, 86-90
2/5	Arguments for the Existence of God: The Ontological and Cosmological Arguments	FR, 121-174 UA, 93-99
2/10	Arguments for the Existence of God: The Teleological and Moral Arguments	FR, 121-174 UA, 93-99
2/12	Test over Unit I	
2/17	Mardi Gras	

Unit 2: The Christian Worldview and Rival Worldviews		
When	Topic	Text Reference
2/19	Major Western Philosophical Worldviews: Idealism and Naturalism	FR, 252-259 UA, 27-51
2/24	Major Western Philosophical Worldviews: Realism and Pragmatism	UA, 27-47
2/26	Major Western Philosophical Worldviews: Existentialism/Postmodernism	UA, 27-47
3/3	Major Western Philosophical Worldviews: Existentialism/Postmodernism	UA, 27-47
3/5	Western Religions: Judaism and Islam	UA, 52-62
3/10	Syncretistic East-West Religions	
3/12	Eastern Religions: Hinduism and Buddhism	UA, 63-84
3/17	Syncretistic Eastern Religions	
3/19	Test over Unit II	

Unit 3: Defending the Faith: Answering Challenges to the Christian Faith		
When	Topic	Text Reference
3/31	The Problem of Evil	FR, 177-221 UA, 101-106
4/2	The Problem of Evil	FR, 177-221 UA, 101-106
4/7	The Problem of Evil	FR, 177-221 UA, 191-106
4/9	Miracles	FR, 225-251, 260-285 UA, 107-111, 118-123
4/14	Creation and Evolution	UA, 112-117
4/16	Creation and Evolution	UA, 112-117
4/21	The New Atheism	
4/23	The New Atheism	
4/28	Cultural Apologetics	
4/30	Cultural Apologetics	
5/5	Evidence for the Truth of Scripture	
5/7	Defending the Resurrection of Christ	
5/14 10am	Test over Unit III	

Class Policies

Absences, according to the NOBTS catalog, may not exceed nine hours for a 3 hour class. Three times tardy count as one absence.

Late Work will be penalized a proportional penalty (three points per office day), and no work will be accepted beyond two weeks late.

Grades will be determined on the official NOBTS grading scale: 93-100 = A, 85-92 = B, 77-84 = C, 70-77 = D, below 70 = F. Borderline Grades will be determined by the numerical grade received unless the instructor's evaluation of 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.

Participation in Class with preparation and attentiveness are crucial not only to your own success in the class, but to those who sit around you. Each student has a positive contribution to make to the class. Participation in the online discussions is strongly encouraged.

Appropriate Class Conduct -- Use of laptop computers for note taking is fine, but playing computer games, checking email, social networking, or doing work not associated with the class is not appreciated and is strictly prohibited. Holding private conversations in class or other rude behavior is not appreciated. Class members should treat each other with Christian charity and kindness. Rude behavior disrespectful of the instructor or other students will not be tolerated in class or in Internet discussions. We will be dealing with some complex issues, and we need your undivided attention.

Seminary Computer/Phone Texting Policy – The student is to demonstrate appropriate classroom behavior at all times. This includes the usage of cell phones and computers during class time. The opportunity for students to use these items within the classroom is contingent upon their proper usage. Students are also reminded that phones are to be silenced during the class and other Seminary functions. Proper usage includes note taking and tasks specifically assigned by the professor. Improper utilization includes all other usages such as surfing the Internet, playing games, texting, and emailing. If a student is engaged in improper usage of a cell phone or computer during a class, the professor has the right to prohibit the student from bringing the item to subsequent class meetings. Application: Silence your phone and put it away before class. No text messaging, no phone or computer email, no games, no surfing, no Facebook, no Twitter, no distractions that would distract your focus on the class.

Extra Resources are available at the class Blackboard web site (PHIL5301SL), which provides a number of resources related to the class, including a gradebook to get your grades, use links for further information on topics in Apologetics, access to class information, quizzes to help you get ready for the unit tests, and online discussions.

Extra Credit is available for students who participate meaningfully in online discussions, and for taking online quizzes over material presented in class and in the text. Students are strongly encouraged to take the quizzes to help prepare for the unit tests. You may take them as many times as needed to get a perfect score. Students are eligible for a point for meaningful contributions to the discussion board, and a point for each quiz with a perfect score.

Christian Apologetics Bibliography

Introductions to Apologetics

- Allen, Diogenes. *Philosophy for Understanding Theology*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985.
- Brown, Colin. *Philosophy and the Christian Faith*. London: Tyndale, 1969.
- Bush, L. Russ. *A Handbook for Christian Philosophy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991.
- Campolo, Anthony. *A Reasonable Faith*. Dallas: Word, 1983.
- Cunningham, Richard. *The Christian Faith and Its Contemporary Rivals*. Nashville: Broadman, 1988.
- Dyrness, William. *Christian Apologetics in a World Community*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1983.
- Geisler, Norman. *Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976.
- Groothuis, Douglas. *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.
- Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. New York: MacMillan, 1968.
- Lewis, Gordon R. *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims: Approaches to Christian Apologetics*. Chicago: Moody, 1976.
- Newport, John. *Life's Ultimate Questions*. Dallas: Word, 1989.
- Roberts, J. Deotis. *A Philosophical Introduction to Theology*. London: SCM, 1991.
- Woodfin, Yandall. *With All Your Mind*. Fort Worth: Scripta, 1989.
- _____. *Why Be a Christian?* Nashville: Broadman, 1988.

History, Models, and Methodology in Apologetics

- Brown, Colin. *Christianity and Western Thought*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990.
- Bush, L. Russ. *Classical Readings in Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983.
- Clark, Kelly James. *Return to Reason*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Cowan, Steven B. *Five Views on Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.

Penner, Myron B. *The End of Apologetics: Christian Witness in a Postmodern Context*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013.

Phillips, Timothy, and Dennis Okholm, eds. *Christian Apologetics in a Postmodern World*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995.

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Sproul, R. C., John Gerstner, and Arthur Lindsley. *Classical Apologetics: A Rational Defense of the Christian Faith and a Critique of Presuppositionalist Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.

Rational Evidence for Theism

Allen, Diogenes. *Christian Belief in a Post-Modern World*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1989.

Hick, John. *Philosophy of Religion*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1990.

Mitchell, Basil. *The Justification of Religious Belief*. New York: Seabury, 1974.

Moreland, J. P. *Scaling the Secular City*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989.

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Pojman, Louis. *Philosophy of Religion*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 1987.

Rowe, William. *Philosophy of Religion: An Introduction*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 1993.

Spitzer, Robert. J. *New Proofs for the Existence of God: Contributions of Contemporary Physics and Philosophy*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.

Christianity and World Religions

Bowker, John. *Problems of Suffering in the Religions of the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Fisher, Mary Pat, and Robert Luyster. *Living Religions*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1991.

Hopfe, Lewis. *Religions of the World*. New York: Macmillan, 1991.

Lewis, James, and William G. Travis. *Religious Traditions of the World*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991.

Nielsen, Niels, ed. *Religions of the World*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988.

Parshall, Phil. *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism: Evangelical Approaches to Contextualization*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980.

Woodberry, J. Dudley, ed. *Christians and Muslims on the Emmaus Road: Crucial Issues among Muslims*. Monrovia: MARC, 1989.

Theodicy and Miracles

Adams, Marilyn, and Robert Adams, eds. *The Problem of Evil*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Brown, Colin. *Miracles and the Critical Mind*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984.

Davis, Stephen T., ed. *Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1973.

Hick, John. *Evil and the God of Love*. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.

Lewis, C. S. *Miracles*. New York: MacMillan, 1960.

Swinburne, Richard. *The Concept of Miracle*. London: Macmillan, 1970.

Apologetics Topics

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

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

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_____. *Surprised by Meaning: Science, Faith, and How We Make Sense of Things*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2011.

Wallace, J. Warner. *Cold-Case Christianity: A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2013.