

Christian Apologetics PHIL5301
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Defend the Faith Apologetics Conference
January 4-9, 2015
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Seminary Mission Statement

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Core Values Addressed

The course will address the core values *Doctrinal Integrity* and *Mission Focus* by giving attention to defending and presenting Christian beliefs particularly as they relate to Christian evangelism. *Servant Leadership* will be addressed as well in that Christian apologists must model humility. This year's core value is *Spiritual Vitality*.

Competencies Addressed

The competencies of Christian Theological Heritage, Disciple Making, and Spiritual and Character Formation will be addressed.

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.

Objectives

By the end of the course, students should:

1. Be able to apply their knowledge and comprehension of how to defend and support Christian belief to academic and ministerial issues.
2. Value the following:
 - Intellectual accountability in relation to issues of ultimate concern to Christian faith.
 - Convincing presentations of Christian faith.
3. Be able to present the Christian faith in a reasonable and attractive form to skeptics and other non-Christians.

Required Textbooks

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

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

Course Requirements

1. Lecture Attendance. Students are required to attend all sessions of the Defend the Faith Christian Apologetics Conference. Students are to listen to all sessions of the Defend the Faith School in Christian Apologetics which they do not attend. Students must affirm that they have completed this. Students will confirm on Blackboard how much they attended/listened to. Failure to attend/listen to all of the conference will result in a 5 point deduction from a student's final average.

2. Book Reviews. Each student is required to review **3** of the following books:

1. Robert M. Bowman, Jr., Ed Komoszewski, and Darrell L. Bock, *Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Jesus Christ*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007.
2. Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*. New York: Free Press, 2007.
3. Paul Copan, *True for You But Not for Me: Deflating the Slogans That Leave Christians Speechless*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.
4. Paul Copan, *When God Goes to Starbucks: A Guide to Everyday Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.
5. William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*. Third Edition. Wheaton: Crossway, 2008.
6. Craig A. Evans, *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006.
7. Nancy Pearcey, *Saving Leonardo: A Call to Resist the Secular Assault on Mind, Morals, and Meaning*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010.
8. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.
9. C. S. Lewis, *Miracles*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.
10. Alister E. McGrath, *Why God Won't Go Away: Is the New Atheism Running on Empty*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011.
11. Alister E. McGrath, *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012.
12. Robert J. Spitzer, *New Proofs for the Existence of God: Contributions of Contemporary Physics and Philosophy*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
13. Robert B. Stewart, *The Future of Atheism: Alister McGrath and Daniel Dennett in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008.
14. Robert B. Stewart, *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.

15. Robert B. Stewart, *The Reliability of the New Testament: Bart Ehrman and Daniel B. Wallace in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011.
16. Robert B. Stewart, *Can Only One Religion Be True?: Paul Knitter and Harold Netland in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013.
17. Robert B. Stewart, *The Message of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and Ben Witherington III in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013.
18. J. Warner Wallace, *Cold-Case Christianity: A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2013.

Reviews should include: (1) some professional 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. The reviews should follow Turabian form. **Book Reviews are due 6 weeks after the final day of the Defend the Faith Apologetics Conference (February 20, 2015).**

3. Session Summaries. Students will write one-page, single-spaced summaries of 12 different breakout sessions from the Defend the Faith Christian Apologetics Conference. Students taking more than one Defend the Faith course for NOBTS credit may use 6 session summaries that they summarize for another course so long as they are shaped for the concerns of each course. Summaries should be submitted via Blackboard. **Summaries are due 8 weeks after the conclusion of the Defend the Faith Apologetics Conference (March 6, 2015).**

4. Apologetics Research Paper. Each student is required to submit a research paper on a topic related to Christian Apologetics, e.g., science and faith, a non-Christian religion, atheism, argument(s) for the existence of God, the problem of evil, the reliability of Scripture, and/or miracles, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, etc. The paper should be not less than 5,000 words nor more than 7,000 words in length (double spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font). Papers must adhere to the Turabian style guide. **Research papers are due 10 weeks after the final day of the Defend the Faith Apologetics Conference (March 20, 2015).**

5. Greer-Heard Report. Students must attend the April 10-11, 2015 *Christians, the Environment, and Climate Change*, featuring E. Calvin Beisner and Bill McKibben, and write a summary and critique of the event, including all Saturday papers. The summaries should include some professional biographical data on each presenter, as well as their major points of content. Students should respond to their points critically. Students unable to attend the Greer-Heard activities may purchase the audio CDs (or MP3 files) from the conference to prepare the report, or a research paper may be substituted for this assignment. Reports should be 12-15 double-spaced pages in length, not counting bibliography and must adhere to Turabian standards, with 1 inch margins and 12 Times New Roman font. **Greer-Heard Reports are due May 1, 2015.**

Grades will be assigned on the basis of the NOBTS grading scale: 93-100, A; 85-92, B; 77-84, C; 70-76, D; 0-69, F.

The final grade will be determined accordingly:

Book Reviews	30%
Research Paper	35%
Session Summaries	20%
<u>Greer-Heard Report</u>	<u>15%</u>
Final Grade	100%

The required texts will be available for purchase through the LifeWay Seminary bookstore. All texts are presently available online as well.

Suggested Bibliography

Philosophy of Religion and Apologetics

- Copan, Paul. *True for You, But Not for Me: Deflating the Slogans That Leave Christians Speechless*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1998.
- Geisler, Norman. *Philosophy of Religion*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974.
- _____. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999.
- Hudson, Yeager. *The Philosophy of Religion*. London: Mayfield, 1991.
- Moreland, J. P. *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987.
- Nash, Ronald. *Faith and Reason*. Grand Rapids: Academie, 1988.
- _____. *Life's Ultimate Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999.
- Newport, John. *Life's Ultimate Questions*. Dallas: Word, 1988.
- Peterson, Michael, William Hasker, Bruce Reichenbach, and David Basinger. *Reason and Religious Belief: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, 2d ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Pojman, Louis P., ed. *Philosophy: The Quest for Truth*. New York: Wadsworth, 1996.
- Pojman, Louis P., ed. *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 1994.
- Solomon, Robert C. *The Big Questions: A Short Introduction to Philosophy*, 2nd ed. New York: Harcourt Brace Javonovich, 1982.
- Strobel, Lee. *The Case for Faith: A Journalist Investigates the Toughest Objections to Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
- Woodfin, Yandall. *With All Your Mind*. Fort Worth: Scripta, 1989.

Works Arguing for Theism

- Allen, Diogenes. *Philosophy for Understanding Theology*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1985.
- Hick, John. *Philosophy of Religion*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1990.
- Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. New York: MacMillan, 1968.

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

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Nash, Ronald H. *Faith and Reason*. Grand Rapids: Academie, 1988.

Plantinga, Alvin, and Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*. South Bend: Notre Dame, 1983.

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

The History of Philosophical Theology

Brown, Colin. *Christianity and Western Thought: A History of Philosophers, Ideas and Movements*, Vol. 1. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990.

_____. *Philosophy and the Christian Faith*. London: Tyndale, 1969.

Bush, L. Russ. *Classical Readings in Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Academie, 1983.

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Cahn, Steven M. and Shatz, David, eds. *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Dyrness, William. *Christian Apologetics in a World Community*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1983.

Ramm, Bernard. *Varieties of Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1961.

Tarnas, Richard. *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View*. New York: Ballantine, 1991.

Wilkens, Steve and Alan G. Padgett. *Christianity and Western Thought: A History of Philosophers, Ideas and Movements*, Vol. 2. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000.

World Religions

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

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

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

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

Theodicy, Miracles, and Ethics

Adams, Marilyn, and Adams, Robert, 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.

Kreeft, Peter. *Making Sense out of Suffering*. Ann Arbor: Servant, 1986.

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Rachels, James. *The End of Life: Euthanasia and Morality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

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

Wennberg, Robert N. *Terminal Choices: Euthanasia, Suicide, and the Right to Die*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.

Anthropology, History, Language, and Science

Barbour, Ian. *Religion in an Age of Science*. New York: Harper/Collins, 1990.

Block, Ned, ed. *Readings in the Philosophy of Psychology*, 2 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980.

Breisach, Ernst. *Historiography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

Brown, Colin, ed. *History, Criticism, and Faith*. Downer's Grove: Intervarsity, 1976.

Collins, Raymond. *Introduction to the New Testament*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1983.

Custance, Arthur C. *The Mysterious Matter of Mind*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980.

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Hjelle, Larry A., and Ziegler, Daniel J. *Personality Theories*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981.

Lemke, Steve; Corley, Bruce, and Lovejoy, Grant, eds. *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Complete Guide to Interpreting Scripture*. Nashville: Broadman Holman, 1995.

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MacKay, Donald. *Brains, Machines, and Persons*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980.

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The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Interpretation. Nashville: Broadman, 1988.

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Wachterhauser, Brice R. *Hermeneutics and Modern Philosophy*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986.

Wood, Laurence W. "Recent Brain Research and the Mind-Body Dilemma." *The Best of Theology*, vol. 2, ed. J. I. Packer and Paul Fromer. Carol Stream: Christianity Today, 1988.

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Allen, Diogenes. *Philosophy for Understanding Theology*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1985.

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Postmodernism

Dockery, David, ed. *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1995.

Doty, William G., ed. *Picturing Cultural Values in Postmodern America*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1995.

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