

Apologetic Method PHIL6304
Defend the Faith Christian 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 apologetic strategy and method in 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. The core value focus for this year is *Spiritual Vitality*.

Competencies Addressed

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

Course Description

The course further prepares students to interact knowledgeably with historical and methodological issues related to the defense of the Christian worldview. Issues addressed include biblical apologetics, patristic apologetics, medieval apologetics, Reformation apologetics, modern and postmodern apologetics, various apologetic methods, and the thinkers who have developed and used them. The course focuses upon personal reading, research, and writing.

Objectives

By the end of the course, students should:

1. Be able to apply their knowledge and comprehension of the history and the methodology of Christian apologetics to academic and ministerial issues related to Christian apologetics.
2. Value the following:
 - a. Intellectual accountability in relation to issues concerning the history and the methodology of Christian apologetics.
 - b. Convincing presentations of Christian faith.
3. Be able to state their position on which apologetic method is to be preferred and why.

Required Texts

1. Ken Boa and Robert Bowman. *Faith Has Its Reasons: An Integrative Approach to Defending Christianity*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2001.
2. Steven B. Cowan, *Five Views on Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
3. Gregory Koukl, *Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.

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. Avery Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*. New York: Corpus, 1971.
2. John M. Frame, *Cornelius Van Til: An Analysis of His Thought*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1995.
3. Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.
4. Douglas Groothuis, *Truth Decay: Defending Christianity Against the Challenges of Postmodernism*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000.
5. Donald J. Johnson, *How to Talk to a Skeptic*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2013.
6. Gordon Lewis, *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims: Approaches to Christian Apologetics*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990.
7. Louis Markos, *Apologetics for the 21st Century*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.
8. Alister E. McGrath, *Intellectuals Don't Need God and Other Modern Myths: Building Bridges to Faith Through Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993.
9. Alister E. McGrath, *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012.
10. Richard Messer, *Does God's Existence Need Proof?* Oxford: Clarendon, 1993.
11. J. Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh, *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used to Be: Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995.
12. Basil Mitchell, *The Justification of Religious Belief*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.

13. John Warwick Montgomery, *Faith Founded on Fact: Essays in Evidential Apologetics*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1978.
14. Randy Newman, *Questioning Evangelism: Engaging People's Hearts the Way Jesus Did*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004.
15. Victor Reppert, *C. S. Lewis' Dangerous Idea: In Defense of the Argument from Reason*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003.
16. Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Francis A. Schaeffer Trilogy: The 3 Essential Books in 1 Volume/the God Who Is There/Escape from Reason/He Is There and He Is Not Silent*. Wheaton: Crossway, 1990.
17. Khaldoun A. Sweis and Chad V. Meister, *Christian Apologetics: An Anthology of Primary Sources*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012.
18. Cornelius Van Til and K. Scott Oliphint, *The Defense of the Faith*. Fourth Edition. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2008.
19. Clifford Williams, *Existential Reasons for Belief in God*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011.

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 should be 5-7 double-spaced pages in length, Times New Roman 12 font or comparable. **Book Reviews are due 6 weeks after the final day of the Defend the Faith Christian 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 Christian Apologetics Conference (March 6, 2015).**

4. Research Paper. Each student must write a research paper on a selected apologist, apologetic method, or a particular issue (e.g., the existence of God) from a particular perspective (e.g., classical, evidentialism, cumulative case, presuppositionalism, etc.). If a student writes on an apologetic issue, the student must address the issue from a particular apologetic method. The research paper should be neither less than 15 nor more than 22 double-spaced pages. Papers should follow Turabian form. **Research papers are due 12 weeks after the final day of the Defend the Faith Christian Apologetics Conference (April 3, 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.**

6. Personal Perspective. Each student is required to submit a personal perspective on apologetic method. In it he should express his personal preference or method concerning apologetic method and justify it in light of the other available options. The personal perspective should be **3-6 *single-spaced pages***. All references according to Turabian style guide. **Due 14 weeks after the last day of the Defend the Faith Christian Apologetics Conference (Friday, April 18, 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%
Personal Perspective	10%
Research Paper	30%
Greer-Heard Report	10%
<u>Session Summaries</u>	<u>20%</u>
Final Grade	100%

The required texts will be available for purchase through the Seminary LifeWay bookstore. All texts should be available via Amazon.com as well.

Bibliography

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