

Christian Apologetics PHIL5301-01
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Theological and Historical Division
Professor: Robert B. Stewart
Professor of Philosophy and Theology
Classroom: HSC 277
Office: Dodd 112, extension #3245
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Spring 2018
Tuesday & Thursday 8:00 p.m.-9:20 a.m.

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 Focus

The course will address the core value of *Doctrinal Integrity* and *Mission Focus* directly and *Spiritual Vitality* indirectly. Reflection on the philosophical issues is intimately related to reflection on the nature of God, Scripture, Christian faith, evangelism, and the doctrine of Creation. For the Christian, philosophy is ultimately a matter of loving God with the mind (Matthew 22:37-40). **The core value for the 2017-2018 academic year is Servant Leadership.**

Curriculum Competencies Addressed

The Seminary has seven key competencies in its academic program. They are: Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Discipleship Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual and Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. The key competency addressed in this course is Christian Theological Heritage

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, historical development, and contemporary issues related to apologetics.

Objectives

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 Christian theology and be able to recognize concepts that are inconsistent with orthodox Christianity.
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

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

Robert Stewart, ed., *Can Only One Religion Be True?: Paul Knitter and Harold Netland in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013.

Optional Texts (for Book Reviews)

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. Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*. New York: Dutton, 2008.
8. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.
9. C. S. Lewis, *Miracles*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.
10. Alister E. McGrath, *Dawkins' God: Genes, Memes, and the Meaning of Life*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004.
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 Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.
14. Robert B. Stewart, *The Reliability of the New Testament: Bart Ehrman and Daniel B. Wallace in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011.
15. Robert B. Stewart, *The Message of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and Ben Witherington III in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013.
16. J. Warner Wallace, *Cold-Case Christianity: A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2013.
17. Tawa J. Anderson, W. Michael Clark, and David K. Naugle, *An Introduction to Christian Worldview: Pursuing God's Perspective in a Pluralistic World*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2017.

Recommended Texts

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

Course Requirements and Class Policies

Absences may not exceed 6 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 7th 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. There will also be class discussion over material in the text on quiz days—but not as part of the quiz. **Under no circumstances will any quiz ever be given in advance or as a make-up!**

EMNR Conference Attendance or Book Review. Students must attend the Evangelical Ministries to New Religions conference April 27-28, 2018 on the NOBTS campus OR write a book review of one of the optional texts. Students who attend the EMNR conference will answer a brief questionnaire as to which sessions they attended and their thoughts on the conference.

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.

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 4,500 words not counting bibliography. Guidelines for research papers are given in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th edition. Taw Here is a rough guide to how research paper 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>

Grading:

The final grade will be determined accordingly:

Quiz Average	10%
EMNR Attendance or Book Review	15%
Research Paper	20%
First 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) 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.

(2) 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*. The reviews should follow Turabian form.

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

Reading Inventories listing all required and optional reading done for the course will be due at the final exam. As stated above exceptional additional reading may add to the final score for the course. Failure to read all assigned readings will result in a decrease in the final score for the course.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE			
CLASS SESSION	DATE	CLASS DISCUSSION TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT
PROLEGOMENA			
1	1/23	Introduction to the Course	
2	1/25	The Biblical Basis for Christian Apologetics	Groothuis, 23-44
3	1/30	Worldviews: What They Are and How They Work	Groothuis, 45-72
4	2/1	Faith and Reason	Groothuis, 155-70
5	2/6	Postmodernism and Truth	Groothuis, 117-54
6	2/8	A Little Lesson in Logic	
7	2/13	MARDI GRAS (NO CLASS)	
8	2/15	Abductive Reasoning	
9	2/20	Knowledge: The Basics	
THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF SCRIPTURE			
10	2/22	Has Jesus Been Misquoted?: Textual Reliability	
11	2/27	What About Those Other Gospels? Canonical Issues	
12	2/29	Understanding New Testament Critical Methods: Source, Form, and Redaction Criticism	
13	3/1	Did Jesus Really Exist?	
14	3/6	The Historical Jesus	Groothuis, 438-74
15	3/8	The Historical Basis of the Resurrection	Groothuis, 527-66
CHRISTIAN THEISM AND NATURALISM			
16	3/15	Understanding Atheism: A Colorless Worldview	
	3/19-23	SPRING BREAK	
17	3/27	What's Wrong with the New Atheism	
18	3/29	Arguments for God's Existence: Uses and Limitations; Teleological Arguments	Groothuis, 171-84; 240-65
19	4/3	Arguments for God's Existence: Cosmological Arguments	Groothuis, 207-39
20	4/5	Arguments for God's Existence: Ontological and Moral Arguments	Groothuis, 185-206; 330-63
21	4/10	Arguments for God's Existence: Pragmatic and Other Arguments	Groothuis, 418-37;
22	4/12	Apologetic Method	
23	4/17	The Problem of Evil	Groothuis, 614-46
24	4/19	Different Approaches to the Problem of Evil	
25	4/24	Can I Trust a God Who Would Command Genocide?	
CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE			
26	4/26	Miracles	
27	5/1	How Science Works & What It Means for Christians	Groothuis, 266-96
28	5/3	Darwinism, Intelligent Design, Creation Science, and Evolutionary Creation	Groothuis, 297-329
THE EXCLUSIVITY OF CHRIST			
29	5/8	Is Jesus Really the Only Savior?	Groothuis, 567-98
30	5/10	What About People Who Never Hear of Jesus?	
	5/15	Final Exam 9:00-11:00 a.m	

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.
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- . *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999.
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- 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.

- 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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- 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.