

Christian Apologetics PHIL5301-01
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Theological and Historical Division
Professor: Robert B. Stewart
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Spring 2020
Tuesday 6:00-8:50 p.m.

Seminary Mission Statement

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

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 2019-2020 academic year is Spiritual Vitality.

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:
 - ◆ 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. Steven B. Cowan and Terry L. Wilder, *In Defense of Scripture: A Comprehensive Apologetic for the Authority of Scripture*. Nashville: B & H Academic, 2013.
6. William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*. Third Edition. Wheaton: Crossway, 2008.
7. William Lane Craig and Chad Meister, *God Is Great, God Is Good: Why Believing in God Is Reasonable and Responsible*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009.
8. Andrew Davison, *Imaginative Apologetics: Theology, Philosophy and the Catholic Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.
9. Craig A. Evans, *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006.
10. John S. Feinberg, *Can You Believe It's True? Christian Apologetics in a Modern and Postmodern Era*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2013.
11. Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*. New York: Dutton, 2008.
12. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.
13. C. S. Lewis, *Miracles*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.
14. Alister E. McGrath, *Dawkins' God: Genes, Memes, and the Meaning of Life*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004.
15. Alister E. McGrath. *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012.
16. Brian K. Morley, *Mapping Apologetics: Comparing Contemporary Approaches*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2015.
17. K. Scott Oliphint, *Covenantal Apologetics: Principles and Practice in Defense of Our Faith*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2013.
18. Robert J. Spitzer, *New Proofs for the Existence of God: Contributions of Contemporary Physics and Philosophy*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
19. Robert B. Stewart, *The Future of Atheism: Alister McGrath and Daniel Dennett in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008.
20. Robert B. Stewart, *The Message of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and Ben Witherington III in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013.
21. Robert B. Stewart, *The Reliability of the New Testament: Bart Ehrman and Daniel B. Wallace in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011.
22. Robert B. Stewart, *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.
23. Benno van den Toren, *Christian Apologetics as Cross-Cultural Dialogue*. New York and London: T & T Clark, 2011.
24. J. Warner Wallace, *Cold-Case Christianity: A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2013.

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 3 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 4th absence will result in failure of the course.

Make-up Exams are not permitted, except in *extreme* situations, to ensure 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!**

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.

Book Reviews. 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 should follow Turabian form.

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.**

Research Paper. Students will write a research paper on a topic agreed upon by the professor and the student. The paper should be not less than 12 pages nor more than 15 pages of text, double-spaced with footnotes and bibliography. The font chosen should be no more than 12 and no less than 10 with margins of 1 inch. Guidelines for research papers are given in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th edition. Guidelines for research papers are given in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th edition.

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.

In place of a research paper students may attend the SW Regional Evangelical Philosophical Society (EPS) meeting (March 20-21, 2020 at Dallas Theological Seminary). (The EPS meeting is part of the SW Regional Evangelical Theological Society meeting. For more see https://www.etsjets.org/region/Southwest_Overview).

In place of a research paper students may attend the joint conference of the International Society of Christian Apologetics (ISCA) and Evangelical Missions to Non-Christian Religions (EMNR). The ISCA/EMNR conference will be New Hope Community Church, Palatine, IL, March 27-28, 2020. In addition to registering for and attending the conference, the students will need to send an email with a picture of themselves and a non-NOBTS conference speaker (it can be a selfie) to Robert Stewart at rstewart@nobts.edu with a sentence or two stating that the picture

demonstrates that they attended the conference. For more see <https://www.isca-apologetics.org/2020-conference>.

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%
Book Review	20%
Research Paper	20%
First exam	25%
<u>Final exam</u>	<u>25%</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** may also be considered for extra credit with the approval of the professor.

SW Regional Meeting of the Evangelical Philosophical Society. Students who submitted a research paper may attend the SW Regional Evangelical Philosophical Society meeting (March 20-21, 2020 at Dallas Theological Seminary) to receive a full letter grade increase on their final grade. (Proof of attendance must be given.) For more see https://www.etsjets.org/region/Southwest_Overview).

Students who submitted a research paper may attend the **joint conference of the International Society of Christian Apologetics (ISCA) and Evangelical Missions**

to Non-Christian Religions (EMNR). The ISCA/EMNR conference will be New Hope Community Church, Palatine, IL, March 27-28, 2020. In addition to registering for and attending the conference, the students will need to send an email with a picture of themselves and a non-NOBTS conference speaker (it can be a selfie) to Robert Stewart at rstewart@nobts.edu with a sentence or two stating that the picture demonstrates that they attended the conference. For more see <https://www.isca-apologetics.org/2020-conference>.

A Reading Inventory 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.

This schedule is simply a guide

Tentative Class Schedule			
CLASS SESSION	DATE	CLASS DISCUSSION TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT
1	1/21	Introduction to the Course; The Biblical Basis for Christian Apologetics	
2	1/28	Worldviews: What They Are and Why They Matter; Abductive Reasoning (Logic)	Groothuis 45-116
3	2/4	Logic; Faith and Reason in Apologetics; Truth and Knowledge: The Basics	Groothuis 117-67
4	2/11	The Textual Reliability of the New Testament; What About Those Other Gospels?	
5	2/18	Did Jesus Really Exist, The Importance of NT Criticism for Apologetics	
6	2/25	Mardi Gras (No Class)	
7	3/3	Atheism: A Colorless Worldview; What's Wrong with the New Atheism	
8	3/10	Arguments for God's Existence	Book Review Due Midterm Exam
9	3/17	SPRING BREAK (No Class)	
10	3/24	Arguments for God's Existence; What's the Best Apologetic Method	
11	3/31	The Problem of Evil	
12	4/7	Can I Trust a God Who Would Command Genocide?, Why Does God Seem So Hidden and Distant?	
13	4/14	Science and Christianity	
14	4/21	Miracles; The Resurrection of Jesus	Groothuis 527-63
15	4/28	Is Jesus Really the Only Savior?, What Happens to People Who Never Hear of Jesus?	Groothuis 567-98
16	5/5	Miscellaneous	Research Paper Due
			Final Exam

Suggested Bibliography

- Adams, Marilyn, and Adams, Robert, eds. *The Problem of Evil*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- 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.
- Geisler, Norman. *Philosophy of Religion*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974.
- . *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999.
- 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.
- 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.
- . *The Message of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and Ben Witherington III in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013.
- 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.