



Christian Apologetics PHIL5301-01
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Division of Theological and Historical Studies
Spring 2023; Tuesday-Thursday; 9:30-10:50 a.m.
[Location TBA]

Please include your name and the course (PHIL5301) in the subject of each email.

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Mission Statement

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

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.

Student Learning Outcomes

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 historic Christian theology and be able to recognize concepts that challenge Christian belief.
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.

Textbooks

Required

Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022. (CA).

Forrest, Benjamin K., Joshua D. Chatraw, and Alister E. McGrath, *The History of Apologetics: A Biographical and Methodological Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020. (HoA).

Optional Texts (for Book Reviews)

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.

Anderson, Tawa. *Why Believe: Christian Apologetics for a Skeptical Age*. Hobbs College Library. Nashville: B & H Academic, 2021.

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.

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.

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

Evans, Craig A. *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006.

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

Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.

———. *Miracles*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.

McGrath, Alister E. *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012.

Stewart, Robert B., ed. *Can Only One Religion be True?: Paul Knitter and Harold Netland in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.

———. *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.

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

Recommended Texts

Boa, Ken and Robert M. Bowman, Jr., *Faith Has Its Reasons: An Integrative Approach to Defending Christianity*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 2006.

Campbell-Jack, W. C. and Gavin McGrath, *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006.

Cowan, Steven B., ed. *Five Views on Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.

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

Gould, Paul. *Cultural Apologetics: Renewing the Christian Voice, Conscience, and Imagination in a Disenchanted World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2019).

Putman, Rhyne. *The Method of Christian Theology: A Basic Introduction* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2021). Chapter 13: Writing a Theological Research Paper. (Discussion of this chapter on 3/21)

Course Teaching Methodology

The course will involve the following methodologies:

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.
4. Students will be tested over the basics of Christian apologetics.

Course Requirements and Class Policies

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 **5 points per day late up to 2 weeks**. No paper will be accepted after 2 weeks without prior permission of the professor.

Grades will be assigned on the basis of the NOBTS grading scale (see p.5).

1) Class Participation. Participation will be measured by attentiveness and responsiveness in class, required reading, and quizzes. Students must read the required texts during the semester.

The reading will be demonstrated through class discussion. Quizzes will cover the readings assigned in the primary text and class lectures. The form of the quizzes will be objective. Quizzes may be administered on Canvas or in class. More quizzes will occur if the professor determines that the class has not been keeping up with the reading schedule.

2) Book Review. Students write a book review of an optional text. The optional text list is pre-approved books that may be reviewed. I will also consider other requests. Any text that is not pre-approved must be approved before review. **Due Feb. 28.**

Book reviews should include:

- (1) professional biographical data concerning the author (approximately 3-4 sentences);
- (2) a summary and identification of the major elements of content (no more than 2 pages);
- (3) a critical evaluation of the book that considers: an assessment of the author's aim or purpose; an evaluation of the degree of its fulfillment; agreement or disagreement; and strengths or weaknesses *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*, 9th edition.

Eddie Campbell's Book Review Guide is available at <https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/writing/turabiantutor-book.pdf>

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 double-spaced 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.**

Both exams will be taken on Canvas. They must be completed once started.

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 between 15 and 20 pages. Guidelines for research papers are given in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th edition. **Due Apr. 18.**

Here is a rough guide to how research papers 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.

The NOBTS manual of form and style is available at <https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf>.

My blog post that identifies the most common mistakes is available at <https://turabianhelper.blogspot.com/2021/04/on-writing-well.html>.

Evaluation of Grade

Grading Scale:

A = 100-93
B = 92-85
C = 84-77
D = 76-70
F = 69-0

Grade Percentages:

Participation = 15%
Exams = 50% (25% Each)
Research Paper = 20%
Book Review = 15%
TOTAL = 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 average. All extra credit will be determined by the teacher and awarded based on level of difficulty. Do NOT wait until the last week to attempt extra credit.

(1) **Special Events** sponsored by various NOBTS divisions, other schools, churches, etc. may also be considered for extra credit with the approval of the professor. A 1 page single-spaced record will be required.

(2) **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.

(3) **Book Reviews** may be done for extra credit. The extra review should follow the guidelines for the other book review.

Additional Policies and Resources

Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. Canvas.NOBTS.com Click on the “Help” button for technical questions/support requests regarding the NOBTS Canvas System. You can also email questions to Canvas@nobts.edu.
3. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer.

A copy of the approved NOBTS Style Guide can be found in the course Canvas shell, or can be located online at the Writing Center’s page on the seminary website at:

<https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf>

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

The policy is located at G.1 and G.2 of the handbook on pages 11–12.

<https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/studentservices/NOBTSHandbook.pdf>

Attendance Policy

Traditional Classes: Students are expected to attend and participate in the class sessions. Any student missing more than nine hours may receive an automatic grade of “F” for the course. Three tardies will count as one absence.

Special Needs

If you need accommodations for a disability, please set up a meeting with the professor for consideration of any modifications you may need.

Emergency Plan

In the event the NOBTS schedule is impacted due to a natural event, go to the seminary’s website for pertinent information. Class will continue as scheduled through the Canvas shell. Please note announcements and assignments on the course’s Canvas site.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE			
SESSION	DATE	CLASS DISCUSSION TOPIC	READING/ DUE
PROLEGOMENA			
1 (Tu)	1/17	Introduction to the Course	Syllabus
2 (Th)	1/19	The Most Important Thing in Christian Apologetics	CA, 23–44
3 (Tu)	1/24	Worldviews: What They Are and How They Work	CA, 45–72
4 (Th)	1/26	Faith and Reason	CA, 155–70
5 (Tu)	1/31	Postmodernism and Truth	CA, 117–54
6 (Th)	2/2	A Little Lesson in Logic	HoA, 31–66
7 (Tu)	2/7	Abductive Reasoning	HoA, 67–101
8 (Th)	2/9	Knowledge: The Basics	HoA, 102–136
THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF SCRIPTURE			
9 (Tu)	2/14	Has Jesus Been Misquoted?: NT Textual Reliability	HoA, 137–78
10 (Th)	2/16	What About Those Other Gospels? Canonical Issues	HoA, 210–250
	2/21	MARDI GRAS OFF	
11 (Tu)	2/23	Understanding New Testament Critical Methods: Source, Form, and Redaction Criticism	HoA, 305–23; 344–54 BOOK REVIEW
12 (Th)	2/28	Did Jesus Really Exist?	HoA, 410–44
13 (Tu)	3/2	Why You Should Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus	
MIDTERM EXAM ONLINE			
CHRISTIAN THEISM AND NATURALISM			
14 (Th)	3/7	Understanding Atheism: A Colorless Worldview	CA, 438–74
	3/9	SPRING BREAK	
15 (Tu)	3/14,3/16	What's Wrong with the New Atheism	CA, 527–66 Suggested: Putman
16 (Th)	3/21	Arguments for God's Existence: Uses and Limitations; Teleological Arguments	HoA, 479–93; 509–19
17 (Tu)	3/23	Arguments for God's Existence: Cosmological Arguments	HoA, 604–17; 636–60
18 (Th)	3/28	Arguments for God's Existence: Ontological and Moral Arguments, Pascal's Wager	CA, 171–84; 240–65
19 (Tu)	3/30	Apologetic Method	CA, 207–39
20 (Th)	4/4	The Problem of Evil	CA, 185–206; 330–63
21 (Tu)	4/6	The Problem of Evil	CA, 418–37
22 (Th)	4/11	Different Approaches to the Problem of Evil	CA, 614–46
23 (Tu)	4/13	Can I Trust a God Who Would Command Genocide?	RESEARCH PAPER
CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE			
24 (Th)	4/18	Can I Believe in Both Science and the Bible?	HoA, 696–730
25 (Tu)	4/20	How Science Works & What It Means for Christians	HoA, 750–82
THE EXCLUSIVITY OF CHRIST			
26 (Th)	4/25	Is Jesus Really the Only Savior?	CA, 266–96
CHRISTIANITY AND GENDER ISSUES			
27 (Tu)	4/27	Christianity and LGBTQ and Issues	
28 (Th)	5/2	Catchup on Lectures; General Discussion; and Review for Final	
Th	5/4	FINAL EXAM ONLINE	
			9-11a

RESEARCH PAPER RUBRIC	
	The papers are graded on a scale of coherence with the below listed items where an A paper displays an exceptional level, a B paper displays a good level, a C paper displays an adequate level, a D paper displays a low/inadequate level, and an F paper has no display.
FORM (10%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Clear of grammatical and punctual errors -Paper has a logical flow (organized and coherent ideas) -The most recent edition of Turabian is followed -Correct font and spacing (Times New Roman, 12pt, double spacing, 1” margins—I will account for any attempted size and margin change if the corrected size reveals length deficiency)
CONTENT (65%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Accurate grasp of ideas both in favor of and against one’s position -The knowledge of the writer is displayed clearly (I can only know your knowledge by your display of it) -The purpose/aim/central argument of the paper is clearly established -The paper seeks to fulfill the stated purpose/aim/central argument -The paper confirms or denies the stated purpose/aim/central argument -The paper is biblically sound -Application is made to real-world concerns and its place in a whole worldview -The paper is free of “fluff” (non-substantial info) and unnecessary repeated content
STYLE (10%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sentences are communicated with clarity -Sentences are free of first-person plural and second-person -The body of the content is free of first-person singular -The paper is written in a formal tone -The length has met the requirement (failure to do so will likely negatively affect the quality of CONTENT)
REFERENCE (15%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Interacted with sources that agreed and disagreed with the author’s ideas -Successfully fulfilled the required number of sources -The references cited are scholarly and relevant to the field of discussion -The references are properly used and accurately represent the original author’s intention (soundness of reference) -The footnotes and bibliography are in Turabian formatting
OTHER FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Punctuality of submission (5pt deduction per day) -Failure to properly document the thoughts and quotations not original to you (Potentially automatic 0%)

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.
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- . *Philosophy of Religion*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974.
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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.
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- 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.
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- Wallace, J. Warner. *Cold-Case Christianity: A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2013.