

**Supervised Reading Colloquium:  
Contemporary Readings in Christian Apologetics**

**APSR9304**

**Spring 2020**

**Professor: Dr. Robert B. Stewart**

**Dodd 112, extension #3245**

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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 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). For the 2019-2020 academic year NOBTS is emphasizing the core value of Spiritual Vitality.

**Curriculum Competencies Addressed**

Christian Theological Heritage

**Course Description**

An examination of fundamental philosophical writings related to Christian theism with particular emphasis given to historical development. The bulk of the course will be given to reading the most significant writings from the Western philosophical tradition. The course constitutes a call to intellectual reflection and accountability in relation to issues of ultimate concern to Christian faith.

**Course Requirements**

1. Attend each session. See attached schedule for dates of meeting.

2. Prepare for colloquium discussions by completing all the assigned reading carefully. You may need to read the material more than once in order to be ready for discussion. Focus on interpreting the author's thought. Write down observations and questions. (The faculty convener reserves the right to review these notes.) Review the assigned reading and your notes before the colloquium and be prepared to contribute to the discussion.
3. Students should seek to use these materials as a lens through which to consider the broader discussion and questions that are raised on these issues. As a result, preparation for the colloquium extends beyond the reading of the assigned materials to include reflection on topics and issues introduced by these readings.
4. Lead colloquium sessions:
  - One week prior to assigned session, students leading a session will distribute to the other seminar members a one to two page outline of interpretive questions that warrant further discussion as part of the overall effort to understand the assigned reading and the issues raised by the reading assignments.
  - At the time of the assigned session, students leading a session will distribute a 4-5 page, single-spaced reading report to the colloquium. The summary must include some critique of the material covered and some discussion questions.
  - Open the colloquium for discussion in accordance with the purpose of the session (to understand the assigned readings and the nature of the issues they raise). The discussion is not simply a time for discussing the views of the student leader. All colloquium members need to speak and address the issues. There may be other issues not raised by the presenter that need to be discussed. It is the responsibility of the entire colloquium to discuss the issues. Discussions need to move so that they do not bog down and waste time. Students should direct the discussion to cover as much of the scope of issues presented by the assigned readings as possible.

5. Στυδέντσ ωιλ βε γραδέδ ον υνδερστανδίνγ τηε ισσουεσ αδδρεσσέδ ιν τηε ρεαδίνγσ, ιδεντιφιχατιον οφ σιγνιφιχάντ ισσουεσ ρελατέδ το τηε ρεαδίνγσ, χλαριτψ ιν φοχυσίνγ θυεσιονσ ορ ιτεμισ φορ δισχυσσιον, ανδ σκίλλ ιν ενγαίνγ τηε χολλοθιουμ ιν διαλογυε
6. Ατ τηε ενδ οφ τηε σμεστερ εαχη στυδέντ ωιλ σβμιτ α ωριττεν στατεμεντ ασ το ηοω μυχη οφ τηε ασσιγνέδ ρεαδίνγ ηε ορ σιηε αχτυαλλψ διδ. Πλευασε βε ηονεστ.

## Schedule

### **FEBRUARY 10, 1:30 p.m.—FIRST MEETING—FAITH AND REASON: POSTMODERNITY AND TRUTH**

#### **First Report:**

Stewart Kelly, *Truth Considered and Applied: Examining Postmodernism, History, and Christian Faith*. B & H Studies in Christian Apologetics. Nashville: B & H Academic, 2011.

#### **Second Report:**

Paul Helm, *Faith with Reason*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

### **MARCH 9, 1:30 p.m.—SECOND MEETING—SCIENCE AND RELIGION**

#### **First Report:**

Alister McGrath, *Science and Religion: A New Introduction*. 2nd ed. Oxford and New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

#### **Second Report:**

Daniel C. Dennett and Alvin Plantinga, *Science and Religion: Are They Compatible? Point-Counterpoint*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

### **APRIL 13, 1:30 p.m.—THIRD MEETING—MIRACLES AND BIBLICAL RELIABILITY**

#### **First Report:**

Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament: Countering the Challenges to Evangelical Christian Beliefs*. B & H Studies in Christian Apologetics. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016.

#### **Second Report:**

Craig Keener, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.

### **MAY 11, 1:30 p.m.—FOURTH MEETING—ATHEISM VERSUS THEISM**

**First Report:**

Alvin Plantinga and Michael Tooley, *Knowledge of God*. Great Debates in Philosophy. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008.

**Second Report:**

J. J. C. Smart and J. J. Haldane, *Atheism and Theism*, Second Edition. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003.