



PHIL 5301-01 – Christian Apologetics
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Division of Theology & History
Spring 2024: January 16 – May 8
Thursday 6:00-8:50 P.M.

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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 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.

Course Teaching Methodology

The course will involve the following methodologies:

1. Assigned required reading
2. In-class lectures
3. Classroom dialogue and discussion
4. Online quizzes

Textbooks

(TA) Anderson, Tawa J. *Why Believe: Christian Apologetics for a Skeptical Age*. B&H Academic, 2021. ISBN: 978-1-0877-2423-2

(JD) Dickson, John. *Bullies and Saints: An Honest Look at the Good and Evil of Christian History*. Zondervan Reflective, 2021. ISBN: 978-0-310-11836-7

(DG) Groothuis, Douglas. *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. 2nd edition. IVP Academic, 2022. ISBN: 978-1-5140-0275-9

(GK) Koukl, Gregory. *Street Smarts: Using Questions to Answer Christianity's Toughest Challenges*. Zondervan, 2023. ISBN: 978-0-3101-3913-3

(ML) Lanier, W. Mark. *Religions on Trial: A Lawyer Examines Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and More*. IVP, 2023. ISBN: 978-1-5140-0343-5

(BP) Pitre, Brant. *The Case for Jesus: The Biblical and Historical Evidence for Christ*. Image, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-7704-3548-6

Course Requirements

All students are required to complete all assigned reading and attend all class sessions. Graded requirements for the course are as follows:

1. Quizzes (25%)

Thoughtful and comprehensive reading is an essential aspect of graduate education, particularly in philosophy and theology. To encourage consistent **pre-class** reading, there will be weekly readings quizzes covering the assigned reading in the Anderson and Groothuis texts. Quizzes will be administered online via Canvas, and **must** be taken prior to the start of class (i.e., 5:59 P.M. on Thursday evening). **Quizzes are closed-book and no-notes:** you are not permitted to utilize any resources other than your own mind. If I come to suspect that anyone is cheating on the quizzes (using external resources), we will move to in-person quizzes at the start of class instead. Quizzes will consist of multiple-choice and true-false questions, with occasional fill-in-the-blank or matching questions. There will be 20 questions on each quiz, and 15 minutes to complete the quiz. Each quiz is worth 2.5%, for a total of **25%** of your final grade.

2. Theistic Argument Essay (25%)

Theistic arguments set forth reasons to believe that God (either in general or with more specifically-Christian attributes) exists. After reading the relevant assigned material (Groothuis chapters 8-19; Anderson chapters 4-6) and *conducting some additional external research*, students will write a 1750-2250 word defense of a theistic argument of their choice. Your essay must (a) introduce the significance and place of the theistic argument; (b) clearly articulate the logical structure of the argument; (c) provide supporting reasons and evidence for each step of the argument; and (d) identify and respond to objections to each step of the argument and the argument as a whole. Please see the Grading Rubric on Canvas for concrete expectations and grading guidelines. Your theistic argument essay is **due via Canvas by 11:59 P.M. on Saturday, February 24**, and is worth **25% of your final grade**.

3. Four Book Reviews (50%)

Students will write an analytical review for each of Koukl, *Street Smarts*; Pitre, *The Case for Jesus*; Lanier, *Religions on Trial*; and Dickson, *Bullies and Saints*. Each book review will be 1500-2000 words in length, formatted in Turabian style. Your book review should be approximately half summary, half analysis. That is, spend the first half of your book review articulating the purpose, structure, and primary contours of the book; spend the second half evaluating the book, adjudicating how successful the author has been at accomplishing his goals and persuading his readers. Each book review is worth **12.5% of your final grade, for a total of 50%**. A grading rubric for Book Reviews is posted on the Canvas book review assignment page. Due dates for the books reviews is as follows:

- a) Koukl, *Street Smarts* Wednesday, January 31 @ 11:59 P.M.
- b) Pitre, *The Case for Jesus* Wednesday, March 20 @ 11:59 P.M.
- c) Lanier, *Religions on Trial* Wednesday, April 10 @ 11:59 P.M.
- d) Dickson, *Bullies & Saints* Thursday, May 2 @ 11:59 P.M.

Evaluation of Grade

The student's grade will be computed as follows:

Quizzes	10 @ 2.5%/ea	25%
Theistic Argument Essay	February 24	25%
Koukl Book Review	January 31	12.5%
Pitre Book Review	March 20	12.5%
Lanier Book Review	April 10	12.5%
Dickson Book Review	May 2	12.5%

NOTE: All late work will receive an automatic and non-negotiable 10% late penalty. Late submissions will not receive substantive feedback. All late assignments must be turned in by Thursday, May 2 @ 11:59 P.M.

GRADING SCALE

- A: 93 - 100
- B: 85 - 92
- C: 77 - 84
- D: 70 - 76
- F: below 70

COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Attendance Policy

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. *Tardies will include returning late from short breaks in the middle of our three-hour block class.*

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 or My.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. Canvas@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Canvas Learning Management System (Faculty/Students/Staff) Canvas.NOBTS.edu.
3. Bluejeanshelpdesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Bluejeans & NOBTS Bluejeans classrooms (On and Off-Campus)
4. TelephoneHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS On-Campus Phone system.
5. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests in the Flex classrooms and for general technical questions/support requests. If you are not sure who to contact, use this email address!
6. [504.816.8180](tel:504.816.8180) - Call for any technical questions/support requests. (Currently available Mon-Thurs 7:00am-9:00pm & Fri 7:00-7:00pm Central Time)
7. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Policy for Late Submissions

All late work (quizzes as well as written assignments) will receive an automatic penalty of 10% *regardless of the reason for which the work was submitted late*. Late work must be turned in no later than Thursday, May 2 @ 11:59 P.M., and late written assignments will receive less substantive feedback.

Classroom and Online Decorum

Each student is expected to demonstrate appropriate Christian behavior. The student is expected to interact with other students in a fashion that will promote learning and respect for the opinions of the others in the course. A spirit of Christian charity is expected at all times.

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

A high standard of personal integrity is expected of all NOBTS students. Copying another person’s work, submitting downloaded material without proper references, submitting material without properly citing the source, submitting the same material for credit in more than one course, and committing other such forms of dishonesty are strictly forbidden. *Although anything cited in three*

sources is considered public domain, we require that all sources be cited. Any infraction may result in failing the assignment and the course. Any infraction will be reported to the Dean of Graduate Studies for further action. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for further definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Course Schedule

NOTE: Given our 3-hour block format, we will have either one 20-minute break or two 10-minute breaks during our assigned class time. Please ensure that you return from breaks on-time and ready to start promptly.

Date	Topic	Assigned Reading (Book + Pages)
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SECTION 1: APOLOGETIC PRELIMINARIES

January 18	Course Overview & Class Introductions Who Cares about Christian Apologetics?	DG Intro (1-6); TA Intro + 1 (1-26)
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January 25	The Mandate and Basis of Apologetics Apologetic Methodology “Apologetic Methodology” (supplementary reading in Canvas – Files) What We Are and Are Not Defending	DG 1 (9-35); TA 2 (27-44) DG 2 (36-66); *Anderson reading DG 3-4 (67-119)
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Quiz #1 Due: Thursday, January 25 @ 5:59 P.M.

February 1	Truth & Apologetics Prudence & Apologetics Koukl, <i>Street Smarts</i> Book Discussion	DG 5-6 (120-47); TA 3 (45-64) DG 7 (148-60) Koukl, <i>Street Smarts</i> (whole book)
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Koukl Book Review Due: Wednesday, January 31 @ 11:59 P.M.

Quiz #2 Due: Thursday, February 1 @ 5:59 P.M.

SECTION 2: POSITIVE APOLOGETICS

Part A: Defending the Existence and Nature of God

February 8	Introducing Theistic Arguments Cosmological Arguments Design Arguments	DG 8-9 (161-81) DG 11 (201-29); TA 4 (65-104) DG 12 (230-53), 14-15 (267-327)
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Quiz #3 Due: Thursday, February 8 @ 5:59 P.M.

February 15	Ontological Arguments Moral Arguments Arguments from Beauty	DG 10 (182-200); TA 5a (105-19) DG 16 (328-63); TA 5b (119-36) DG 13 (254-66)
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Quiz #4 Due: Thursday, February 15 @ 5:59 P.M.

February 22	Arguments from Religious Experience Arguments from Human Nature Pascal’s Anthropological Argument	DG 17 (364-87), 20 (433-47) DG 18 (388-414); TA 6 (137-58) DG 19 (415-32)
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Quiz #5 Due: Thursday, February 22 @ 5:59 P.M.

Theistic Argument Essay Due: Saturday, February 24 @ 11:59 P.M.

Selected Bibliography

- Baggett, David, and Jerry L. Walls. *Good God: The Theistic Foundations of Morality*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Bauckham, Richard. *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.
- Beckwith, Frank, William Lane Craig, and J. P. Moreland, eds. *To Everyone An Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004.
- Beckwith, Francis, and Gregory Koukl. *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Midair*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.
- Behe, Michael J. *The Edge of Evolution: The Search for the Limits of Darwinism*. Free Press, 2007.
- Blomberg, Craig. *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*. 2nd ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2007.
- Boa, Kenneth and Robert Bowman. *Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to Defending the Christian Faith*. 2nd ed. Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2005 (2001).
- Boa, Kenneth, and Robert Bowman. *20 Compelling Evidences that God Exists: Discover Why Believing in God Makes So Much Sense*. 2002.
- Boot, Joe. *Why I Still Believe: Hint, It's the Only Way the World Makes Sense*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006.
- Boyd, Gregory A., and Edward K. Boyd. *Letters from a Skeptic: A Son Wrestles with His Father's Questions about Christianity*. Colorado Springs: Life Journey, 2003.
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- Brown, Colin. *Miracles and the Critical Mind*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984.
- Bruce, F. F. *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* 5th rev. ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1971.
- Bush, L. Russ, III. *A Handbook for Christian Philosophy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991.
- Chamberlain, Paul. *Why People Don't Believe: Confronting Seven Challenges to Christian Faith*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.
- Chatraw, Joshua D. *Telling a Better Story: How to Talk About God in a Skeptical Age*. Zondervan, 2020.
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- Craig, William Lane, and Paul Copan, eds. *Contending with Christianity's Critics: Answering New Atheists and Other Objectors*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009.

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- Dickerson, Matthew. *The Mind and the Machine: What It Means to Be Human and Why It Matters.* Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2011.
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- Eddy, Paul Rhodes, and Gregory A. Boyd. *The Jesus Legend: A Case for the Historical Reliability of the Synoptic Jesus Tradition.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.
- Evans, Craig A. *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels.* Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008.
 _____ . *Jesus and His World: The Archaeological Evidence.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2012.
- Evans, C Stephen. *Faith Beyond Reason: A Kierkegaardian Account.* Reason and Religion Series. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998.
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- Fisk, Bruce N. *A Hitchhiker's Guide to Jesus: Reading the Gospels on the Ground.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.
- Garcia, Robert K., and Nathan L. King, eds. *Is Goodness without God Good Enough? A Debate on Faith, Secularism, and Ethics.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009.
- Geisler, Norman L., and Chad V. Meister, eds. *Reasons for Faith: Making a Case for the Christian Faith.* Wheaton: Crossway, 2007.
- Geisler, Norman L., and Frank Turek. *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist.* Wheaton: Crossway, 2004.
- Geisler, Norman L., and Paul K. Hoffman, eds. *Why I Am a Christian: Leading Thinkers Explain Why They Believe.* Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006.
- Geivett, R. Douglas, and Gary R. Habermas, eds. *In Defense of Miracles: A Comprehensive Case for God's Action in History.* Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997.
- Habermas, Gary R. *Why is God Ignoring Me? What to Do When It Feels Like He's Giving You the Silent Treatment.* Tyndale, 2010.
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Press, 1996.

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Habermas, Gary R., and Michael R. Licona. *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004.

Habermas, Gary R., and J. P. Moreland. *Beyond Death: Exploring the Evidence for Immortality*. Wipf & Stock, 2004.

Holmes, Arthur F. *Contours of a World View*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983.

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Johnson, Phillip. *Darwin On Trial*. 2nd ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1993.

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Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*.

_____. *Miracles*.

_____. *The Weight of Glory*.

_____. *The Problem of Pain*.

_____. *God in the Dock*.

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