ST530 – Apologetics
Reformed Theological Seminary, Houston
Spring 2011

I. Details
A. Dates: February 4–5; March 4–5; April 8–9
B. Times: Fri 7:00–9:00 PM; Sat 8:00–4:00
C. Location: Christ Evangelical Presbyterian Church, 8300 Katy Freeway, Houston
D. Instructor: Dr. James Anderson
E. Contact: janderson@rts.edu

II. Goals
A. To survey the biblical foundations for apologetics, including the basics of a biblical epistemology (theory of knowledge and rationality).
B. To familiarize the student with the major schools of apologetic methodology: their basic rationales, their representative thinkers, and their distinctive approaches to prominent issues in apologetics.
C. To present a defense of Reformed presuppositional (worldview) apologetics: its biblical and theological warrant, its philosophical cogency, and its practical effectiveness.
D. To familiarize the student with prominent issues in apologetics and how they can be addressed from a Reformed presuppositional perspective.
E. To strengthen the student’s own faith, and to equip them to strengthen the faith of other Christians, through an appreciation of Christian apologetics.

III. Course Overview
A. Biblical Foundations for Apologetics
B. Survey of Contemporary Approaches to Apologetics
C. Reformed Presuppositional Apologetics: Principles and Practice
D. Issues in Apologetics (1): The Existence of the Biblical God
E. Issues in Apologetics (2): The Divine Inspiration of the Bible
F. Issues in Apologetics (3): The Resurrection of Jesus Christ
G. Issues in Apologetics (4): The Problem of Evil and Suffering
H. Issues in Apologetics (5): Science and Scripture

IV. Course Requirements
A. Class attendance and thoughtful participation.
   1. As per seminary policy, you are required to attend all the lectures. If you know that you will be unable to attend class on a particular date, please inform me in advance, otherwise you may be penalized for your absence.
   2. There will be opportunity for class participation and questions during the lectures.
   3. A proportion of your final grade (see below) will depend on your attendance record and your participation in the classes (thoughtful interaction with the professor and other students).
B. Reading assignments. A proportion of your final exam mark (and thus your final grade) will depend on your acknowledgment that you have completed the required reading (see below).

C. Writing assignment.
1. You should write a paper (3000–4000 words, excluding bibliography) taking the form of a dialogue with either a non-Christian or a Christian who is struggling with the intellectual aspects of their faith.
2. You have two options for the dialogue paper; you should choose one or the other.
   i. The first option is to write an entirely fictional dialogue between a Christian apologist and a non-Christian or a Christian with doubts or intellectual anxieties. If you choose this option, you should aim to represent both sides of the dialogue in a realistic, fair, and challenging way (i.e., avoid “straw men”).
   ii. The second option is to engage in a real written exchange with a non-Christian or a Christian with doubts or intellectual anxieties, e.g., via email or a web-based discussion forum. You should edit the dialogue as needed to maintain clarity and conciseness (i.e., format it to make clear the flow of discussion, correct obvious errors of spelling or grammar, excise irrelevant or tangential material). If the final word count of the dialogue is less than 3000 words, you should supplement it with a critical commentary on the exchange (where you would aim to take any subsequent discussion, how you might have argued differently in retrospect, etc.).
3. The paper should illustrate that you have a good understanding of the goals, principles, and methods of apologetics discussed in the lectures and readings.
4. Your paper will be graded according to the following criteria, in no particular order: realism, responsible use of Scripture, extent of research, creativity, clarity, structure and coherence, cogency of argument, evidence of critical thinking, and good writing style (inc. grammar, spelling, and punctuation).
5. The paper should include a standard bibliography citing sources used in the writing of the assignment and sources that document or further develop the points raised in the dialogue.
6. The paper should be word-processed, not hand-written.
   i. Use a 12-point font and double line-spacing for the main text.
   ii. Use section headings where applicable to improve readability.
   iii. Use footnotes (10-point font) rather than endnotes.
   iv. Use a recognized scholarly style for citations (e.g., Chicago, Turabian, SBL).
7. The paper should be submitted with a title page containing all of the following: the name and year of the course; your name; the professor’s name; the title of the paper; and the exact word count for the main text of the paper (obtained from your word processor’s word-count feature).
8. Your paper should be mailed to the following address, with a postal date stamp no later than May 6: Dr. James Anderson, Reformed Theological Seminary, 2101 Carmel Road, Charlotte, NC 28226. Late submissions will be penalized.

D. Final exam.
1. The final exam should be completed no later than May 6. You should provide Angela Boyd (aboyd@rts.edu) with the contact details of a suitable proctor as early as possible.
2. The format of the exam will be a series of short-answer questions plus two longer essay questions. You will have 2 hours to complete it.

V. Grading
   A. Attendance and class participation — 10%
   B. Final exam — 40%
   C. Dialogue paper — 50%

VI. Required Reading

Note: You should obtain copies of all of the above. You should try to read A before class begins. You should certainly have read A-G (completely, including appendices) in preparation for the paper and final exam. You do not need to read H from cover to cover, but you should have it available as a reference during class.

VII. Recommended Supplementary Reading
   B. James N. Anderson, “The Lord of Non-Contradiction: An Argument for God from Logic” (2010). [A copy of this will be made available on the Self-Service website.]
recommended. The first edition is available for free online: [http://bible.org/series/faith-has-its-reasons]


H. Paul Copan and William Lane Craig, eds., *Contending with Christianity’s Critics: Answering New Atheists & Other Objectors* (B&H, 2009). [Eighteen short chapters penned by leading evangelical scholars responding to the claims of the New Atheists and other contemporary critics.]

I. William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland, eds., *Naturalism: A Critical Analysis* (Routledge, 2000). [A collection of essays offering a sophisticated and comprehensive critique of metaphysical naturalism. A good number of the arguments could be fairly described as presuppositional in thrust.]

J. William Lane Craig and Chad Meister, eds., *God is Great, God is Good: Why Believing in God is Reasonable and Responsible* (InterVarsity Press, 2009). [Another collection of essays responding to the New Atheists. Not all contributors write from an evangelical perspective. Includes a interview with Antony Flew following his ‘conversion’ from atheism to theism (or something close to theism).]


L. R. Douglas Geivett and Gary R. Habermas, *In Defense of Miracles: A Comprehensive Case for God’s Action in History* (InterVarsity Press, 1997). [A collection of essays that together offer a comprehensive case (part presuppositional, part evidential) that miracles are possible in principle, that miracle claims can be rationally believed, and that the major miracle claims of the Bible are true.]


N. Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (Dutton, 2008). [An apologia for the Christian faith aimed at 21st-century Western unbelievers. Keller’s approach is eclectic, but has presuppositionalist themes; he cites Van Til and Frame as positive influences. A good example of culturally-aware apologetics.]


Q. C. S. Lewis, *Miracles* (Fount Paperbacks, 1974). [Lewis’s classic defense of miracles (and supernaturalism more broadly); includes an insightful refutation of metaphysical naturalism.]


**Note:** You are not required to read any of the above, but you may find them useful to consolidate the course material and for further study as your interests dictate. For many of these, the table of contents can be viewed on Amazon.com or Google Books.