ST628 – Applied Apologetics
Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte
Spring Session, 2009

I. Details
A. Times: Thursdays, 1:00-3:00 PM
B. Instructor: Dr James Anderson
C. Contact: janderson@rts.edu

II. Purpose
A. To develop the student’s understanding of the Reformed presuppositional method of apologetics through its application to specific instances of non-Christian thought.
B. To familiarize the student with prominent non-Christian worldviews (both secular and religious) and their philosophical shortcomings.
C. To introduce the student to various ‘tools’ of apologetics.
D. To sharpen the student’s critical thinking skills in the practice of apologetics.
E. To strengthen the student’s own faith, and to equip them to strengthen the faith of other Christians, through an appreciation of the rational superiority of the Christian worldview.

III. Course Overview
A. Review of Apologetic Method
B. Tools and Techniques in Applied Apologetics
C. Secular Worldviews: Naturalism, Postmodernism
D. Religious Worldviews: Pantheism (e.g. New Age), Panentheism (e.g. Process Theism), Polytheism (e.g. Mormonism), Dualism, Deism, Unitarian Theism (e.g. Islam, Judaism), Pluralism
E. Discussion Scenarios / Case Studies

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.
   2. There will be opportunity for class participation (particularly toward the end of the course) and questions during the lectures.
   3. A proportion of your final grade will depend on your attendance record and your participation in the classes (thoughtful interaction with the professor and other students).
B. Reading assignments. See below for the reading requirements.
C. Review paper.
   1. The paper is due on May 15th. It should be submitted to the secretary at the main front desk on or prior to this date. Late submissions will be penalized.
2. You should write a critical review paper (between 3500 and 4000 words, excluding footnotes) of a book which defends or promotes a non-Christian worldview (e.g. naturalism, deism, pantheism). (See below for some book suggestions.)

3. The paper should include: (i) an explanation of how you identified the author’s worldview from the text (you may make use of other writings from the same author in support); (ii) a critique of the author’s worldview, using the presuppositional approach illustrated in class; (iii) a comparison of the author’s worldview with the Christian worldview, explaining why the latter does not succumb to the criticisms you have made of the former. You should also aim to identify and explain any logical fallacies or other errors of reasoning committed by the author.

4. Your paper will be graded according to the following criteria, in no particular order: responsible use of sources, responsible use of Scripture, creativity, clarity, structure and coherence, evidence of critical thinking, and good writing style (inc. grammar, spelling, and punctuation).

5. The paper should be word-processed (not hand-written), using a 12-point font and double line-spacing for the main text. Use footnotes (10-point font) rather than endnotes. Do not include a bibliography (any references should be provided within the footnotes). The formatting of footnotes and bibliographic references should resemble that found in the standard journals (e.g. *JBL*, *JTS*, *JETS*, *NTS*).

D. **Final exam.**

1. The final exam will be taken in exam week; details will be given nearer the time.

2. **Important:** Please read the exam questions very carefully before attempting to answer them! You will receive no marks for an answer that does not address the question as stated.

V. **Grading**

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

VI. **Required Reading**

E. John M. Frame, “How to Write a Theological Paper”, Appendix F in *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (P&R, 1987). [A copy of this will be provided.]

**Note:** You should obtain copies of all of the above. You should have read A by the end of the second week of class (13th February) and B-E in preparation for the paper and final exam. Each book should be read in full, including appendices. You do not need to read F from cover to cover, but you should have it available as a reference during class.
VII. Recommended Supplementary Reading

   [A practical introduction to presuppositional apologetics.]
   [The definitive exposition of Van Til’s presuppositionalism.]
   [A reliable introduction to Muslim beliefs and practices.]
   [As you might expect from the title, a primer on postmodernism.]
   [A readable critique of typical postmodernist claims.]
   [An up-to-date handbook of evidences for the historicity of the Resurrection.]
   [A collection of essays on various topics relevant to applied Christian apologetics.]
   [A volume of essays critiquing process theology from an evangelical perspective.]
   [A defense of Lewis’s ‘argument from reason’ against metaphysical naturalism.]
   [A defense of classical theism; includes a critique of Hartshorne’s process theology.]
   [A relatively accessible introduction to Van Til’s apologetic method.]

VIII. Suggestions for Books to Review

A. Marcus Borg, *The God We Never Knew*
B. Deepak Chopra, *How to Know God or The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*
C. John B. Cobb, Jr. & David Ray Griffin, *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition*
D. Don Cupitt, *Taking Leave of God or The Sea of Faith*
E. Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker or The God Delusion*
F. Samuel Harris, *The End of Faith or Letter to a Christian Nation*
G. Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*
H. Christopher Hitchens, *God is Not Great*
I. Richard Holloway, *Godless Morality or Doubts and Loves*
J. Harold Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*
K. Robert L. Millet, *A Different Jesus?*
L. Feisal Abdul Rauf, *What’s Right with Islam*
N. Peter Rollins, *How (Not) to Speak of God*
O. Bertrand Russell, *Why I am Not a Christian*
P. Eckhart Tolle, *The Power of Now*

**Note:** The above are merely suggestions. You are free to choose any book you think will allow you to fulfill the paper requirements, but be sure that your chosen book does allow you to meet those requirements. I recommend that you spend time doing some research (e.g. Google searches, Amazon reviews) before settling on a final choice.