

**PHIL6304 Apologetic Method**  
**NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**  
**DIVISION OF THEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL STUDIES**  
**DEFEND CONFERENCE / JANUARY 8-12, 2018**



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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 values *Doctrinal Integrity* and *Mission Focus* by giving attention to apologetic strategy and method in defending and presenting Christian beliefs particularly as they relate to Christian evangelism. *Servant Leadership* is our core value for the year.

**Competencies Addressed**

The competencies of Christian Theological Heritage, Disciple Making, and Spiritual and Character Formation will be addressed.

**Course Description**

The course further prepares students to interact knowledgeably with historical and methodological issues related to the defense of the Christian worldview. Issues addressed include biblical apologetics, patristic apologetics, medieval apologetics, Reformation apologetics, modern and postmodern apologetics, various apologetic methods, and the thinkers who have developed and used them. The course focuses upon personal reading, research, and writing.

**Objectives**

By the end of the course, students should:

1. Be able to apply their knowledge and comprehension of the history and the methodology of Christian apologetics to academic and ministerial issues related to Christian apologetics.
2. Value the following:
  - a. Intellectual accountability in relation to issues concerning the history and the methodology of Christian apologetics.
  - b. Convincing presentations of Christian faith.
3. Be able to state their position on which apologetic method is to be preferred and why.

### Required Texts

1. Ken Boa and Robert Bowman. *Faith Has Its Reasons: An Integrative Approach to Defending Christianity*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2001.
2. Steven B. Cowan, *Five Views on Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
3. Gregory Koukl, *Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.

### Course Requirements

**1. Lecture Attendance.** Students are required to attend all sessions of the Defend the Faith Christian Apologetics Conference. Students are to listen to all sessions of the Defend the Faith School in Christian Apologetics which they do not attend. Students must affirm that they have completed this. Students will confirm on Blackboard how much they attended/listened to. Failure to attend/listen to all of the conference will result in a 5 point deduction from a student's final average.

**2. Book Reviews.** Each student is required to review 3 of the following books.

1. Avery Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*. New York: Corpus, 1971.
2. John M. Frame, *Cornelius Van Til: An Analysis of His Thought*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1995.
3. Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.
4. Douglas Groothuis, *Truth Decay: Defending Christianity Against the Challenges of Postmodernism*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000.
5. Donald J. Johnson, *How to Talk to a Skeptic*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2013.
6. Gordon Lewis, *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims: Approaches to Christian Apologetics*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990.
7. Louis Markos, *Apologetics for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.
8. Alister E. McGrath, *Intellectuals Don't Need God and Other Modern Myths: Building Bridges to Faith Through Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993.
9. Alister E. McGrath, *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012.
10. Richard Messer, *Does God's Existence Need Proof?* Oxford: Clarendon, 1993.
11. J. Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh, *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used to Be: Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995.

12. Basil Mitchell, *The Justification of Religious Belief*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.
13. John Warwick Montgomery, *Faith Founded on Fact: Essays in Evidential Apologetics*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1978.
14. Randy Newman, *Questioning Evangelism: Engaging People's Hearts the Way Jesus Did*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004.
15. Victor Reppert, *C. S. Lewis' Dangerous Idea: In Defense of the Argument from Reason*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003.
16. Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Francis A. Schaeffer Trilogy: The 3 Essential Books in 1 Volume/the God Who Is There/Escape from Reason/He Is There and He Is Not Silent*. Wheaton: Crossway, 1990.
17. Khaldoun A. Sweis and Chad V. Meister, *Christian Apologetics: An Anthology of Primary Sources*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012.
18. Cornelius Van Til and K. Scott Oliphint, *The Defense of the Faith*. Fourth Edition. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2008.
19. Clifford Williams, *Existential Reasons for Belief in God*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011.

Reviews should include: (1) some professional biographical data concerning the author; (2) an identification of the major elements of content; (3) an assessment of the author's aim or purpose and of the degree of its fulfillment; and (4) a critical evaluation of the book. The reviews should follow Turabian form. Book reviews should be 5-7 double-spaced pages in length, Times New Roman 12 font or comparable. **(February 16, 2018)**

**3. Session Summaries.** Students will write one-page, single-spaced summaries of 8 different breakout sessions from the Defend the Faith Christian Apologetics Conference. Students taking more than one Defend the Faith course for NOBTS credit may use 6 session summaries that they summarize for another course so long as they are shaped for the concerns of each course. Summaries should be submitted via Blackboard. **(March 9, 2018)**

**4. Research Paper.** Each student must write a research paper on a selected apologist, apologetic method, or a particular issue (e.g., the existence of God) from a particular perspective (e.g., classical, evidentialism, cumulative case, presuppositionalism, etc.). If a student writes on an apologetic issue, the student must address the issue from a particular apologetic method. The research paper should be neither less than 15 nor more than 22 double-spaced pages. Papers should follow Turabian form. **(April 6, 2018)**

**5. Personal Perspective.** Each student is required to submit a personal perspective on apologetic method. In it he should express his personal preference or method concerning apologetic method and justify it in light of the other available options. The personal perspective should be **3-6 single-spaced pages**. All references according to Turabian style guide. **(April 13, 2018)**

Grades will be assigned on the basis of the NOBTS grading scale: 93-100, A; 85-92, B; 77-84, C; 70-76, D; 0-69, F.

The final grade will be determined accordingly:

Book Reviews	40%
Personal Perspective	10%
Research Paper	30%
<u>Session Summaries</u>	<u>20%</u>
Final Grade	100%

The required texts will be available for purchase through the Seminary LifeWay bookstore. All texts should be available via Amazon.com as well.

## Bibliography

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- Beanblossom, Ronald E. and Keith Lehrer, eds. *Thomas Reid: Inquiry and Essays*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983.
- Beckwith, Francis J. *David Hume's Argument Against Miracles: A Critical Analysis*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989.
- Boa, Kenneth D., and Robert M. Bowman, Jr. *An Unchanging Faith in a Changing World: Understanding and Responding to Issues that Christians Face Today*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Oliver, 1997.
- . *Faith Has Its Reasons: An Integrative Approach to Defending Christianity*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2001.
- Boa, Kenneth and Larry Moody. *I'm Glad You Asked: In-depth Answers to Difficult Questions about Christianity*. Wheaton: Victor, 1987.
- Bowman, Robert M., Jr. *Heresy: A Biblical Guide to Doctrinal Discernment*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991.
- Brisley, Eric D. *A Guide to the Writings of Cornelius Van Til, 1895-1987*. Chicago: Olive Tree Communications, 1995.
- Brown, Colin. *Christianity and Western Thought: A History of Philosophers, Ideas, and Movements*, vol. 1, *From the Ancient World to the Age of Enlightenment*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990.
- . *Miracles and the Critical Mind*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984.
- Bruce, F. F. *The Defense of the Gospel in the New Testament*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977.
- Carson, D.A. *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.
- . *Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.

- Clark, David K., and Norman L. Geisler. *Apologetics in the New Age: A Christian Critique of Pantheism*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990.
- Clark, David K. *Dialogical Apologetics: A Person-Centered Approach to Christian Defense*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993.
- Colyer, Elmer M., ed. *Evangelical Theology in Transition: Theologians in Dialogue with Donald Bloesch*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999.
- Corduan, Winfried. *No Doubt about It: The Case for Christianity*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1997. Originally published as *Reasonable Faith: Basic Christian Apologetics* (1993).
- Cowan, Steven B., ed. *Five Views on Apologetics*. Counterpoint series. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
- Craig, William Lane. *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1994. Revised version of *Apologetics: An Introduction*. Chicago: Moody, 1984.
- Davis, Stephen T., ed. *Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1973.
- Dembski, William. *Intelligent Design: The Bridge Between Science and Theology*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999.
- . *Mere Creation: Science, Faith and Intelligent Design*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998.
- . *Signs of Intelligence: Understanding Intelligent Design*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998.
- Dembski, William A. and Jay Wesley Richards, eds. *Unapologetic Apologetics: Meeting the Challenges of Theological Studies*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001.
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- . *The Historical Christ and the Jesus of Faith: The Incarnational Narrative as History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- . *Why Believe? Reason and Mystery as Pointers to God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1996.
- Flew, Antony. *God and Philosophy*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1996.

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- . *The Reconstruction of the Christian Revelation Claim: A Philosophical and Critical Apologetic*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984.
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