

SOUTHWESTERN

BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

What you believe to be true will control you whether it's true or not.
—Jeremy LaBorde

Course Title: PHILO 4373-A; Christian Apologetics

Class Dates, Time, and Term: Monday mornings, 8:00-10:45am, Fall 2010

Room: TBD

Professor: William A. Dembski (F-215D, 817-923-1921 x4435)

COURSE DESCRIPTION An introductory study of selected issues in apologetics. Common objections to Christian truth claims will be critically appraised and answered. Three hours.

COURSE GOALS This course will help students reflect with theological accuracy, philosophical precision, and cultural sensitivity on the Christian apologetic enterprise.

COURSE OBJECTIVES In this course the student will:

- Gain facility with the main apologetic strategies and arguments for defending the Christian faith.
- Understand the philosophical and cultural backdrop of contemporary apologetics.
- Learn how to write a critical review, a vital genre for engaging apologetic arguments.

COURSE TEXTS

Required

- [UNAPOL] William A. Dembski & Jay Wesley Richards, eds., *Unapologetic Apologetics: Meeting the Challenges of Theological Studies* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2001).
- [INTROPHIL] Norman L. Geisler and Paul D. Feinberg, *Introduction to Philosophy: A Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1987).
- [MIRACLES] C. S. Lewis, *Miracles* (1947; revised and reprinted San Francisco: Harper, 2001).
- [REASBAL] Phillip E. Johnson, *Reason in the Balance: The Case Against Naturalism in Science, Law, and Education* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1995).
- [TWO TASKS] William Lane Craig & Paul M. Gould, eds., *The Two Tasks of the Christian Scholar: Redeeming the Soul, Redeeming the Mind* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2007).
- [CONT CRIT] Paul Copan & William Lane Craig, *Contending with Christianity's Critics* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2009).
- [PETFROMM*] Martin Gardner, *The Flight of Peter Fromm* (1973; reprinted Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus, 1994).

Recommended

Steven B. Cowan, ed., *Five Views on Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2000).

Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1976)

Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2004).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

this is a paperless course – all assignments are to be emailed to dembski.grading.1+@gmail.com

- (1) Daily précis statements — 30 percent positive. Due before each class. Précis statements include (1) single sentences summarizing each 10-page (or fewer) block from the reading, with pages summarized being clearly noted; (2) a sentence describing the most important insight you gained from the reading; (3) a sentence describing the biggest question the reading raised for you; (4) total time you spent reading the assignment. Bring copy to class.
- (2) Final exam — 30 percent positive. Due a stated number of hours after the exam is posted online. It will be posted online at <http://www.designinference.com> (under “teaching”) at the time that the final for this course is scheduled. It will appear as both a pdf and an rtf file.
- (3) 4,000-word critical review of PETFROMM — 30 percent positive. Due by last class meeting. Critical reviews, rather than merely summarize a book, analyze it critically, evaluating its arguments, assessing the degree to which it succeeds and/or fails in meeting its objectives, and exploring how it could have been made better.
- (4) 3,000-word record of interactions with contrary websites, totaling at least 10 posts and giving URLs for posts — 10 percent positive. Due by last class meeting. This is where you get to mix it up with people on the other side of the debate over faith and science. It will open your eyes.
- (5) Active class participation — up to 10 percent negative.
- (6) 200- to 300-word single-page one-sided executive summary of YOU (with clearly recognizable picture of yourself) — up to 5 percent negative if not handed in or carelessly done. Due by second class meeting.

WRITTEN WORK

To improve the quality of your written work, you may wish to take advantage of Southwestern’s Writing Center — <http://www.swbts.edu/writingcenter>. Also, the critical review must follow Southwestern’s Style Manual — <http://www.swbts.edu/swstyle>.

GRADES

Grades will be determined by the following scale: 100-98 (A+); 97-93 = A; 92-90 (A-); 89-88 (B+); 87-83 (B); 82-80 (B-); 79-78 (C+); 77-73 (C); 72-70 (C-); 69-68 (D+); 67-63 (D); 62-60 (D-); Below 60 = F.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism is the misrepresentation of another's work as one's own. When the professor concludes that a student has plagiarized an assignment, the student will receive the grade of zero for the assignment, and the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs will be notified about the incident. The same actions apply to other acts of academic dishonesty such as cheating on examinations (see Ethical Conduct section in SWBTS catalog).

SPECIAL NEEDS

Individuals with documented impairments who may need special circumstances for exams, classroom participation, or assignments should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester in order for special arrangements to be considered.

CLASS SCHEDULE

- (1) UNAPOL, foreword, preface, chs. 1, 4, 5
- (2) UNAPOL, chs. 7-13
- (3) INTROPHIL, pref., chs. 1-8
- (4) INTROPHIL, chs. 9-18
- (5) INTROPHIL, chs. 19-27
- (6) MIRACLES, chs. 1-10
- (7) MIRACLES, chs. 11-17 plus appendices
- (8) REASBAL, intro, chs. 1-5
- (9) REASBAL, chs. 6-10, appendix
- (10) TWOTASKS, foreword, chs. 1-4
- (11) TWOTASKS, chs. 5-8
- (12) CONTCRIT, pt. 1
- (13) CONTCRIT, pt. 2
- (14) CONTCRIT, pt. 3

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Francis J. Beckwith, William Lane Craig, and J. P. Moreland, eds., *To Everyone an Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2004).
- Kenneth D. Boa and Robert M. Bowman Jr., *Faith Has Its Reasons: An Integrative Approach to Defending Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Waynesboro, Georgia: Paternoster, 2006).
- C. Campbell-Jack and G. J. McGrath, *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2006).
- Robert Greene, *The 33 Strategies of War* (New York: Viking, 2006).
- Robert Greene and Joost Elffers, *The 48 Laws of Power* (New York: Penguin Putnam, 2000).
- Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999).
- J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2003).
- Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1989).
- Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1994).
- Doug Powell, *Holman QuickSource Guide to Christian Apologetics* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006).
- Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ / Faith / the Real Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1998 / 2000 / 2007) – three books.
- William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*, 3rd or 4th ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1979 or later).