

# 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 2011

**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 necessary genre for engaging in 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).
- [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).
- [PETFROMM] Martin Gardner, *The Flight of Peter Fromm* (1973; reprinted Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus, 1994).
- [CHRISAPOL] Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2011).
- [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).

### Recommended

Paul Copan & William Lane Craig, *Contending with Christianity's Critics* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2009).

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

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

Norman L. Geisler and Paul D. Feinberg, *Introduction to Philosophy: A Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1987).

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

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- (1) Daily quizzes — 30 percent positive. A two-question quiz on this week's reading will be given at the start of class and collected immediately. It is not possible to make these quizzes up. The lowest quiz for the term will be dropped.
- (2) In-class comprehensive final exam — 30 percent positive.
- (3) 3,000-word (10-page) 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. Must be submitted to Turnitin as well as to the following email address: dembski.grading.1{AT}gmail.com.
- (4) 2,000-word record of interactions with contrary websites, totaling at least 10 posts and giving URLs for posts — 10 percent positive. Due by date of final exam. This is where you get to mix it up with people on the other side over matters central to Christian faith. It will open your eyes.
- (5) Class participation, attendance, and punctuality — up to 10 percent negative. Class begins with prayer; if you are not here at the start of the prayer, you are late. Late students must provide a written statement explaining why they are late and place it on the professor's desk BEFORE taking their seat. Active class participation is expected.
- (6) 200- to 300-word single-page one-sided executive summary of YOU (with clearly recognizable picture of yourself). This must be emailed to me before the second class meeting at dembski.grading.1{AT}gmail.com.

## **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) MIRACLES, chs. 1-10
- (4) MIRACLES, chs. 11-17 plus appendices
- (5) REASBAL, intro, chs. 1-5
- (6) REASBAL, chs. 6-10, appendix
- (7) PETFROMM, all of it
- (8) CHRISAPOL, chs. 1-9
- (9) CHRISAPOL, chs. 10-15
- (10) CHRISAPOL, chs. 16-22
- (11) CHRISAPOL, chs. 23-28
- (12) TWOTASKS, foreword, chs. 1-4
- (13) TWOTASKS, chs. 5-8
- (14) Internet reading, TBD

## **COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff, *The Modern Researcher*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Belmont, Calif.: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2004).
- 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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Waynesboro, Georgia: Paternoster, 2006).
- Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).
- 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).
- 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*, 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1979 or later).