

SOUTHWESTERN

BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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

Course Title: PHILO 7514; Christian Faith and Apologetic Issues
Class Dates, Time, and Term: Monday afternoons, 2:15-4:15pm, Spring 2010
Room: F-22
Professor: William A. Dembski (F-215D, 817-923-1921 x4435)

COURSE DESCRIPTION Studies in theodicy, alternative worldviews and ontologies, and in apologetic methods and Christian evidences. Four hours.

COURSE GOALS This seminar outlines some of the key challenges to the Christian faith in Western culture and explores how the Christian apologetic enterprise can deal effectively with them.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES In this course the student will:

- Achieve proficiency in thinking, speaking, and writing effectively and professionally on the role of apologetics to the Christian faith.
- Know the main theological challenges to the Christian faith as well as the most effective apologetic responses.
- Understand the history of Christian apologetics and especially how worldview analysis has in recent years reconfigured this field.

COURSE TEXTS

Required

- [AW] A. N. Wilson, *God's Funeral: A Biography of Faith and Doubt in Western Civilization* (New York: Ballantine, 1999).
- [AD] Avery Cardinal Dulles, *A History of Apologetics* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005)
- [RS] Robert B. Stewart, ed., *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright in Dialogue* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006).
- [AS] Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Press, 1997).
- [EG] Etienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999).
- [WD] William A. Dembski, *The End of Christianity: Finding a Good God in an Evil World* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2009).
- [DN] David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002).

Recommended

Gaymon Bennett, Martinez J. Hewlett, Ted Peters, and Robert John Russell, eds., *The Evolution of Evil* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008).

N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).

Ted Peters, Robert John Russell, and Michael Welker, eds., *Resurrection: Theological and Scientific Assessments* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

this is a paperless course – all assignments are to be emailed to dembski.grading.2@gmail.com

- (1) Active participation in class discussions — 20 percent.
- (2) 2,000- to 2,500-word critical review along with leading a class discussion based on it — 30 percent. Due at time of presentation. 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
- (3) 6,000- to 8,000-word research paper — 50 percent. Due last day of class. The paper can be on a topic of your choice, but it must be relevant to this course and argue a thesis. The word count excludes notes and bibliography. The paper needs to follow a consistent style and provide full references.
- (4) 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 turned in. Due by second class meeting.

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) AW, all of it

NOTE: (1) needs to be read before the first class meeting.

- (2) AD, intro, pp. 1-208
- (3) AD, pp. 209-end
- (4) RS, intro., chs. 1-4

- (5) RS, chs. 5-end
- (6) AS, all of it
- (7) EG, chs. 1-6
- (8) EG, chs. 7-end
- (9) WD, intro., chs. 1-12
- (10) WD, chs. 13-24
- (11) DN, chs. 1-4
- (12) DN, chs. 5-7
- (13) DN, chs. 8-end

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Campbell Campbell-Jack and Gavin J. McGrath, *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2006).

Antony Flew and Roy Varghese, *There Is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind* (New York: HarperOne, 2007)

Phillip E. Johnson, *Reason in the Balance: The Case Against Naturalism in Science, Law, and Education* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1995).

John C. Lennox, *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2007).

J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2003).

Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought: From Its Judaic and Hellenistic Origins to Existentialism*, Carl E. Braaten, ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968)

Benjamin Wiker, *Moral Darwinism: How We Became Hedonists* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2002).