

CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

COURSE INFORMATION

Fall 2015

Section: PHILO-4373-A

Time: 8:00-10:45 M

Meeting place: Fleming Hall
Room 120

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Dr. Travis Dickinson

Office: #147, Fort Worth Hall

Office Hours: 11-12 M, 11:30-12:30 W

or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to apologetics that surveys recent scholarship regarding the *justification of* the truth claims of Christianity and that provides practical ways to use apologetics in evangelism.

TEXTS

Required

-*Reasonable Faith* (3rd Edition) by William Lane Craig (Crossway: 2008, ISBN: 1433501155)

-*Christian Apologetics: An Anthology of Primary Sources*, edited by Sweis and Meister (Zondervan: 2012, ISBN: 0310325331).

-Various reading assignments made available on Blackboard.

Recommended

-*Love Your God with All Your Mind* (15th Anniversary Edition), by J.P. Moreland (NavPress: 2012, ISBN: 1617479004)

-*A Rulebook for Arguments* (4th Edition) by Anthony Weston (Hackett: 2008, ISBN: 0872209547)

-*To Everyone an Answer: A Case for Christian Worldview*, edited by Beckwith, Craig and Moreland (IVP: 2004, ISBN: 0830827358).

-*Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*, by Douglas Groothuis (IVP: 2011, ISBN: 0830839356).

-*Come Let Us Reason: New Essays in Christian Apologetics*, edited by Copan and Craig (B&H: 2012, ISBN: 1433672200).

-*Debating Christian Theism*, edited by Moreland, Meister and Sweis (OUP: 2013, ISBN: 0199755434).

ASSESSMENT

1. **Takeaways Assignment:** For every assigned reading (each chapter or article, etc.), you are to write at least 5 thoughtful "takeaways" (i.e., insights, questions, evaluation, etc.) related to the text (make sure you always mark a page number(s) relevant to the point). These should represent the span of the reading rather than coming from only a few pages. Please bring these to class for interacting in the discussion. These will be submitted each day via Blackboard.
2. **Reading percentage:** You will need to mark the percentage of the reading you have completed for each day that we meet. This will be done via Blackboard (you will also mark your attendance).
3. **Reflection Paper** (600-900 words): You are to reflect on the role of reason in the life of a believer. You should define your terms carefully and interact with such things as whether, on your view, reason and faith are necessarily in conflict and if not, how reason figures into one's faith. Questions that you may interact with include: Must faith always be reasonable? Or do we, at least, sometimes have faith without reason (i.e., blind faith)? This is not meant to be a strict research paper; however,

it is recommended that you make use of academic resources (always with citation!) in forming your thoughts on these matters and especially for interacting with other views. I suspect that there will be some difference of opinions on these issues and you certainly do not have to adopt the professor's view to earn a high grade.

4. **Objection Research Paper** (2700-3000 words): The assignment is to explain one difficult objection or challenge to Christianity and then defend against this objection. Please do not choose a "soft ball" objection that is easily answered. Consider using an objection that does genuinely cause people to struggle with their faith (e.g., the various problems of evil, the problem of divine hiddenness, challenges from contemporary science, objections to the resurrection, textual issues, etc.). I want this to be a valuable exercise for you in your own faith, as well as in ministering to others. You should spend about 30%-50% of your paper developing the objection before you start defending against it. Your paper should obviously demonstrate that you have thoroughly researched a variety of academic resources, both in the development of the objection and the position you defend. As a rough approximation, I would expect you to use around 10-20 sources. Please do not use someone's blog as a resource for this paper. All resources should be peer reviewed and published. Sometimes authors may post published articles on their website and you may use these. However, if it is not a peer reviewed published work, then it may not be used as a resource. If you want to use a website as a resource, it must be approved by the professor.
5. **2 Exams:** We will have a midterm and a final exam.

Breakdown of assignments:

1. Takeaways assignment: 15%
2. Reading percentage: 10%
3. Reflection Paper: 10%
4. Objection Research Paper: 25%
5. Exams: 40% points (20% each)

Point/Letter grade conversion

97 – 100= A+
93 – 96.9= A
90 – 92.9= A-
87 – 89.9= B+
83 – 86.9= B
80 – 82.9= B-
77 – 79.9= C+
73 – 76.9= C
70 – 72.9= C-
67 – 69.9= D+
63 – 66.9= D
60 – 62.9= D-
0 – 59.9= F

LATE WORK POLICY

For every 24 hours (including weekends) that a paper is late, the grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a letter grade (An A paper will go down to an A-, A- to a B+, B+ to a B, etc.).

ATTENDANCE

Each student will be allowed 1.5 absences for the semester without grade penalty (you do not need to inform the instructor of the nature of these absences, should you take one of these absences). You are responsible for all the material covered. Any absence after this will result in a 3% deduction from the semester grade. Any student absent from 3 or more of the scheduled class meetings is subject to failure on this basis alone. Please communicate with the instructor if you have any major issues prior to the fact or as soon as it is reasonable.

COMPUTER USAGE POLICY

You may use laptops or tablets to take notes but you must sit in the first three rows and **you must disable the wireless internet capabilities during class time.** Students should also make efforts for the

computer usage to not be a distraction to others. Failure to comply with this policy will result in the loss of the computer's usage.

SWBTS GUIDELINES

The professor will abide by all of the academic policies described in the current SWBTS Catalog. Note the policies on ethical conduct, including the prohibition against plagiarism and cheating. You are responsible to know all the guidelines and policies. **Ignorance of these policies does not excuse a violation.**

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. Also, the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs will be notified and will make a record of the offense that will remain on file for your time at SWBTS. The same actions apply to other acts of academic dishonesty such as cheating on examinations (see the Ethical Conduct section in the SWBTS catalog). If it turns out that this is a repeat offense, then the consequences will be far stricter, including the possibility of failing the course. SWBTS may take further disciplinary action in such cases.

Plagiarism includes: (1) quoting a source and not citing the source, (2) rewording what a source says and not citing the source, or (3) failing to sufficiently reword a quote and not using quotation marks, even when the material is cited.

Neither ignorance of these policies nor unintentional violation will excuse an instance of plagiarism.

When in doubt, cite! For more information concerning plagiarism, see the article posted to the content section of our course website. Also, there is much information on www.plagiarism.org. You should be aware that SWBTS now uses the Turnitin anti-plagiarism software, which is a very effective tool for catching plagiarism. Beyond your moral obligations and your obligation to honor Christ with your conduct, it takes a fair amount of work to get away with plagiarizing these days. I would recommend putting that effort into doing the assignment with integrity.

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.

COMMUNICATION

I will be regularly emailing reading assignments and announcements to your campus email address. So it will important for you to check these on (at least) a daily basis as you will be responsible for any information that goes out.

OTHER CONTACT INFORMATION

Administrative Assistant: Sarah Haven, shaven@swbts.edu, 817.923.1921 x5806

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading
-----UNIT ONE-----		
I. What is Apologetics?		
1: 8/31	Loving God with all our minds	Craig Introduction; Moreland Mind*
2: 9/7 (no class)	Epistemology and methodology	Craig 1; Beilby (CAA 3)
3: 9/14	Logic and argument	Logic*; Fumerton*
II. Objections		
4: 9/21	Objections from science	Baggini*; Ward*; Polkinghorne (CAA 48)
9/27-10/3	Fall Break	
5: 10/5	Evil and divine hiddenness	Rowe*; Rea*; Kreeft (CAA 46)
6: 10/12	Alleged contradictions and moral issues	Huffman*; Geisler*; Copan*
-----UNIT TWO-----		
III. Reasons for God		
7: 10/19	Arguments from Value	Craig 2; Lewis (CAA 17); Copan (CAA 18)
8: 10/26	Arguments from the Cosmos	Aquinas (CAA 7); Craig 3-4
9: 11/2	Arguments from Science	Behe (CAA 11); Collins CAA 12); Dembski*
IV. Reasons for Christian Faith		
10: 11/9	Miracles	Craig 5-6
11: 11/16	Evidence for the Resurrection	Craig 7; Wright*
11/22-11/28	Thanksgiving Break	
12: 11/30	Evidence for the Resurrection	Craig 8; Habermas*
13: 12/7	Apologetics to other religious views	Mosser*, Saleeb*

“*” denotes that the article is posted to Blackboard

“CAA #” denotes that it is a chapter from the Sweis/Meister volume.