ST530 – Apologetics
Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte
Winter 2015

I. Details
A. Dates: January 12–16
B. Times: Mon 1:00–4:30; Tue–Thu 9:00–4:30; Fri 9:00–12:00
C. Instructor: Dr. James N. Anderson
D. Contact: janderson@rts.edu
E. Availability: If you wish to discuss some aspect of the course, please either arrange (via email) an appointment or knock on the door of my office (in E building) if it’s open.

II. Goals
A. To survey the biblical foundations for apologetics, including the basics of a biblical epistemology (theory of knowledge and rationality).
B. To familiarize the student with the major schools of apologetic methodology: their basic rationales, their representative thinkers, and their distinctive approaches to prominent issues in apologetics.
C. To present a defense of Reformed presuppositional (worldview) apologetics: its biblical and theological warrant, its philosophical cogency, and its practical effectiveness.
D. To familiarize the student with prominent issues in apologetics and how they can be addressed from a Reformed presuppositional perspective.
E. To strengthen the student’s own faith, and to equip them to strengthen the faith of other Christians, through an appreciation of Christian apologetics.

III. Course Overview
A. Biblical Foundations for Apologetics
B. Survey of Contemporary Approaches to Apologetics
C. Reformed Presuppositional Apologetics: Principles and Practice
D. Issues in Apologetics (1): The Existence of the Biblical God
E. Issues in Apologetics (2): The Divine Inspiration of the Bible
F. Issues in Apologetics (3): The Resurrection of Jesus Christ
G. Issues in Apologetics (4): The Problem of Evil and Suffering
H. Issues in Apologetics (5): Science and Scripture

IV. Course Requirements
A. Class attendance and thoughtful participation.
   1. As per seminary policy, you are required to attend all the lectures. If you know that you will be unable to attend class on a particular date, please inform me in advance, otherwise you may be penalized for your absence. Since this is an intensive one-week course, attendance is particularly important; missing one day of class entails missing up to seven lectures.
   2. There will be opportunity for class participation and questions during the lectures.
3. You will be expected to use the Internet in the classroom only for appropriate class-related activities, and you will be asked to sign an honor pledge to that effect.

4. A proportion of your final grade (see below) will depend on your attendance record and your participation in the classes (thoughtful interaction with the professor and other students).

B. Reading assignments.
   1. A proportion of your final exam mark (and thus your final grade) will depend on your acknowledgment that you have completed the required reading (see below).
   2. You will be penalized for each uncompleted reading assignment.

C. Writing assignment.
   1. You should write a paper (3500–4500 words, excluding bibliography) taking the form of a dialogue with a Muslim (of any persuasion: Sunni or Shiite, traditionalist or modernist, etc.).
   2. You have two options for the dialogue paper; you should choose one or the other.
      i. The first option is to write an entirely fictional dialogue between a Christian and a Muslim. If you choose this option, you should aim to represent both sides of the dialogue in a realistic, fair, and challenging way (i.e., avoid “straw men”).
      ii. The second option is to engage in a real written exchange with a Muslim, e.g., via email or an internet discussion forum. You should edit the dialogue as needed to maintain clarity and conciseness (i.e., format it to make clear the flow of discussion, correct obvious errors of spelling or grammar, excise irrelevant or tangential material). If the final word count of the dialogue is less than 3500 words, you should supplement it with a critical commentary on the exchange (where you would aim to take any subsequent discussion, how you might have argued differently in retrospect, etc.).
   3. The paper should illustrate that you have a good understanding of the goals, principles, and methods of apologetics discussed in the lectures and readings.
   4. Your paper will be graded according to the following criteria, in no particular order: realism, responsible use of Scripture, extent of research, creativity, clarity, structure and coherence, cogency of argument, evidence of critical thinking, and good writing style (inc. grammar, spelling, and punctuation).
   5. The paper should include a standard bibliography citing sources used in the writing of the assignment and sources that document or further develop the points raised in the dialogue.
   6. The paper should be word-processed, not hand-written.
      i. Use a 12-point font and double line-spacing for the main text.
      ii. Use section headings where appropriate to improve readability.
      iii. Use footnotes (10-point font) rather than endnotes.
      iv. Use a recognized scholarly style for citations (e.g., Chicago/Turabian, SBL).
   7. The paper should be submitted with a title page containing all of the following: the name and year of the course; your name; the professor’s name; the title of the paper; and the exact word count for the main text of the paper (obtained from your word processor’s word-count feature).
   8. You will be penalized if you do not observe the requirements and guidelines above.
9. Your paper is due on **February 27**. It should be submitted to the assistant at the main front desk on or prior to this date. Ensure that the assistant stamps the paper with the date of submission. Late submissions will be penalized.

10. Your paper will be returned to you after grading with limited feedback. Consult the document “Guide to Annotations on Graded Papers” to crack the code. If you wish to receive more detailed feedback, please email me to arrange an appointment.

**D. Final exam.**

1. The final exam is due on **February 27**. It should be completed in the library on or prior to this date. You will need to make prior arrangements with Kim Macurda (kmacurda@rts.edu) to obtain the exam paper.

2. The format of the exam will be a series of short-answer questions plus two longer essay questions. You will have 3 hours to complete it.

3. You may refer to an English translation of the Bible (but not one with study notes, etc.). You may not refer to any class notes or other study resources.

4. You will be asked to sign a declaration that you have not discussed the content of the exam with any other students before taking it.

5. You will also be asked to indicate which of the required reading assignments you have **completed** and to sign a declaration to that effect.

**V. Course Documents**

**A. Instructions for accessing course documents.**

1. RTS is currently transitioning to a new LMS platform for course home pages.

2. Therefore, instructions for accessing the course documents will be emailed to all registered students the week before class.

**B. Course outline.**

1. Other than the syllabus, the course outline is the most important document. You will need a copy (either electronic or printed) in front of you throughout the class.

2. You are strongly encouraged to supplement the outline with your own notes.

3. The outline will be uploaded to the course home page the week before class.

**C. Supplementary documents.**

1. Some of the required and recommended readings (see below) will be available on the course home page.

2. You should also consult the documents “Research Paper Checklist” and “Guide to Annotations on Graded Papers”.

**VI. Grading**

A. Class attendance and participation — 10%

B. Final exam (including credit for reading assignments) — 40%

C. Writing assignment — 50%

**VII. Required Reading**

You should obtain copies of all of the items below. You should try to read **A** before class begins. You should certainly have read **A–G** (completely, including appendices) in preparation for the paper and final exam. You do not need to read **H** from cover to cover, but you should have it available as a reference during class.
G. John M. Frame, “How to Write a Theological Paper,” Appendix F in *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (P&R, 1987). [A copy of this will be made available on the course home page.]

**VIII. Recommended Supplementary Reading**

You are not required to read any of the items below, but you may find them useful to consolidate the course material and for further study as your interests dictate. For many of these, the table of contents can be viewed on Amazon.com or Google Books.

A. History of Apologetics / Methodology in Apologetics
   3. William Edgar and K. Scott Oliphint, eds., *Christian Apologetics Past & Present: A Primary Source Reader* (Volume 1, To 1500) (Crossway, 2009). [An excellent selection of primary source readings on Christian apologetics from the apostolic era to the close of the Middle Ages, with helpful commentary by two WTS professors.]
perspective by a Reformed theologian. Very relevant to apologetics, but also to other areas of biblical and theological study. Highly recommended.]

   [An influential work by a leading classical apologist; covers both methodology and application.]

   [An up-to-date defense of Van Tilian presuppositional apologetics (although Oliphint prefers the label “covenantal apologetics”) with helpful illustrations of its practical application. Good emphasis on the relationship between apologetics and biblical theology.]

   [A defense of the classical approach and critique of the presuppositional approach from three Reformed scholars, dedicated (without evident irony) to Cornelius Van Til. John Frame’s critical review of the book appears as an appendix in AGG.]

   [A good selection of readings representing a range of approaches to apologetics.]

    [One of Van Til’s most influential works on presuppositional apologetics. This edition features an introduction and explanatory notes by K. Scott Oliphint.]

B. Apologetics in Practice

   [http://www.proginosko.com/docs/induction.html]


   [A little book of applied apologetics written for both believers and unbelievers. It uses an interactive, non-linear format to help the reader to understand what a worldview is and to reflect more critically on their own worldview.]

   [A reliable and wide-ranging treatment of the relationship between modern science and Christian faith; particular relevance to issues in apologetics, e.g., Darwinism versus Intelligent Design.]

   [A collection of scholarly philosophical essays arguing that belief in God is rational. Part 2 contains contemporary versions of the traditional arguments for God’s existence.]

   [Eighteen short chapters penned by leading evangelical scholars responding to the claims of the New Atheists and other contemporary critics.]
   [A collection of essays offering a sophisticated and comprehensive critique of metaphysical naturalism. A number of the arguments could be fairly described as presuppositional in thrust.]

   [A heavyweight volume offering state-of-the-art formulations and defenses of the traditional theistic arguments.]

9. William Lane Craig and Chad Meister, eds., *God is Great, God is Good: Why Believing in God is Reasonable and Responsible* (InterVarsity Press, 2009).
   [Another collection of essays responding to the New Atheists. Not all contributors write from an evangelical perspective. Includes an interview with Antony Flew following his ‘conversion’ from atheism to theism (or something close to theism).]

    [A reliable introduction to the basic teachings of Islam followed by a critical evaluation from an evangelical Christian perspective.]

    [A collection of essays that together offer a comprehensive case (presuppositional in part, evidential in part) that miracles are possible in principle, that miracle claims can be rationally believed, and that the major miracle claims of the Bible are true.]

    [A short but well-informed handbook of responses to common Muslim objections. PDF version is available online if you search for it.]

    [Exactly what it says on the tin. A cumulative-case approach to defending the Christian worldview by a leading evangelical philosopher.]

    [An up-to-date handbook of evidences for the historicity of the Resurrection. Evidentialist in its methodological orientation, but still invaluable for ‘moderate’ presuppositionalists.]

    [An apologia for the Christian faith aimed at 21st-century Western unbelievers. Keller’s approach is eclectic, but has presuppositionalist themes; he cites Van Til and Frame as positive influences. A good example of culturally-aware apologetics.]

    [Lewis’s influential apologia for the existence of God and the identity of Jesus Christ. Various editions available.]

    [Lewis’s influential response to the problem of evil—a mixed bag of biblical insights and unbiblical ideas. Various editions available.]
   [Lewis’s classic defense of miracles (and supernaturalism more broadly); includes
   an insightful refutation of metaphysical naturalism.]
   [A useful collection of essays on prominent issues in Christian apologetics, but
   with very little attention given to methodological concerns.]
20. Vern S. Poythress, *Redeeming Science: A God-Centered Approach* (Crossway,
    2006).
   [A knowledgeable and insightful treatment of the relationship(s) between science
   and biblical theology, from a Reformed perspective.]
   [An updated defense of Lewis’s “argument from reason” against metaphysical
   naturalism.]
   [A well-informed, lay-level defense of the reliability of the Gospels, clearing away
   the common objections and misconceptions. A useful resource to give to skeptics.]
   [A popularization of Alvin Plantinga’s apologetics. Well-argued and engagingly
   written, but mostly defensive in orientation.]

C. Reference Works
1. W.C. Campbell-Jack and Gavin McGrath, *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*
   (InterVarsity Press, 2006).
   [A comprehensive reference work with a wide range of scholarly contributors.]
   [An online, peer-reviewed encyclopedia of philosophy; good articles on many of
   the philosophical concepts discussed in the course. http://www.iep.utm.edu]
   [An online, peer-reviewed encyclopedia of philosophy; good articles on many of
   the philosophical concepts discussed in the course. http://plato.stanford.edu]
# Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

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<tr>
<th>Course:</th>
<th>Apologetics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor:</td>
<td>James N. Anderson</td>
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<td>Campus:</td>
<td>Charlotte</td>
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<td>Date:</td>
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## MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.

*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.

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<tr>
<th>Rubric</th>
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<td>Strong</td>
<td>1. Creative application paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>2. Final exam questions test knowledge and articulation of course topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>3. Biblical perspectives on theodicy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>4. Historicity of Gospel accounts</td>
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### Articulation (oral & written)

Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.

- **Moderate**
  - 1. Creative application paper
  - 2. Final exam questions test knowledge and articulation of course topics

### Scripture

Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)

- **Moderate**
  - 1. Explores biblical teaching on apologetics and epistemology
  - 2. Examines biblical basis for presuppositional methodology
  - 3. Biblical perspectives on theodicy
  - 4. Historicity of Gospel accounts

### Reformed Theology

Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.

- **Minimal**
  - 1. Emphasizes connection between Reformed theology and apologetic methodology
  - 2. Reformed approach to theodicy

### Sanctification

Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.

- **Minimal**
  - 1. Emphasizes our dependence on God in all aspects of life
  - 2. Ultimate purpose of apologetics to glorify God

### Desire for Worldview

Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.

- **Strong**
  - 1. Presuppositional methodology
  - 2. Holistic view of Christian faith
  - 3. Christian worldview shown to be foundation for all aspects of life

### Winsomely Reformed

Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)

- **Minimal**
  - 1. Appreciation for material from non-Reformed apologists and scholars
  - 2. Emphasis on humility in apologetics
  - 3. Person-relative approach

### Preach

Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.

- **Minimal**
  - 1. Role of apologetics in preaching
  - 2. Critical thinking skills developed

### Worship

Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.

- **None**

### Shepherd

Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.

- **Moderate**
  - 1. Importance of apologetics for both evangelism and counseling
  - 2. Use of apologetics to edify and protect Christian believers

### Church/World

Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.

- **Moderate**
  - 1. Relevance of apologetics to public issues, ethics, politics, etc.
  - 2. Distinguishes Christian worldview from denominational distinctives