INTRODUCTION TO APOLOGETICS

06ST530

RTS Washington, DC
June 2016

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Objectives

This course offers an overview of the field of apologetics and develops an argument for a biblical-theological and confessional approach, in the Reformed tradition. It seeks to equip students with the basic understanding and tools needed to uphold and defend the faith delivered once-for-all in our time and (globalized) place. Trusting in the full sufficiency of Scripture, the goal is to grow in our ability to think biblically in our theology and biblico-theologically in our Christian life, witness and ministry. And to do all for the glory of the Triune God alone.

Basic Course Outline

I. Introduction

II. In Defense of Apologetics

III. Apologetics Defined
   A. A Definition
   B. Main Schools of Apologetics

IV. Developing a Biblical and Confessional Approach
   A. Taking Stock of Our Theological and Confessional Heritage
   B. Building from Scripture
   C. Meta-apologetics
   D. Learning from Non-theological Fields of Knowledge
   E. Synthesis

V. Classic and Current Challenges to the Christian Faith

VI. Conclusion
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COURSE

Course participation
Students are expected to interact constructively with the professor and their fellow-students during class time. The quality of that interaction will play into their final grade.

Reading Digests
Students must write digests for the required readings marked with an asterisk. These should be concise and the fruit of a careful analytical reading.

Please send an electronic copy to the RTS administrator and to the professor. Due August 6th 2016.

Paper
Students are to write a “dialogue” between them and a Muslim. This dialogue must be built on: 1) actual conversation(s) with one or more Muslims (if you do not have any Muslim friend, a meeting to learn more about Islam can easily be arranged through a local mosque); 2) an array of readings on the subject (see recommended readings and the bibliography in Daniel Brown’s book for a start); 3) the content of the course lectures. It should be at least 2000 words long, but should not exceed 15 pages (a grade penalty will be applied if it does). Please type it double spaced, in 12 pt Times New Roman font, with 2 inch margins. The dialogue should focus on one major issue between Christianity and Islam and demonstrate the goals, principles, and methods of the apologetic approach studied in class. It should cite at least eight reputable sources in its bibliography.

Please send an electronic copy to the RTS administrator and to the professor. Due August 6th 2016.

Final exam
The exam does not need to be proctored, as it relies on an honor system. The student must write and sign a pledge at the end of the exam (the exact wording will be provided with the exam sheet). Three hours maximum, covering all segments of the course. I prefer to have it typed (and in electronic format). If typing is not feasible or practical, then write legibly in dark ink and leave 2 inch margins. Indicate in writing whether you want to get feedback from the instructor on your exam. Due August 6th 2016.

Any delay with turning in any of the assignments will incur a grade reduction. If you have any problem with the deadline, contact the instructor as soon as possible ahead of time. See the RTS policy concerning extensions for details of the process.

Required readings


Flavien Pardigon, “Theology of Religions” and “Areopagus Speech,” https://independent.academia.edu/FlavienPardigon

**For Further Study**


Harvie Conn, *Eternal Word and Changing Worlds: Theology, Anthropology, and Mission in*
Kenneth Cragg, The Call of the Minaret, 2nd ed. (Orbis, 1985).
Phillip E. Johnson, Darwin on Trial, 2nd ed (IVP, 1993).
Joshua Lingel, Jeff Morton, Bill Nikides, Chrislam: How Missionaries are Promoting an Islamized Gospel (i2, 2011?) Available in kindle format on Amazon.
John Gresham Machen, Christianity and Liberalism (Eerdmans, 2009).
Vern S. Poythress, Redeeming Science: A God-centered Approach (Crossway, 2006).


Daniel Strange, “*For Their Rock is not as Our Rock*”: *An Evangelical Theology of Religions* (Apollos, 2014).


