ST530 – Apologetics
Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando
Summer 2016

I. Details
   A. Dates: July 25–28
   B. Times: Mon–Thu, 9:00–4:30 (including one-hour break for lunch)
   C. Instructor: Dr. James N. Anderson
   D. Contact: janderson@rts.edu
   E. Availability: If you wish to discuss some aspect of the course, please feel free to speak to me between lectures or else email me at the above address.

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 *either* a non-Christian or a Christian who is struggling with the intellectual aspects of their faith.

2. You have **several options** for the dialogue paper:

   i. The first (and recommended) option is to engage in a *real written exchange* with either a non-Christian or a Christian with doubts or intellectual anxieties, e.g., via email, social media, 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.).

   ii. The second option is to write an *entirely fictional dialogue* between a Christian apologist and either a non-Christian or a Christian with doubts or intellectual anxieties. 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”).

   iii. The third option is a hybrid of the first two: a *partly fictional dialogue* based on a real exchange with either a non-Christian or a Christian with doubts or intellectual anxieties (“based on a true story”).

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 **September 9**. It should be either emailed (Word or PDF) to janderson@rts.edu or mailed to the following address with a postal date stamp no later than the due date: Dr. James Anderson, Reformed Theological Seminary, 2101 Carmel Road, Charlotte, NC 28226. 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 should be completed and returned to the Orlando campus no later than **September 9**. It will be a ‘take-home’ exam for which you will need to arrange a suitable proctor.
   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. The course documents will be made available on the Canvas course home page.
      2. Log in to the Canvas website ([https://rts.instructure.com](https://rts.instructure.com)) using your Self-Service username and password. Select **Apologetics (Summer 2016)** from the **Courses** menu. Click **Modules** in the side menu to see the course documents and other resources.

   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.

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.]
   [An insightful treatment of epistemology (theory of knowledge) from a biblical 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.]
   [A superb defense of the integrity of the Bible in response to the common Muslim accusation that Jews and Christians have corrupted their scriptures. Also documents the contradictions, alterations, and dubious textual history of the Qur’an.]
   [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.]
23. Mark D. Roberts, *Can We Trust the Gospels?* (Crossway, 2007).
   [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.]
   [An engaging scholarly critique of the Qur’an by a Reformed Christian apologist with decades of experience in debating Muslims. Highly recommended.]

C. Reference Works
   [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

**Course:** Apologetics  
**Professor:** James N. Anderson  
**Campus:** Charlotte  
**Date:** 01/21/11

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em><em>MDiv</em> Student Learning Outcomes</em>*</th>
<th><strong>Rubric</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mini-Justification</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Articulation** (oral & written) | Moderate   | 1. Creative application paper  
| | | 2. Final exam questions test knowledge and articulation of course topics |
| **Scripture** | 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** | Minimal   | 1. Emphasizes connection between Reformed theology and apologetic methodology  
| | | 2. Reformed approach to theodicy |
| **Sanctification** | Minimal   | 1. Emphasizes our dependence on God in all aspects of life  
| | | 2. Ultimate purpose of apologetics to glorify God |
| **Desire for Worldview** | Strong    | 1. Presuppositional methodology  
| | | 2. Holistic view of Christian faith  
| | | 3. Christian worldview shown to be foundation for all aspects of life |
| **Winsomely Reformed** | Minimal   | 1. Appreciation for material from non-Reformed apologists and scholars  
| | | 2. Emphasis on humility in apologetics  
| | | 3. Person-relative approach |
| **Preach** | Minimal   | 1. Role of apologetics in preaching  
| | | 2. Critical thinking skills developed |
| **Worship** | None      | 1. Importance of apologetics for both evangelism and counseling  
| | | 2. Use of apologetics to edify and protect Christian believers |
| **Shepherd** | Moderate  | 1. Relevance of apologetics to public issues, ethics, politics, etc.  
| | | 2. Distinguishes Christian worldview from denominational distinctives |
| **Church/World** | Moderate  | 1. Relevance of apologetics to public issues, ethics, politics, etc.  
| | | 2. Distinguishes Christian worldview from denominational distinctives |