



ST 513 – HISTORY OF APOLOGETICS
Summer 2013 • 2 Semester Hours
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I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In the first century the Apostle Peter exhorted Christians to honor Christ as Lord by *"always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you"* (1 Peter 3:15, ESV). In the centuries that have intervened since the time of that original injunction, believers have sought to respond both to assaults upon the faith from outside the church and distortions of the faith from within. As a result of their efforts, we as twenty-first century believers have a great apologetic heritage to draw from as we develop strategies for defending the faith in our contemporary situation. In some cases our apologetic forebears were effective in communicating the reality of the faith to others; in other cases their efforts fell short. Rather than attempting to "rewrite the book" of Christian apologetics, this course is designed to lead students in drawing from that rich heritage, discerning within it the soundest and most helpful approaches and tactics, and formulating their own apologetic strategy for ministry in today's world.

The purpose of this course is to give students preparing for Christian ministry and service a broad overview of the contours of Christian defense from the New Testament era to the present, to expose you firsthand to a sampling of the writings of the various apologists who have "fought the good fight," and to offer you a critical perspective on the variety of approaches these apologists have used to defend the faith against those who would attack from without or pervert it from within. Through the examination of the various strategies of defense employed by believers through the ages, you will be better equipped to deal with the doubts and denials of people living in the context of today's post-Christian and postmodern mindset.

II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To trace the flow of Christian apologetics from the New Testament era to the present, and to identify its key figures and their most prominent apologetic contributions;
2. To interact first-hand with the arguments of the major apologists of the Christian faith, and to evaluate their arguments in light of biblical teaching;
3. To discuss intelligently the major approaches to apologetics, and to interact in particular with the evidentialist-presuppositionalist debate as these approaches have expressed themselves throughout history;

4. To articulate your own approach to the defense of the Christian faith in light of key contemporary discussions and thought forms, and to demonstrate skill in communicating this approach.;
5. To demonstrate a clear understanding of the apologetic approach of at least one particular apologist, and to show an ability to evaluate his views in the light of biblical teaching and the history of Christian defense.

III. COURSE STRUCTURE

A. Modules: This online course is divided into thirteen modules, designed to be completed in order over the course of 13-15 weeks. To see a detailed outline of the structure, click the "Modules" link on the left side of this page.

B. Lectures: Attention to and meaningful interaction with the lecture contents is expected and will be assessed by a lecture test to be submitted by email one week after the final class session.

C. Reading Assignments: The course readings provide you with exposure to primary source material from the history of apologetics as well as to five major contemporary approaches to the apologetic task. Completion of the reading assignments will be assessed through weekly quizzes and reading summaries.

D. Apologetic Workshop Assignments: Periodically throughout the course you will be asked to submit assignments that are designed to help you work through some of the practical aspects of the course's subject matter. These assignments will also provide food for thought related to your conferences with your instructor and your meetings with your mentor.

C. Term Paper: The required research paper will give you the opportunity to examine in greater depth the apologetic approach of one of the major apologists of Christian history and to evaluate that approach in the light of the biblical mandate to offer a reasoned defense of the Christian faith. The paper should be approximately 7500 words in length, including footnotes and bibliography, and should include (1) interaction with at least six scholarly books and/or journal articles dealing with the apologist in question; (2) reflection on the apologetic debate(s) of the thinker's time; and (3) a final section discussing the practical relevance of the apologetic approach or approaches in question for the task of Christian defense in the contemporary world. Key questions you should address in the research paper include:

- 1) *What contribution did this apologist make to the task of Christian defense in his generation?*

- 2) *In what ways did the apologist employ biblical revelation or reflect a biblical approach to the apologetic task?*
- 3) *In what ways were the apologist's efforts effective in defending biblical truth in his generation?*
- 4) *In what ways did the apologist's contribution fall short of or detract from the development of a biblically sound and helpful defense of the faith in his generation?*
- 5) *What relevance does the approach developed by the apologist in question have for the task of Christian defense in our contemporary situation?*

The paper should be submitted by email in a Microsoft Word or Word-compatible electronic document showing appropriate formatting in accord with Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th edition. A convenient summary of Turabian style can be found here:

<http://www.bethanyseminary.edu/sites/default/files/docs/academics/TurabianStyleGuide09-rev2f2.pdf> The deadline for the completion of the term paper is four weeks after the final class session.

IV. ACADEMIC STANDARDS

A. Grading: Your grade for the course will be based on the following elements:

- Interaction (conferences and mentor meetings): 10%
- Workshop Assignments: 10%
- Reading quizzes and reports: 25%
- Lecture test: 25%
- Research paper: 30%

Geneva Theological Seminary uses the following scale for the grading of all academic work:

Score	Grade	GPA
96–100	A	4.00
94–96	A-	3.67
91–94	B+	3.33
88–91	B	3.00
86–88	B-	2.67
84–86	C+	2.33
79–84	C	2.00
<79	F	0.00

Schedule of Lectures and Corresponding Readings

Date	Lecture Topics	Workshop Assignments	Readings
Week 1	Course Introduction Lecture 1: <i>In Defense of Defense</i>		
Week 2	Lecture 2: <i>New Testament Apologetics</i>	Workshop Assignment 1: <i>To Defend or not to Defend?</i>	Bush, 1-82 (Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Irenaeus)
Week 3	Lecture 3: <i>The Early Christian Apologists</i>		Cowan, 7-20, 26-89 (Overview, Classical Apologetics)
Week 4	Lecture 4: <i>Compromise and Confrontation: Pre- and Post-Nicene Apologists</i>	Workshop Assignment 2: <i>Socrates: Christian Incognito?</i>	Bush, 83-138 (Tertullian, Origen)
Week 5	Lecture 5: <i>Is History His Story? The Argument of Augustine</i>		Cowan, 92-145 (Evidential Apologetics)
Week 6	Lecture 6: <i>Scholastic Apologetics: In Pursuit of the Perfect Proof</i>	Workshop Assignment 3: <i>If God is Good, Why is there Bad?</i>	Bush, 139-236 (Athanasius, Augustine)
Week 7	Lecture 7: <i>Defying Defense: The Reformers, Reason, and Revelation</i>		Cowan, 148-206 (Cumulative Case Apologetics)
Week 8	Lecture 8: <i>A Clockwork World: Deism and Theistic Defense</i>	Workshop Assignment 4: <i>How Intelligent is Intelligent Design?</i>	Bush, 237-326 (Anselm, Aquinas, Calvin)
Week 9	Lecture 9: <i>Christianity for the Common Man: The Legacy of C. S. Lewis</i>		Cowan, 208-263 (Presuppositional Apologetics)
Week 10	Lecture 10: <i>Presuppositional Apologetics: Beginning with God</i>	Workshop Assignment 5: <i>Liar, Lunatic, Lord, or What?</i>	Bush, 327-374 (Butler, Paley)
Week 11	Lecture 11: <i>Reformed Rationalism: Making Sense of the World</i>		Cowan, 266-312 (Reformed Epistemology Apologetics)
Week 12	Lecture 12: <i>The Challenge of Modern Science</i>	Workshop Assignment 6: <i>Apologetic Manifesto</i>	Bush, 375-386 (The Rest of the Story)
Week 13	Lecture 13: <i>Apologetics in the Postmodern World</i>		Cowan, 314-381 (Closing Remarks, Conclusion)

Required Reading (see daily page assignments below):

L. Russ Bush, ed. *Classical in Christian Apologetics: A.D. 100-1800*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Academie, 1983. 386 pg. ISBN-13: 978-0310456414. (Primary source readings from the great apologists who have defended the faith through the ages.)

Steven B. Cowan, ed. *Five Views on Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000. 400 pg. ISBN-13: 978-0310224761. (A comparison of five major apologetic approaches, written by the advocates themselves, and each including a response from the others. Contributors include William Lane Craig, Gary R. Habermas, Paul D. Feinburg, John M. Frame, and Kelly James Clark.)

Supplemental Readings in Apologetics. This packet of materials will be provided by the instructor.

Recommended Supplemental Reading:

F. F. Bruce. *The Defense of the Gospel in the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977. (A brief yet excellent survey of the various apologetic approaches to be found in the New Testament. Alas, it is out of print.)

John M. Frame. *Apologetics to the Glory of God: An Introduction*. Phila.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1994. ISBN: 0875522432. (A carefully reasoned and practical overview of the presuppositional approach to apologetics in the Van Til tradition.)

C. S. Lewis. *Mere Christianity*. San Francisco: Harper, 2001. 256 pg. ISBN: 0060652926. (An all-time classic of popular Christian defense by one of the best known Christian authors of all time.)

J. K. S. Reid. *Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970. (One of only two thoroughgoing histories of Christian apologetics published in recent times. Alas, also out of print.)

R. C. Sproul, John Gerstner and Arthur Lindsley. *Classical Apologetics: A Rational Defense of the Christian Faith and a Critique of Presuppositional Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984. ISBN: 0310449510. (A defense of classical evidentialism containing a sharp critique of Van Tillian presuppositionalism by some the best-known contemporary Reformed apologists.)