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Fall 2013

THE 5151 Topics in Apologetics in the 21st Century

Course Description:

The faith tradition especially in Christianity is still faced with many theological and social challenges in the 21st century. These challenges have been renewed by the recent rise of "new atheism," for example, which has produced influential publications such as Richard Dawkins' *The God Delusion* (2006). Because of this, lots of adherents in the faith tradition are either doubting or losing their faith. The most notable among the challenges today are the atheistic assertions that the universe is the product of natural selection, and that religion and morality are not rooted in God at all, as well as the sharply anti-religious objections that the God of the Bible is murderous, that religion is oppressive and violent, and that it is abusive to children. Other challenges today include the aftermath of the 20th-century Sexual Revolution and Jacque Derrida's deconstructionism. This course, through lectures and class discussions, addresses these challenges as well as older issues such as the problem of evil, the believability of miracles, and biological evolution. 3 credits.

Outcomes: Upon the completion of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Know the meaning of apologetics.
2. Identify and address the most notable challenges to the faith tradition.
3. Realize that apologists need not only knowledge of the field of apologetics but also a kind of wisdom that can arise from their doubt, prayer, and reflection in order to effectively address challenges to faith.

Weekly Schedule:

1.	a) Introduction	Strobel 7-23	
	b) A History of Apologetics	Dyrness 23-51	
2.	Why Evil and Suffering?	Strobel 25-55 (obj. 1)	Keller 22-34
3.	Are Miracles Believable?	Strobel 57-86 (obj. 2)	
4.	Evolution	Strobel 87-112 (obj. 3)	Dawkins 137-89 (chap. 4)
5.	A Murderous God?	Strobel 113-43 (obj. 4)	Dawkins 113-43 (chap. 7)
6.	Just One True Religion?	Strobel 145-67 (obj. 5)	Keller 3-21
7.	A Loving God and Hell?	Strobel 169-94 (obj. 6)	Keller 68-83
8.	Oppression and Violence?	Strobel 195-221 (obj. 7)	Dawkins 195-221 (chap. 8)
9.	Forcing Beliefs on Children?		Dawkins 349-87 (chap. 9)
10.	Atheism	Geisler & Brooks 15-33	Dawkins 100-36 (chap. 3)
11.	Religion Not Rooted in God		Dawkins 190-240 (chap. 5)
12.	Morality Not Rooted in God		Dawkins 241-67 (chap. 6)
13.	The Sexual Revolution	Gallangher	
14.	Deconstructionism	Middleton and Walsh	
15.	Conclusion: Doubt and Faith	Strobel 223-62	

Requirements:

1. Assigned reading(s) for each session. (There will occasionally be a brief quiz in order to know the student's comprehension.)

2. A book report on either of the two required textbooks. (2 to 3 pages typed, double-spaced). Due by the 11th week of the term.
3. A term paper (13-15 pages typed, double spaced). Due by the end of the term.

Evaluation: The student will be evaluated on the basis of:

1. Quizzes (17.5%)
2. Book report (17.5%)
3. Term paper (40%)
4. Class involvement (25%)

Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism is a form of dishonesty that occurs when a student passes off someone else's work as their own. This can range from failing to cite an author for ideas incorporated into a student's paper, to cutting and pasting paragraphs from different websites, to handing in a paper downloaded from the Internet. This includes buying or submitting a paper written by a third party. All are considered forms of "plagiarism" and a violation of the Seminary's academic integrity policy. Instances of plagiarism may be reported to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for disciplinary action. Possible disciplinary actions include probation, suspension or withdrawal.

Required Textbooks:

Dawkins, Richard. *The God Delusion*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008. ISBN 13: 978-0-618-91824-9. $12.32.

Strobel, Lee. *The Case for Faith: A Journalist Investigates the Toughest Objections to Christianity*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2000. ISBN 978-0310-23469-2. $12.27.

Required Readings:

Callagher, Steve. *How America Lost Her Innocence: A History of the Sexual Revolution*. Dry Ridge, Ky.: Pure Life Ministries, 2005.

Dyrness, William. *Christian Apologetics in a World Community*. Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1983, pp. 23-51.

Geisler, Norman L., and Brooks, Ronald M. *When Skeptics Ask*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1990, pp. 15-33.

Keller, Timothy. *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*. New York: Dutton, 2008.

Middleton, J. Richard, and Walsh, Brian J. "Facing the Postmodern Scalpel: Can the Christian Faith Withstand Deconstruction?" In *Christian Apologetics in the Postmodern World*, pp. 131-54. Edited by Timothy R. Phillips and Dennis L. Okholm. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1995.

Suggested Readings:

Avis, Paul. *Faith in the Fires of Criticism: Christianity in Modern Thought*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1995.

Beilby. James K. *Thinking about Christian Apologetics: What It Is and Why We Do It***.** Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2011.

Carroll, Vincent, and Shiflett, David. *Christianity on Trial: Arguments against Anti-Religious Bigotry*. San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2002.

Craig, William Lane. *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*. 3rd ed. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2008.

Ingram, Kenneth. *Is Christianity Credible?: A Plain Guide for Intelligent Inquiries*. London: The Faith Press, 1963.

Kreeft, Peter. *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1994.

Markos, Louis. *Apologetics for the Twenty-first Century*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2010.

McGrath, Alister E. *Intellectuals Don't Need God and Other Modern Myths*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1993.

Moore, Peter C. *Disarming the Secular Gods: How to Talk So Skeptics Will Listen*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1989.

Reid, J. K. S. *Christian Apologetics*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969.

Sproul, R. C. *Defending Your Faith: An Introduction to Apologetics*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2009.

West, Christopher. *Theology of the Body for Beginners: A Basic Introduction to Pope John Paul II's Sexual Revolution*. Revised ed. West Chester, Pa.: Ascension Press, 2009.