

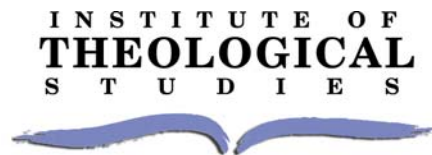


Exploring Approaches to Apologetics

Programmed Syllabus

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Syllabus

Course Description

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15). Peter's words ring true in today's anti-Christian culture. In this course, learners compare biblical, historical, and recent approaches to defending faith in God, Christ, and Scripture. The course emphasizes the apologetics of Peter among Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 2), and Paul among the Gentiles in Athens (Acts 17). It compares the still influential approaches of Augustine and Aquinas, but focuses primarily on the approaches of six apologists who led in the resurgence of evangelicalism during the last half of the twentieth century.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. Explain the nature of apologetics and the need for implementing a ministry based on sound reasoning.
2. Sum up relevant biblical teaching and examples of the use of apologetics, comparing and contrasting Peter's approach to Jews and Paul's approach to Gentiles (Jerusalem and Athens).
3. Compare and contrast the approaches to defending the faith in Augustine and Aquinas.
4. Describe the roots and characteristics of non-Christian belief systems and three basic worldviews that challenged twentieth century apologists.
5. Compare and contrast six distinct ways of reasoning in support of evangelical Christian faith with some objectivity and fairness.
6. Develop a coherent approach synthesizing the strengths of the six as the base for verifying religious beliefs and living a life faithful to them.
7. Mature in the art of communicating the faith to varieties of people from radically different worldviews and their cultural expressions.

Course Texts

Lewis, Gordon R. *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims: Approaches to Christian Apologetics*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1976. Reprint: Lanham, New York: London University Press of America, 1990.

Emphasizes the need for the science of apologetics, a well thought through epistemological method of reasoning from the logical starting point to the conclusion.



Syllabus

McGrath, Alister E. *Intellectuals Don't Need God and Other Modern Myths: Building Bridges to Faith through Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993.

Wisdom on the art of person-centered apologetics for relating the faith in dialogues with varied individuals, talks in different classes and messages for culturally different congregations.

Sire, James W. *The Universe Next Door*. Fourth edition. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

Helps to understand the multiple worldviews Christians face at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Correlation of Course Outline, Lectures and Readings Requirements

The course is based on the twelve major topics covered as follows:

- A. The Need for Apologetics and its Nature (Lecture I)
- B. Approaches to Apologetics in the Old and New Testaments (Lectures II-IV)

Required text: Lewis, Gordon R. *TCTC*, chapter 1.
Recommended texts: Bruce, F. F. *The Defense of the Gospel in the New Testament*
Dyrness, William. *Christian Apologetics*, pp. 11-12
Dulles, A.R. *A History of Apologetics*

- C. Augustine's Approach to Apologetics (Lectures V-VI)
- D. The Approach of Thomas Aquinas to Apologetics (Lecture VI continued)

Required text: Lewis, G.R. "Faith and History in St. Augustine," *Trinity Journal*, NS (1982) pp. 39-50. (included in student materials)
Recommended texts: Lewis, G.R. *Faith and Reason in the Thought of St. Augustine*.
Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1959. (Available for purchase or from Interlibrary loan, Denver Seminary Library.)
Dyrness, Wm. *Christian Apologetics*, pp. 23-35.
Reid, J.K.S. *Christian Apologetics*, pp. 75-121.
Bush, Russ, ed. *Classical Readings in Christian Apologetics*, pp. 195-300.
Dulles, A.R. *A History of Apologetics*

- E. Roots of Twentieth Century Thought (Lecture VII)



Syllabus

- F. Twentieth Century Non-Christian Thought (Lectures VII continued-Xa)
- Required text: Sire, James. *The Universe Next Door*.
Recommended texts: Dyrness, Wm. *Christian Apologetics*, pp. 35-51.
Henry, Carl F.H. *Remaking the Modern Mind*.
Reid, J.K.S. *Christian Apologetics*, pp. 122-210.
Dulles, A.R. *A History of Apologetics*
- G. The Pure Empirical Approach of J. Oliver Buswell, Jr. (Lectures Xb-XIa)
- Required text: Lewis, Gordon. *TCTC*, chapter 2.
Recommended texts: Sproul, R.C. et. al. *Classical Apologetics*.
Geisler, Norman. *Christian Apologetics*.
Moreland, J.P. *Scaling the Secular City*.
- H. The Approach of Rational Empiricism, Stuart Hackett (Lectures XIb-XIIIb).
- Required text: Lewis, Gordon. *TCTC*, chapter 3.
Recommended texts: Hamilton. *The Basis of Christian Faith*.
Hackett. *The Reconstruction of the Christian Revelation Claim*.
- I. The Approach of Rationalism, Gordon Clark (Lectures XIIc-XIVa).
- Required text: Lewis, Gordon. *TCTC*, chapter 4.
Recommended texts: Clark, Gordon. *A Christian View of Men and Things*.
_____. *Religion, Reason and Revelation*.
Nash, Ronald, ed. *The Philosophy of Gordon H. Clark*.
- J. The Approach of Self-Authenticating Presuppositions, Cornelius Van Til (Lectures XIVb-XVa).
- Required text: Lewis, Gordon. *TCTC*, chapter 5.
Recommended texts: Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*
Geehan, ed. *Jerusalem and Athens: Critical Discussions on the Theology and Apologetics of Cornelius Van Til*.
Frame, John M. *Apologetics to the Glory of God*.
- K. The Approach of Christian Mysticism, Young and Barrett (Lectures XVb-XVIIb).
- Required text: Lewis, Gordon. *TCTC*, chapter 6.
Recommended texts: Young, W.C. *A Christian Approach to Philosophy*.
Barrett, E.E. *A Christian Perspective of Knowing*.



Syllabus

- L. The Verificational Approach, Edward John Carnell (Lectures XVIc-XXIV).

Required text: Lewis, Gordon. *TCTC*, chapters 7-10.

Recommended texts: Carnell, E.J. *Introduction to Apologetics*.
Trueblood. *A Philosophy of Religion*.
Carnell, E.J. *A Philosophy of the Christian Religion*.



Course Requirements

I. General Requirements

In order to receive three semester (or four quarter) hours of credit, you must complete the course requirements within a one-year period unless the particular institution requires the completion of all the work within the framework of the semester or quarter. During this time, you are expected to devote a minimum of 130 hours to the completion of the course including listening to the recorded lectures, doing the assigned readings, answering all questions in the Study Guide, completing the Dialogue Reports, Written Testimony, ITS Online Interactivity Forum, Spiritual Formation Project, Research Paper, Textbook Quizzes and Final Examination.

II. Specific Requirements

- A. Lectures: Listen carefully to all of the twenty-four (24) recorded lectures by Dr. Gordon Lewis.



Syllabus

- B. Required Reading: The following three textbooks have been assigned over which quizzes will be taken: (See above: Course Texts)

Sire, James. *The Universe Next Door*.

Lewis, Gordon R. *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims: Approaches to Christian Apologetics*.

McGrath, Alister E. *Intellectuals Don't Need God and Other Modern Myths: Building Bridges to Faith Through Apologetics*.

- C. Additional Reading: Complete at least **800 pages** of reading outside of the assigned textbooks. Such readings can be taken from the Bibliography listed in the Syllabus and Study Guide. Submit a report on a separate sheet of paper noting the title of the book, author, publisher, date of publication and the pages read.

- D. Study Questions: You are required to make careful use of the Study Guide prepared by Dr. Lewis and are responsible for the questions over the twelve major topics covered by the lecturer (see pp. 20-25 of the Study Guide). Answers to the questions are to be answered in writing and submitted to the course grader.

Because there are so many questions, the administrator of the course may select a majority from each main point in the outline or permit the student to select a majority of the questions to answer under each of the twelve major points in the course outline as printed in the Study Guide and in the Programmed Syllabus.

- E. Dialogue Reports (see also Lewis' instructions in lecture 10): By the end of this course engage in **two pre-evangelistic conversations** with people who hold naturalistic or pantheistic world views and hand in **1 or 2 page reports** of each, illustrating your respect for those who differ with you, and your use of your apologetic approach: Listening to their hypothesis, presenting yours, appealing to common ground and criteria of truth, etc. Each report should indicate the following:

1. How you began the dialogue.
2. The questions you asked from epistemology, metaphysics and ethics. (These questions should take the form of "What do you believe about...?" or something similar.)
3. The assumptions of the person.
4. How the person defined key terms.
5. The grounds on which the person defended his/her views.
6. An outline of your response(s) to the person.
7. The apparent results of your dialogue.

- F. Written Testimony: Write out and hand in a **three to five page** testimony of your conversion to Christ that avoids the weaknesses of Christian mysticism and



Syllabus

incorporates its strengths Consider Lewis' comments on personal testimony in lecture 16. As a minimum your testimony should include the following:

1. Circumstances of your conversion to Christ (i.e. place, age, situation, who explained salvation to you, etc.)
2. Reasons why you placed faith in Christ
3. Perceived results of conversion (i.e. feelings of peace, victory over sin, etc.)
4. Appeal to the nonbeliever to make a similar conversion

G. ITS Online Interactivity Forum

Participate with other students worldwide in an ongoing asynchronous threaded discussion of two major course topics. Go to www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/ to register for and enter the ITS Online Interactivity Forum. In order to get the fullest benefit from the Forum, complete the assignment *after* you have listened to *all* the lectures. Be sure to return to the forum after finishing the course to see how others respond. Follow these steps to complete the assignment:

- ◆ Post an original answer to each question for your course (75 word min.).
- ◆ Post your response to any previous answer given to each question (75 word min.).
- ◆ Submit a document to your proctor that contains the original questions, your postings, and the postings to which you responded.

NOTE: Please read the “Assignment Instructions” in the Forum for details.

Objective: to develop critical thinking skills through personal interaction with the content of the course and the responses of others within a diverse community of learners.

F. Spiritual Formation Project

RATIONALE Ministry preparation and the Christian life require more than academic exercises. Learners also need personal, spiritual formation, which involves theological reflection and critical thinking on their current practices and assumptions. This process occurs as learners engage in self-reflection and interaction in a community of learning. **With this in mind**, ITS includes in all courses a capstone project addressing these issues and facilitating interaction beyond the formal learning environment (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 4.1.1; 10.3.3.3).

Write a **five-to-six page reflective essay** and **interview a mentor**, discussing the spiritual impact of this course on your life. *Identify your mentor early in the course*, and submit the essay to your grader when you take the final exam. This last project



Syllabus

should not be a summary of course content, but an application of course principles.
Complete the following

1. Personal Reflection and Evaluation: *Reflect on the course* – To integrate your academic studies with your walk of faith, reflect on the content of the course and evaluate your life in light of what you learned.

a. Follow these steps in your reflection:

Step 1: What **one** theme, principle, or concept in the course is the most significant to you personally? Why is it significant?

Step 2: What portion(s) of the course brought this theme/principle/concept to light?

Step 3: Think about your past. Why is it vital now for you to deal with and apply this theme/principle/concept?

Step 4: How should this affect your thoughts and actions, and what *specific steps* should you take to *concretely* apply what you have learned?

b. Write your answers to the above questions in full paragraph form. (Recommended length for this reflection: **approximately three pages**)

c. Give a copy of this reflection to your mentor (see #2).

2. Community Reflection and Interaction: *Interview a mentor* – Since the Holy Spirit uses the input of others to guide and form His people, interview a mentor according to the following guidelines:

a. Who should you interview? (1-3 are required; 4-6 are recommended)

1. Someone with whom you have a reasonably close relationship.
2. Someone who is a mature Christian ministry leader (i.e. a pastor).
3. Someone who is **not** your grader or a family member.
4. Someone who values the spiritual formation process.
5. Someone who is familiar with and values the subject of the course.
6. Someone who has experience using the content of the course in ministry.

NOTE: ***Identify your mentor early in the course***, and give him/her the page entitled “Guidelines for Mentors.”

b. Focus of the interview – Your interview should focus on the issues and questions you raise in your essay. For example:

- ♦ What feedback can your mentor give in response to your essay?



Syllabus

- ◆ In light of the course content, are the conclusions you made appropriate? Why or why not?
- ◆ What additional advice, deeper insights or broader applications might he/she suggest from his/her own life and ministry?

NOTE: Conduct this interview either in person (preferred) or over the phone. Do **not** use electronic communication (i.e. email, instant messenger, etc). Suggested length: 45 minutes.

3. **Synthesis and Application: *Draw your final conclusions*** – Having reflected on the course and the discussion with your mentor, synthesize what you have learned in these three sections:
- a. Section 1: Begin your essay with the personal reflection from #1 above. This should be exactly what you gave your mentor for the interview.
 - b. Section 2: Comment on your interview, explaining what you discussed and the insights you gained from your mentor. Include the following:
 - ◆ What were the mentor’s comments regarding your essay?
 - ◆ What advice did he/she give?
 - ◆ How did his/her comments expand or correct your application of the course?
 - ◆ Include the person’s name, occupation, and the length of the interview.
 - c. Section 3: Conclude with a synthesis of what you have learned. Answer the following:
 - ◆ If your mentor corrected any thoughts in your “Personal Reflection and Evaluation”, how do you feel about these corrections? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
 - ◆ Synthesizing your thoughts from section one and your mentor’s insight in section two, what final conclusions have you reached? How is this different from section one?
 - ◆ In light of the interview and further reflection, what additional, *specific* changes need to occur in your life and what *concrete* steps will you take to implement them?



Syllabus

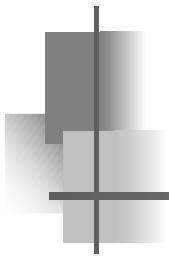
NOTE TO STUDENTS: Your effort in this assignment will determine its benefit. If by the end of this course you have not yet reflected critically on your life in light of what you have studied, allow this assignment to guide you in that process. The instructor for this course will not score your essay based on the amount of spiritual fruit you describe; so do not exaggerate (or trivialize) what you have learned. **The primary grading criteria is that you have thoughtfully considered the principles of the course and realistically sought to apply them to your life.** If you have done this and met the minimal requirements (as noted above), you will earn the full points for this assignment.

Note on confidentiality: Perhaps the Holy Spirit is dealing with you in some very personal areas of your life. Because of this, your grader will keep your essay entirely confidential and either return or discard it.

Objective: to stimulate reflection and interaction on course principles in order to enhance personal spiritual formation.

Revised 10/05

- G. Textbook Quizzes: You will take **three quizzes** on the required texts:
1. *Universe Next Door*: A quiz testing your understanding of alternative worldviews by the seven points of comparison in Sire's book.
 2. *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims*: A quiz on Dr. Gordon Lewis' book designed to test your grasp of the science of apologetics based on the five points of comparison, the definitions in the glossary and the identification of the other writers in the Appendix in relation to which of the six methods of reasoning they utilize most closely.
 3. *Intellectuals Don't Need God*: A quiz focusing on your ability to adapt your apologetic to a person's cultural and other differences based on McGrath's book, emphasizing chapters 2, 3, 4 and 7.
- H. Final Examination: There will be a comprehensive Final Examination covering all the materials in the lectures and readings.



Syllabus

Course Grading

Study Questions (see Study Guide, pp. 21-25).....	25%
Dialogue Reports	6%
Written Testimony.....	9%
ITS Online Interactivity Forum.....	5%
Spiritual Formation Project.....	10%
Textbook Quizzes (10% each).....	30%
Final Examination	15%
Total:	100%

Syllabus

Notes Regarding This Downloaded Syllabus

This downloadable syllabus is not exhaustive. It is designed to provide learners with a picture of the course, not a full outline of the course. Grader Guidelines, Appendixes, Bibliographies, Lecture Outlines, and Review Questions have been removed. The complete course syllabus is included with purchase of the course in either a digital or hard-copy format.

Likewise, individuals taking the class for credit are responsible for the syllabus requirements of the specific institution through which the course is offered. Each individual institution has reserved the right to alter or change the syllabus as deemed necessary.