

ASSOCIATED CANADIAN THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS CAP 550: Apologetics in a Post-Modern World

Instructor: Paul Chamberlain, PhD
Fall 2010
3 Semester Hours

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Wednesdays
8:30 – 11:10 a.m.

Biographical

Paul Chamberlain has taught at Trinity Western University since 1990 and has also worked with Ravi Zacharias International Ministries during part of that time. His Ph.D. is from Marquette University (1990) in philosophy with specializations in ethics and philosophy of religion. His primary areas of teaching are Christian Apologetics, Ethics, Philosophy of Religion and Political Philosophy. He is the author of three books and a number of articles on social and apologetic issues. He currently serves as professor of Apologetics and Ethics at ACTS and is Director of the Institute for Christian Apologetics at ACTS.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Apologetics is an intellectual discipline, which is concerned with making a case for the truth of Christian faith and also defending the Christian faith against charges of falsehood or inconsistency. This course will seek to introduce students to this discipline. Attention will be given to the history of this discipline, various approaches used by apologists, key terms in apologetics and a number of the most important challenges and arguments apologists wrestle with today.

OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of this course is to:

1. enable students to examine and test the truth and coherence of Christian faith,
2. bolster the faith of Christian students,
3. aid students in the task of evangelism,
4. acquaint students with various approaches to apologetics,
5. give students a basic understanding of the most common arguments used by contemporary apologists in defense of Christian faith,
6. make students aware of a few of the most common contemporary challenges to Christian faith as well as responses that can be offered to them.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Cowan, Steven B., Ed. *Five Views on Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. 2000

Craig, William Lane. *Hard Questions, Real Answers*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2003.

Grenz, Stanley J. *A Primer on Postmodernism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996.

Kreeft, Peter. *Yes or No: Straight Answers to Tough Questions About Christianity*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press. 1991

RECOMMENDED FOR FURTHER READING:

Beckwith, Francis J., William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland, eds. *To Everyone an Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview*: Downers Grove: Intervarsity press, 2004.

Bush, L. Russ. *Classical Readings in Christian Apologetics: A.D. 100-1800*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Academie, 1983.

Clark, David K. *Dialogical Apologetics: A Person-Centered Approach to Christian Defense*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993.

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

Edgar, William. *Reasons of the Heart: Recovering Christian Persuasion*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.

Evans, C. Stephen. *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics and Philosophy of Religion*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2002.

Kreeft, Peter. *The Best Things in Life: A Twentieth-Century Socrates Looks at Power, Pleasure, Truth, and the Good Life*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1984.

Kreeft, Peter. *Between Heaven and Hell: A Dialogue Somewhere Beyond Death with John F. Kennedy, C. S. Lewis and Aldous Huxley*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1982.

Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. New York: Macmillan, 1952.

Lewis, C. S. *Miracles*. New York: Macmillan, 1947.

Lewis, C. S. *The Problem of Pain*. New York: Macmillan, 1940.

Moreland, J. P. *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987.

Moreland, J.P. and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2003.

Pascal, Blaise. *Pensees*. Trans. A. J. Krailsheimer. Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1966.

Stackhouse, John G., Jr. *Humble Apologetics: Defending the Faith Today*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

COURSE SCHEDULE: Readings and Student Presentations

(Please read Cowan and Grenz before the course begins)

Session 1: Introductory lecture: Foundational Issues in Apologetics I

Session 2: Foundational Issues in Apologetics II

Session 3: Important questions the apologist must ask: *Craig*, chapters 1 & 2
Pres (Craig, chpt. 1) _____

Session 4: Important Questions the apologist must ask: *Craig*, entire text
Pres (Craig, chpt. 2) _____

Session 5: Classical Apologetics, *Cowan* 25 – 89
Pres _____
Pres _____

Session 6: Evidential Apologetics, *Cowan* 91 – 145
Pres _____
Pres _____

Session 7: Cumulative Apologetics, *Cowan* 147 – 206
Pres _____
Pres _____

Session 8: Presuppositional Apologetics, *Cowan* 207 – 263
Pres _____
Pres _____

Session 9: Reformed Apologetics, *Cowan* 265 – 312
Pres _____
Pres _____

Session 10: Apologetics and the alleged Modern connection, *Grenz* chpt. One
Pres (Grenz chpt. 1) _____

Session 11: Apologetics and the Postmodern challenge, *Grenz* entire text
Pres (Grenz chpt. 2) _____

ASSIGMENTS AND GRADING PROCEDURES:

1. Careful reading of all assigned readings.
2. One summary/evaluation 20%
3. Two in-class seminar presentations 40%

4. Research essay

40%

Reading Summary and Evaluation

Students will select one chapter from Grenz or Cowan. For your chapter summarize the author's most important ideas. Your rule of thumb as you summarize the chapter is that what is important to the author is important to you. Then evaluate the chapter. Do you agree with the author? Why or why not? Identify any ideas which seem particularly strong or weak to you. How might the chapter have been improved if you had written it? Summary should be 4 to 6 pages in length with approximately two-thirds summary and one-third evaluation.

Worth 20%

Due date: November 11

Research Essay

For the essay you will construct an argument in defense of the Christian faith. You choose the argument and the approach you will use. Early in your essay you will set out a clear and concise thesis which your essay will focus on and argue for. Please note that this will be an *argumentative* essay and not simply a *discussion* essay. Of course you will include responses to the strongest objections to your argument as well. This should be 16 – 20 pages (4,000 – 5,000 words). Due date: November 24, 2006

Worth 40%

Due date: December 2

In-class seminars

These are not intended to be prepared, or even begun, before the course begins. They will be prepared during the course and due at various times as agreed upon early in the course.

Each student will lead the class in two seminars through the assigned readings for the day. Each seminar will cover one assigned reading. The seminar will consist of the following two parts:

- 1) A basic summary of the author's most important ideas,
- 2) Your assessment of and response to them. Interact deeply with the author. For example, highlight points of agreement and disagreement with specific ideas and tell why. Draw out assumptions you find the author making and give apologetic responses to them. Then respond to questions from your colleagues and professor.

Your presentation should be approximately half summary and half assessment. You will prepare a four to six (4-6) page written document, in polished form, which you will read from and distribute to the class at the beginning of your presentation.

Worth 20% x 2 = 40%

Supplement: Important Academic Notes from ACTS

Web Support – Student Portal <https://students.twu.ca>

All students at TWU have a TWUPass username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application or can be managed through the computing services help desk or the link on the student portal. Your student email account is also available through this student portal and is vital for communication about grades, account statements, lost passwords, sign-up instructions, etc. If you do not know your account or password, there is a link at the login area called “I forgot my password.” When you click on that link, you will be walked through the process of retrieving your account information.

Campus Closure

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions overnight or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to the radio stations CKNW (980 AM), CKWX (1130 AM), MAX (850 AM), PRAISE (106.5 FM) and KARI (550 AM) by 6:30 a.m., and an announcement will be placed on the University's switchboard as well as on the website <http://www.twu.ca/conditions/>. The first announcement regarding a closure will cover the period up to 1:00 p.m. only. If classes are to be cancelled beyond 1:00 p.m., this decision will be announced by the same means before 11:00 a.m. that day. Students and faculty should assume that all night classes will continue to operate. If the emergency continues into the evening, students and faculty may check for a closure notice on the University's switchboard and website after 3:00 p.m. that day.

Paper Formatting

Students need to adhere to Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format except for in counselling courses, for which APA format is used and for CANIL courses.

Students are strongly encouraged to use RefWorks (available through the library home page www.twu.ca/library) as their bibliographical manager and as a tool for formatting bibliographies. They will need to be aware of the need to “clean up” most bibliographies generated by this program. Students are encouraged to view the documents on the following websites for format samples:

http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html or www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/. Note that in RefWorks the available formatting styles are those of Turabian (Notes), 7th edition, and APA – American Psychological Association, 5th edition. For Turabian, note that there are two formats – Notes (or Bibliography Style) and Reference List (a short format citation style). ACTS uses the Notes (Bibliography) format, not Reference List.

Counselling students are expected to purchase the APA Publications Manual. More information found at the following website. <http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html>. For free online programs that will enable you to create properly formatted bibliography citations, go to <http://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/> ("Chicago stands for "Turabian") or <http://www.sourceaid.com/citationbuilder/>. CANIL students can locate this on the CANIL intranet, under the “student” side. A hard copy is given to incoming students in the fall.

Please check with your professor to see which one he/she recommends you use!!

Research Ethics

Please note that all research projects involving human participants undertaken by members of the TWU university community (including projects done by ACTS students to satisfy course or degree requirements) **MUST** be approved by the Trinity Western University Research Ethics Board. Information and forms may be found at

<http://www.twu.ca/academics/research/ethics/>

Those needing additional clarification may contact the ACTS Academic Dean's office. Please allow at least three (3) weeks from the date of submission for a review of the application.

Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism at TWU

As Christian scholars pursuing higher education, academic integrity is a core value of the entire TWU community. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship at TWU. This includes, but is not limited to, avoiding all forms of plagiarism and cheating in scholarly work. TWU has a strict policy on plagiarism (see academic calendar 2008-09, pp. 37-38). Further details on this subject are contained in the ACTS Student Handbook in section 4.12. The handbook is available online on the ACTS webpage (www.acts.twu.ca) at the following link:

www.acts.twu.ca/Handbook.html.

Learning what constitutes plagiarism and avoiding it is the student's responsibility. An excellent resource describing plagiarism and how to avoid it has been prepared by TWU Librarian William Badke and is freely available for download (PPT file) or used as flash (self running) tutorials of varying lengths from:

<http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/plagiarism.ppt>

<http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/Plagiarism.swf> (14 minute flash tutorial)

http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/Plagiarism_Short.swf (8 minute flash tutorial)

Equity of Access

It is the responsibility of a student with a learning disability to inform the ACTS Director of Student Life of that fact before the beginning of a course so that necessary arrangements may be made to facilitate the student's learning experience. We are unable to accommodate any student who informs the Director of Student Life of a disability after the beginning of class.