



ERSKINE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
For Christ and His Church

ST780G APOLOGETICS AND WORLD RELIGIONS

Semester: January 4-7, 2016

Greenville: Mitchell Road Presbyterian Church

Professor of Record: The Reverend Michael A. Milton, Ph.D.
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Mission

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church.

Course Description

Students will identify commonly encountered classical, modern, and postmodern challenges to the Christian faith, including secularism and the New Atheism; evaluate the classical and contemporary efforts to defend the Christian faith against these challenges; and develop strategies for setting forth Christianity's truth claims in a world that is increasingly diverse and religiously pluralistic. **This course is for CEU or Audits only. Students who wish graduate credit may participate but will need to register for the online course ST780Z Apologetics and World Religions, spring 2016.**

Course Purpose

To introduce the student to the study of Apologetics; to identify and evaluate contemporary approaches to Apologetics; to survey and critique contemporary challenges to the Christian faith, including the New Atheism; to introduce students to non-Christian religions; and to construct a personal Apologetic approach, in light of Scripture, that responds to contemporary challenges.

Course Learning Outcomes

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for ministry in the Christian Church. As a part of that mission, one goal is to teach students various methods used to defend the faith, including the development of the student's own approach to doing Apologetics. In this course conventional theological language and various methods of doing Apologetics are emphasized.

Specific objectives for this course are that, by the end of the course, students will:

1. Articulate significant religious and philosophical challenges to the Christian faith and develop methods for responding to those challenges. **(MDIV SLO 1c and 3)**
2. Understand by defining the methodologies of various systems of Apologetics and be able to critique their effectiveness. **(MDIV SLO 1b, and 2d)**
3. Know the truths of Biblical revelation and how to relate them to the culture in light of his/her own theological commitment. **(MDIV SLO 1a, 1b, 2a, 2c, and 3)**
4. Articulate the worldview components of the major world religions in dialogue with Christianity. **(MDIV SLO 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b, and 3)**
5. Apply revelation, reason, and evidences to contemporary issues. **(MDIV SLO 1a, and 1c)**
6. Develop a consistently Christian world and life view and be ready to give an answer for the hope that he/she has experienced in Christ. **(MDIV SLO 1a, 1b, 1c, 2a, and 2b)**
7. Evaluate and respond to the challenges of Postmodernism. **(MDIV SLO 1b, 1c, 2d, and 3)**
8. Affirm wisely the Christian worldview in our increasingly diverse and religiously pluralistic world. **(MDIV SLO 2b)**

Required Course Textbooks

Students are expected to secure their own copies of all required materials. As a convenience, the seminary has a bookstore portal of the website at <http://seminary.erskine.edu/resources/bookstore/>. There you will find links to familiar vendors (CBD, Amazon) and can check availability of texts, compare prices, and place orders. The ETS SBA will receive a modest percentage of the profits from students' and professors' purchases through this portal. The Erskine Campus Bookstore will carry a limited number of copies of every required text and orders for books can be placed through the Campus Bookstore.

Netland, Harold A. *Christianity & Religious Diversity: Clarifying Christian Commitments in a Globalizing Age*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2015.

Plantinga, Alvin. *Knowledge and Christian Belief*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015.
Sire, James W. *Apologetics beyond Reason: Why Seeing Really Is Believing*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014.

Recommended Course Textbooks (Not Required)

Corduan, Winfried. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.

Frame, John M. *Apologetics to the Glory of God: An Introduction*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1994.

Sire, James W. *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009.

Further Reading (Not Required)

Blamires, Harry. *The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think?* Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1963.

Boa, Kenneth. *Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to Defending the Christian Faith*. Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2006.

Campbell-Jack, Walter Campbell., Gavin McGrath, and C. Stephen. Evans. *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2006.

Coogan, Michael David. *The Illustrated Guide to World Religions*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Copan, Paul. *That's Just Your Interpretation: Responding to Skeptics Who Challenge Your Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001.

Copan, Paul. *When God Goes to Starbucks: A Guide to Everyday Apologetics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008.

Corduan, Winfried. *No Doubt about It: The Case for Christianity*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1997.

Craig, William Lane., and William Lane. Craig. *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994.

Dembski, William A., and Mike Licona. *Evidence for God: 50 Arguments for Faith from the Bible, History, Philosophy, and Science*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010.

Dembski, William A. *Intelligent Design: The Bridge between Science & Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999.

Geisler, Norman L., Francis Beckwith, William Lane. Craig, and James Porter Moreland. *To Everyone an Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview: Essays in Honor of Norman L. Geisler*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

Johnson, Phillip E. *Reason in the Balance: The Case against Naturalism in Science, Law & Education*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995.

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

Kreeft, Peter. *Between Heaven & Hell: A Dialog Somewhere beyond Death with John F. Kennedy, C.S. Lewis & Aldous Huxley*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1982.

Lewis, C. S., and Kathleen Norris. *Mere Christianity. A Revised and Amplified Edition: With a New Introduction, of the Three Books*. London: Collins, 2012.

Milton, Michael A. *Cooperation without Compromise: Faithful Gospel Witness in a Pluralistic Setting*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2006.

Moreland, James Porter. *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987.

Netland, Harold A. *Christianity & Religious Diversity: Clarifying Christian Commitments in a Globalizing Age*.

Newbigin, Leslie. *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*. London: SPCK, 1986.

Plantinga, Alvin. *Knowledge and Christian Belief*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015.

Schaeffer, Francis A., and James Montgomery Boice. *The Foundation of Biblical Authority*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.

Tennent, Timothy C. *Christianity at the Religious Roundtable: Evangelicalism in Conversation with Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002.

_____. *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church Is Influencing the Way We Think about and Discuss Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007.

Zaleski, Philip, and Carol Zaleski. *The Fellowship: The Literary Lives of the Inklings: J.R.R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Owen Barfield, Charles Williams*.

Course Expectations

The following grading scale from the Seminary catalog assigns a numeric value to each completed assignment. All scores receive equal weighting. Your final grade is the average of each grade received. The professor computes a letter grade on the basis of your average raw score using the following grade scale recently adopted by the Seminary faculty:

A Level Work = Exemplary ability to differentiate constituent parts; assess and critique

theories, thoughts, ideas, concepts, proposals, and relevant literature; and the ability to reason in a logical and compelling manner.

B Level Work = Reflects above average grasp of the subject matter; displays a superior ability to use new knowledge in a creative manner; and can demonstrate an above average ability to discriminate among alternative viewpoints.

C Level Work = Adequate but not exceptional ability to think cogently and clearly; sufficient ability to understand and comprehend subject matter; and a satisfactory ability to integrate and organize course concepts in a logical and coherent manner.

D Level Work = Inadequate mastery of basic facts and information presented in the course; insufficient or inappropriate use of common terms and language indicating an inadequate grasp of the material; and an inferior ability to analyze and judge proposals, ideas or concepts.

Grading Scale

100 - 95 A	83 - 80 C
94 - 93 A-	79 - 78 C-
92 - 91 B+	77 - 76 D+
90 - 88 B	75 - 72 D
87 - 86 B-	71 - 70 D-

Course Requirements

Online students have access to the Erskine Library. You can access online services at <http://www.erskine.edu/library/>. Though you may wish to check out books via inter-library loan, the online database has a number of articles and resources available for download. As an Erskine Seminary student, you have access to the ATLA Religion database which has 500,000 citations of articles and books. Subjects covered include: Biblical Studies, Theology, Church History, Pastoral Care, Ethics, etc. About 150,000 of these records have full-text articles attached. You can access the online database by logging into your account using your student identification number.

Other resources

<http://www.plagiarism.org/>

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html

All written work must conform to the latest edition of the Turabian manual of style and typed in twelve-point type, Times New Roman (or similar), normally double-spaced, with one-inch

margins. Some reflection papers (which do not use footnotes) may be single spaced. See syllabus requirements for each assignment

Turabian, Kate L., et. al. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Eighth ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
(464 pp., ISBN 978-0226816388)

Click [here](#) for a video tutorial on formatting a document in Turabian style.

Additional writing guidelines are available in the [Sample Paper and Writing Aids](#) folder found on the Seminary's web site. Here you will find sample papers for several courses, a "Seminary Research Paper Template," a Bibliography sample, footnote samples, and more.

Students who may need more assistance are encouraged to make use of the [Write Here Center](#) (Click Here) for improved writing skills.

Students may find the [Erskine Theological Seminary Writing Rubric](#) (Click Here). Scroll down to the Writing Assessment Rubric and download.

All written work presented is expected to be the student's own unless credit for the ideas, words, etc. of others is clearly identified. Plagiarism in sermons costs pastors their jobs. Plagiarism in class will not be tolerated and penalties will be assigned in keeping with the Seminary's Catalog.

Students are strongly encouraged to review the provisions of the Seminary's Catalog, particularly those governing registration for and withdrawal from classes, class attendance, grades (including incompletes), academic conduct, and expectations for written assignments.

Conduct in Theological Discussions: There are no favorites at Erskine. Publicly rejecting this ethos with the result of making fellow students feel unwelcome will be considered unethical behavior. For further information, please see the Community Life Statement in the Catalog.

THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS ARE FOR STUDENTS WHO PLAN TO SIGN UP FOR ST780Z IN THE SPRING. COMPLETING THESE ASSIGNMENTS WILL REDUCE YOUR REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ONLINE COURSE.

Requirement One: Read all of the required texts and turn in a Statement of Assignment. The requirement assumes an honor code between student and professor. Indicate percentage of reading completed on a graduated percentage scale. Complete a theological reflection paper of not more than five pages (double spaced research paper according to the Erskine Research Paper template) that provides your response to this question, "How will the required readings affect my ministry of evangelism and mission in an increasingly pluralistic culture?" **(CLO 1, 2, and 3)**

Requirement Two: The Professor will assign an individual score for research and presentation in the group presentation on analysis and evaluation of world religions and Christianity in dialogue today. **(CLO 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8)**

Requirement Three: The CAPSTONE PROJECT for ST780Z is a theological reflection paper of not more than five pages (double-spaced and according to Erskine Research Paper Template) outlining a social or ethical issue in contemporary society that has become (as you see it) an impediment to the presentation of the Gospel. Your paper will analyze the issue, propose an apologetic approach, method, instrument, patron, and proponent (according to our model offered in class) and why you believe this would be the most effective apologetic methodology. **(CLO 1, 3, 5, 7, and 8)**

IN SUMMARY, the Grade distribution is as follows: 50% from readings, 20% from research and participation, 30% from the CAPSTONE PROJECT.