

Apologetics

CRU – *Institute of Biblical Studies*
Instructor: Keith Plummer, Ph.D.



Course Description

This course will equip you to confidently and winsomely respond to common objections to the Christian faith, identify and appropriately challenge the worldviews from which they arise, and better understand how cultural contexts shape unbelief. Topics we will explore include the existence and nature of God, the relationship between science and Christianity, miracles, the problem of evil and hell, religious and moral relativism, the trustworthiness of the Bible, and the historicity of the resurrection.

Course Objectives

1. To grow in our understanding of and obedience to God's command that we love Him with our whole selves including our minds.
2. To understand the nature and role of apologetics in evangelistic and discipling conversations.
3. To acquire skill in identifying and challenging the presuppositions underlying various objections to the Christian faith.
4. To learn how to make effective use of questions to further evangelistic and apologetic conversations.
5. To become better equipped to articulate a thoughtful case for Christianity.

Required Texts

Allberry, Sam. *Is God Anti-Gay?* Epsom, Surrey, U.K. The Good Book Company, 2013. (ISBN: 9781908762313)

Chatraw, Joshua D. *Telling a Better Story: How to Talk About God in a Skeptical Age* Grand Rapids, MI. Zondervan, 2020. (ASIN: 0310108632)

Keller, Timothy. *The Reason for God*. New York, NY. Riverhead, 2009. (ISBN: 9781594483493)

Course Requirements

1. **Reading:** You are to master the content of the assigned text chapters and articles. You must read all of the assigned reading. On the last week you should fill out a form that states what percentage of the reading you have finished.

2. **Discussions:** This weekly forum is where you, the student, will respond to the discussion topic for the week. Your response constitutes a portion of your overall grade. Please begin by clicking on and replying to the discussion. You will also need to interact with at least 3 other posts, which is also a portion of your overall grade.
3. **Quizzes:** There will be 10 quizzes. Each quiz will be based on the information presented in the assigned lectures for the week. No books, notes, outlines, or helps of any kind are allowed during quizzes or exams.
4. **Final Project:** The purpose of this course is to help you become more effective in the use of apologetics in the context of evangelism and follow up. During the course you will have the opportunity to develop a tool for use in your personal ministry. You have three options from which to choose:
 - a) **Evangelistic article:** The article should be targeted to your ministry audience (professors, college students, high school students, athletes). It should identify a specific objection to the Christian faith (e.g. problem of evil, religious pluralism, fate of the unevangelized, etc.) and present a carefully crafted and well-reasoned response. It is *not* a research paper. Your grade will be based on (1) evidence of a good understanding of the nature of the problem and how it challenges belief in Christian theism, (2) a well-reasoned response to this problem, and (3) proper packaging (targeted toward an audience, good introduction and conclusion). The article should be 5 to 8 pages in length. The article should be typed, double-spaced, using 12-point type.
 - b) **Follow-up Tool:** Imagine you are sitting across the table from a *believer* attempting to give a reasoned response to an apologetic issue. This tool would help this person discover a scriptural viewpoint on an important apologetic question. Some apologetic issues (e.g. resurrection of Christ, fate of the unevangelized, Heaven and Hell, etc.) lend themselves more readily to this than others. It must include appropriate Scripture related to the issue, carefully chosen questions to aid discovery, logical progression of thought, and creative packaging. Your grade will be based on (1) evidence of a good understanding of the nature of the problem, (2) a well-reasoned scriptural response to this problem, and (3) creativity in packaging (captivating introduction, illustrations, several key points, and attractive visual layout). Note: if you wish, you may organize this tool in outline form. However it is organized, you must use only complete sentences (even for titles of main points).
For ease of reading, it should be double-spaced, use type no smaller than 12-point and be at least three pages in length. There is no maximum length and you are encouraged to include diagrams and/or art work.

- c) **Evangelistic Talk:** The talk should contain about 30 minutes of content (about 4-5 pages of notes) and must interact with one apologetic issue. The talk should be targeted to your audience (college students, high school students, athletes, etc.). It must identify a specific objection to the Christian faith and present a carefully crafted and well-reasoned response. You will turn in a *detailed* outline (typed) of the talk. "Detailed" means a clear statement of every thought/idea you intend to communicate. Your introduction, conclusion, and illustrations must be word for word. Even your outline points should be expressed in complete sentences. Your grade will be based on (1) evidence of a good understanding of the nature of the problem you discuss and how it challenges belief in Christian theism, (2) a well-reasoned response to this problem, (3) creativity in presentation, and (4) proper elements of a good talk (captivating introduction, good illustrations, several key points, and a conclusion). Your notes should be double-spaced and no smaller than 12-point type.

Lecture and Assignment Schedule:

Module 1: Introduction to Apologetics

J. Chatraw, Introduction – Chapter 3

T. Keller, Introduction

Discussion on Apologetics

Quiz #1

Module 2: Evidences of God

J. Chatraw, Chapters Four and Five

T. Keller, Chapter Eight

Discussion: Evidence for God's Existence

Quiz #2

Module 3: The Problem of Evil

J. Chatraw, Chapter Twelve

T. Keller, Chapters Two and Nine

Discussion: The Problem of Evil

Quiz #3

Module 4: The Morality of God

J. Chatraw, Chapters Six and Seven

Article: "We Don't Hate Sin So We Don't Understand What Happened to the Canaanites"

Discussion: Is God a Moral Monster?

Quiz #4

Module 5: Science, Scientism, & Miracles

J. Chatraw, Chapter Ten

T. Keller, Chapter Six

Discussion: Science and Miracles

Quiz #5

Module 6: Reason as Evidence for God

J. Chatraw, Chapters Eight and Eleven

Discussion: Truth and Postmodernism**Quiz #6****Module 7: Only One Way?**

J. Chatraw, Chapter Nine

T. Keller, Chapters One, Three, and Five

Discussion: Religious Pluralism**Quiz #7****Module 8: Can We Trust the Bible?**

J. Chatraw, Chapter Thirteen and Conclusion

T. Keller, Chapter Seven

Discussion: Historicity of the Bible**Quiz #8****Module 9: Jesus and the Resurrection**

T. Keller, Chapters Ten – Thirteen

Discussion: The Resurrection**Quiz #9****Module 10: LGBTQ and Christianity**

S. Allberry, entire book

Discussion: Christianity & Same-Sex Attraction**Quiz #10****Final Project Due****Percentage of All reading Assignments Completed Document****Course Grade**

Your course grade will be based on the following (there is also extra credit worth 2 points):

Discussions	10 points (1 each)	10% (due during the assigned Week)
Quizzes	50 points	50% (due during the assigned Week)
Reading Report	10 points	10% (due Week 10 of class)
Final Project	30 points	30% (due Week 10 of class)
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Total	100 points	100%

Grading Scale

94-100	A
92-93	A-
90-91	B+
84-89	B
82-83	B-
80-81	C+
74-79	C
72-73	C-

*You will need a grade of 72 or better to pass the course and obtain the required IBS credit.