

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 help of any kind are allowed during quizzes or exams.
4. **Project:** The purpose of this course is to help you become more effective in the use of apologetics in the context of pre-evangelism/evangelism and follow-up. During the course, you will have the opportunity to develop a tool for use in your personal ministry. You have two options from which to choose:

a. **Apologetic Response:** Select an online article or blog post that reflects one of the cultural assumptions covered in *Telling a Better Story* (“I don’t need God or religion,” “You have to be true to yourself,” “The ultimate goal in life is to be happy,” “It’s okay to be spiritual, but not to say that your religion is the only way, or attempt to bring it into the public square,” or “We’ve progressed beyond faith and myths to reason and science”) and write a 5-8-page response using the Inside-Out approach. The article cannot be one used for illustrative purposes in our text. 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 employing the elements of the Inside-Out approach, and (3) proper packaging (targeted toward an audience, good introduction, and conclusion). Your response 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 sound biblical/theological 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 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, if 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 artwork.

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.