

Apologetics

CRU – *Institute of Biblical Studies*

June 8 – June 22, 2022

Instructor: Keith Plummer, Ph.D.

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Course Description

This course will equip you to confidently and graciously 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 relationship between the work of the Holy Spirit and human argument in evangelism, the historicity of Jesus and his resurrection, and commonly-encountered objections to the Christian faith (e.g., the problem of evil, the claim that science and Christian faith are incompatible, and the objection that Christianity is oppressive).

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 and embody a case for Christianity that appeals to the whole person.

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)

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. You will submit a report indicating the

percentage of assigned reading you completed on the final day of the course.

2. **Worksheets:** You will complete three apologetic worksheets that will give you the opportunity to apply what you have learned in the readings.
3. **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 art work.

Reading Assignments (to be completed by the date listed):

If you encounter something in the reading that is unclear and you'd like to discuss it in class, please send me an email (kplummer@cairn.edu) the night before the day by which the reading is to be completed. I'll do my best to address it in class and will not publicly identify who questions are from. Of course, I encourage you to ask questions in class as well.

Wednesday, June 8

Chatraw, Introduction – Chapter 3

Thursday, June 9

Chatraw, Chapters 4 – 5 (35 pages)

Worksheet #1

Friday, June 10

Chatraw, page 73 – Chapter 6,

Article: "Apatheism is More Damaging to Christianity than Atheism or Antitheism"

Monday, June 13

Chatraw, Chapter 7

Article: "Expressive Individualism: What is it?"

Tuesday, June 14

Chatraw, Chapters 8 – 9

Wednesday, June 15

Making Sense of God Chapter 1: "Isn't Religion Gong Away?"

Chatraw, Chapter 10

Worksheet #2

Thursday, June 16

Chatraw, page 169 – Chapter 11

Friday, June 17

Session 2: Chatraw, Chapter 12

Monday, June 20 – No Class

Tuesday, June 21

Chatraw, Chapter 13 – Conclusion

Article: "Jesus Existed"

Wednesday, June 22

Allberry, entire book

Worksheet #3

Note: Final Project is due on Saturday, June 25

Lecture and Discussion Schedule

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Wednesday, June 8: | Apologetics, Narrative, & Late Modernism |
| Thursday, June 9: | Whole-Person Apologetics, Contextualization, & Inside Out |
| Friday, June 10: | "I don't need God or religion." |
| Monday, June 13: | "You have to be true to yourself." |
| : | |
| Tuesday, June 14: | "The ultimate goal in life is to be happy." |
| Wednesday, June 15: | "We've progressed from faith & myths to reason & science" |
| Thursday, June 16: | "The Christian faith is oppressive." |
| Friday, June 17: | "The reality of evil discounts the existence of a good God." |
| Tuesday, June 21: | "Miracles are impossible. The Bible isn't reliable." |
| Wednesday, June 22: | The Christian Sexual Ethic: Engaging LGBTQ+ issues |

Course Grade

Your course grade will be based on the following:

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|-----------------------|-----|--|
| Apologetic Worksheets | 60% | (due as shown in Course Assignments above) |
| Reading Report | 10% | (due at the close of class, Wednesday, 6/22) |
| Final Project | 30% | (due Saturday, <u>6/25</u>) |

Grading Scale

| | |
|--------|-----------|
| 94-100 | A |
| 91-93 | A- |
| 88-90 | B+ |
| 84-87 | B |
| 81-83 | B- |
| 78-80 | C+ |
| 74-77 | C |
| 71-73 | C- |
| 00-70 | No Credit |

Reading Report: Apologetics

Name _____

Bring this reading report to the final class session on Wednesday, June 22.

| Date Due | Assignment | # Pages Completed (if all, write "all") |
|-------------|---|--|
| Wed, 6/8 | Chatraw, Introduction – Chapter 3 (40 pages) | |
| Thurs, 6/9 | Chatraw, Chapters 4 – 5 (35 pages) | |
| Fri, 6/10 | Chatraw, page 73 – Chapter 6 (13 pages) Article: "Apatheism is More Damaging to Christianity than Atheism or Antitheism" (7 pages) | |
| Mon, 6/13 | Chatraw, Chapter 7 (21 pages) <i>Making Sense of God</i> Chapter 6: "The Problem of the Self" (15 pages) Article: "Expressive Individualism: What is it?" (3 pages) | |
| Tues, 6/14 | Chatraw, Chapters 8 – 9 (39 pages) | |
| Wed, 6/15 | Chatraw, Chapter 10 (22 pages) Keller, <i>Making Sense of God</i> Chapter 1: "Isn't Religion Gong Away?" (19 pages) | |
| Thurs, 6/16 | Chatraw, page 169 – Chapter 11 (17 pages) | |
| Fri, 6/17 | Chatraw, Chapter 12 (22 pages) | |
| Tues, 6/21 | Chatraw, Chapter 13 – Conclusion (18 pages) Article: "Jesus Existed" (3 pages) | |
| Wed, 6/22 | Session 2: Allberry, entire book (85 pages) | |

I completed _____ % of the required readings

Signature _____