Instructor: Alan Myatt, PhD
Contact Information: amyatt@gordonconwell.edu
Class Schedule: May 13-17, 9:00am – 4:00pm
Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description: The ability to respond to contemporary challenges to the gospel by refuting error and defending the truth is an essential task of the minister, whether in the pastorate or other contexts. Through this course students will develop skills necessary to evaluate different worldviews and defend the Christian faith. Each student will have an opportunity to develop and sharpen an apologetic methodology and apply it to the task of defending and proclaiming the gospel. Specific issues covered will include the task and methods of apologetics, varieties of non-Christian worldviews, various arguments for unbelief, presuppositional and evidential arguments in favor of Christianity. Special attention will be given to recent discussions concerning the “New Atheism” and responding to its particular brand of assault against faith.

Gordon-Conwell Mission

The course has various objectives which are intended to develop basic competence in the area of systematic theology and to specifically contribute to the fulfilling of the mission of GCTS as expressed in the six articles of the GCTS mission statement (http://www.gordonconwell.edu/about/Mission-and-Purpose.cfm ). Specifically, the faculty have identified the following learning outcomes in relation to the articles of the mission statement:

Article 1: a) Demonstrate a strong understanding of both the content of the Bible and the overarching redemptive story from Genesis to Revelation. b) Demonstrate appropriate and effective use of the tools of biblical interpretation.

Article 2: Demonstrate constructive and critical thinking about Christian ministry in light of biblical, theological, and historical scholarship in accordance with historic Christian orthodoxy.

Article 3: Develop proficiencies in practical ministry that are biblically and theologically grounded, and contextually sensitive.

Article 4: Demonstrate growth in a life of biblical discipleship and intimacy with Christ, expressed in the life of the mind, interpersonal relationships, and interaction with broader society.

Article 5: Demonstrate engagement in the Church and society, using their spiritual gifts and redemptive leadership to promote renewal and reform.

Article 6: Articulate a coherent vision of God’s global activity and develop strategies for actively engaging in God’s redemptive work in the world.
Relation to Curriculum

This course serves as an elective for the M.Div., MACT and other programs. Students should check with their advisor for specific questions.

Objectives - The course has various objectives which are intended to develop basic competence in apologetics and to specifically contribute to the fulfilling of the mission of GCTS as expressed in the six articles of the GCTS mission statement (http://www.gordonconwell.edu/lifelong_learners/mission_statement). Upon completing this course students will:

1) have an understanding of the biblical basis of apologetics and its methodology. This is particularly relevant to article 1, which would naturally include the ability to defend the veracity of God’s inerrant word to a culture that doubts the possibility of truth.

2) be able to apply the methods of apologetics in the critical analysis of various worldviews. This relates to the expectation in article 2 of maintaining the highest levels of scholarship and academic integrity. Critical thinking and the struggle with alternative points of view is important in arriving at firm convictions of one’s own.

3) develop their own positions in relation to each worldview studied and be capable of a defense that is both philosophically and biblically sound. This objective relates to articles 1 and 2, but it also encompasses article 3, addressing the development of ministry skills. The ability to articulate, defend and apply sound doctrine in the life of the church is a basic biblical qualification for the ministry. This includes the ability to refute challenges to the gospel in the context of pastoral ministry.

4) be able to apply apologetics to the daily realities of life. In particular this relates to article 4, emphasizing a growth in the experiential knowledge of Christ. Apologetics is not simply about presenting the best argument to win a debate. It is foremost about clearing away intellectual and practical obstacles that hinder people from coming to know God in Jesus Christ. Secondarily, it functions to answer doubts and strengthen the faith of believers, so that they might develop deeper intimacy with Christ. In addition, apologetics should lead directly to worship, as it displays the glory and wisdom of God in the beauty and coherence of the Christian revelation and world that God has made.

5) integrate apologetics into his or her philosophy of ministry that contributes to the Christian mission in church and society. Christian truth has implications for Church and society (article 5) as well as providing a key basis for the vision and strategies of the Church’s world mission (article 6). This objective for the course will be realized as the student integrates the material from this course with other courses in the seminary curriculum and applies it to the task of cultural transformation and the advance of God’s Kingdom.

Requirements: The objectives will be met by the completion of the following measurable requirements:

1. Attendance and participation in class meetings.

2. Completion of required reading and accompanying assignments as follows:
**Reading:** The student will submit a reading report relating how much (% read = (pages read)/(total pages in book as listed below) x 100) was completed, along with a list of key ideas and questions raised in the book (one page for the shorter books, 2-3 pages for the longer ones). Students should begin with DeWeese and Moreland, followed by Sire, and attempt to complete as much as possible before class begins. Please note that this is dense reading and plan for adequate time to digest the material.

3. **Completion of a paper in two parts.** Each will be considered to be parts of one major project for the course in which an apologetic method is developed and then applied in response to a specific worldview or issue requiring a defense of Christianity. Length should be 20-25 pages not counting bibliography.

   a. The first part of the paper will discuss apologetic methods, especially in light of the book by Cowan. The student will articulate which methods will be most applicable to the topic at hand in the second part.

   b. The second part will tackle a specific worldview, such as post-modernism or naturalism, or a specific issue emerging from such a worldview, such as relativism or the denial of the resurrection of Jesus. James Sire’s *Universe Next Door* should be used as a guide to the worldviews considered. This paper should be academically rigorous, employing a broad range of sources, while not ignoring the practical application of the argument in a real life setting. To this end the student is encouraged to engage in an actual apologetic discussion with someone who represents the worldview in question. This may be done in person or on-line.

   c. The entire paper should show familiarity with the resources from the readings as well as other primary and secondary sources that you will consult.

**Grading:**

Achievement of the course objectives will be measured through a variety of assignments and activities as described below. The successful completion of these activities will require each student to spend at least 135 hours devoted to coursework, both in class and out of class. The following chart indicates due dates and how these hours may be distributed across the various course assignments. Note that students are expected to complete the assignments, regardless of how long it takes. Descriptions of the assignments are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
<th>Estimated Time</th>
<th>Actual Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance</td>
<td>As Scheduled</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>30 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading report 1 - <em>Philosophy Made Slightly Less Difficult</em></td>
<td>5/26</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading report 2 – <em>Universe Next Door</em></td>
<td>6/9</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Report 3 - <em>Five Views on Apologetics</em></td>
<td>6/16</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10 hours</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Report 4 - <em>Christian Apologetics: An Anthology of Primary Sources.</em></td>
<td>6/23</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading report 5 – <em>Christian</em></td>
<td>7/7</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith

| Term Paper    | 7/17 | 60% | 35 hours |

Students will keep a record of time spent on each course-related task, and will submit a final report on Sakai, with their actual hours spent on each task listed in the last column of the table.

Details of assignments:

Due dates for the assignments will be found on the accompanying table, above. Please note that you are expected to begin your reading and course preparation before the first day of class. Get an early start on the reading. You will need it! Late registration will not be an excuse for late work.

Required Textbooks and Materials


Recommended:


Course outline:

I. Apologetics – What and Why
   The necessity of apologetics

II. Methods
   - Natural Theology
   - Evidences
   - Rational argument
   - Presuppositions
   - Paul and Acts 17
   - A World View Approach
III. Key Issues
   Atheism
   Religions and Pluralism
   Cultural issues and ethics

IV. Building a case
   The Bible
   Who is Jesus Christ?

Grading Scale

Assignments will be given a point value on a 100 point scale. Points are earned from a starting point of zero, not taken off from a starting point of 100. Final grades will be calculated according to the above percentages weighted for each assignment and letter grades will be applied with cutoffs as follows: A+ 100, A 94, A- 90, B+ 87, B 84, B- 80, C+ 77, C 74, C- 70, D+ 67, D 63, D- 60, F below 60.

Grading rubrics for the written assignments will be posted on Sakai. The student is encouraged to study these carefully before attempting the papers.

Late work: There will be a one point penalty per day of lateness, deducted from the final grade of each assignment for late work that is not excused. For work turned in after 7/17 normally an extension will be required from the registrar’s office.

Attendance Policy: Points will be awarded for attendance, based on the % of time you are present and your participation in class discussion.

Document Formatting and Citation Style Requirements

Papers must be double-spaced, size 12 Times New Roman font, with a cover sheet, bibliography and proper references. APA format (include page numbers for each citation) for counseling students and Turabian for all others.

Syllabus Addendum

For other seminary policies refer to the attached Syllabus Addendum

Academic Standards

Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one’s writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing
grade as well as other corrective measures. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

ADA Policy
The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations, should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated guidelines in the Student Handbook.

Cancellation of Class
In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancelation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding make-up. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.

Extension Policy
Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the “last day to submit written work”, as noted on the seminary’s Academic Calendar, are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required at this time. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams.

However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized calendar due date, must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the “last day to submit written work.” Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.

Grades
Grades are posted on line within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. Students are expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades. Those individuals who need an official grade report issued to a third party, should put their request in writing to the Registration Office. Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade.

Returned Work
Work will be returned via Sakai, since no hard copies will be turned in.