

HOUSTON GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
Syllabus
Christian Apologetics

PH 601

3 credits

Summer, 2013, July 8-31, Monday and Wednesday 12:30-4:30

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The mission of Houston Graduate School of Theology is empowering spiritual leadership through the intellectual, spiritual, and vocational development of men and women in order to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the relationship between Christian theology and prevailing world views; with attention to major defenders of the Christian faith such as Justin Martyr, Augustine of Hippo, Thomas Aquinas, C. S. Lewis, and others.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES: The student will:

- A. Define and describe various epistemologies and evaluate different apologetical approaches for each (on final).
- B. Determine your particular epistemology, describe it and make an apologetic defense of it (on final).
- C. Defend your view of the relative merits of subjective approaches towards the Christian God, namely: authenticity, basic belief, intuition (tacit, illumination, leading of Spirit, mysticism), religious experience, testimony of religious experience, miracles, narrative telling the story, Pascal's wager, and James' pragmatism (on final).
- D. Describe the Judeo-Christian concept of God (on final).
- E. State the following rational arguments for God (ontological, cosmological, teleological and moral arguments) and identify the assumptions, strengths, weaknesses, cogency and for whom they might be compelling (on final).
- F. Explain why evil is such a theistic problem and the relative merits of solutions for this problem (on final).
- G. Defend the deity of Christ (on final).
- H. Defend the resurrection of Christ (on final).
- I. Defend the authority of the Bible (provide reasons) (on final).
- J. State specifically what steps or beliefs or conditions are required for salvation and defend your answer (on final).
- K. Explain your defense of an issue in which you engage alternative views (in paper).

IV. TEXTS: Required:

Craig, William Lane, et al. *Five Views on Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000. 978-0-310-22476-1

Groothuis, Douglas. *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011. 978-8308-3935-3

Kinnaman, David. *Unchristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity...and Why it Matters* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007). 10: 0-8010-7066-X or 978-0-8010-7066-2

Recommended:

Campbell-Jack, Campbell and McGrath, Gavin J. *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2006). 10: 0-8308-2451-0

Dulles, Avery. *A History of Apologetics* (London: Hutchinson, 1971; Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1999). 0-89870-933-4

Edwards, Paul. *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. 1967).

Kennard, Douglas W. *The Relationship Between Epistemology, Hermeneutics, Biblical Theology and Contextualization*. (Lewiston: Mellen Press, 1999). 0-7734-8217-2

Kennard, Douglas. *The Classical Christian God*. (Lewiston: Mellen Press, 2002). 0-7734-7223-1

Kennard, Douglas. *Messiah Jesus: Christology in His Day and Ours* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008). 978-0-8204-9739-6

Kennard, Douglas. [The Relationship of Philosophy, Theology, and Science](#) on Kennard webpage and within *A Critical Realist Theological Method* (Eugene: Wipf & stock, 2013).

Kreeft, Peter and Tacelli, Ronald K. *Handbook of Christian Apologetics: Hundreds of Answers to Crucial Questions* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994). 10: 0-8308-1774-3

Quinn, Philip and Taliaferro, Charles. *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*. (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1997). 0-631-19153-4

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- A. The student will read assignments in texts according to schedule. Report on the final class period. 10% of final grade.
- B. Final: State your best answers for the following questions. 40% grade.
 - 1) State, explain and defend what your epistemology is at present.
 - 2) State your best argument for God (providing reasons) and identify what kind of God is defended by this argument.
 - 3) State your best argument for the deity of Christ (provide reasons).
 - 4) State your best argument for the resurrection of Christ (provide reasons).
 - 5) State your best argument for the authority of the Bible (provide reasons).
 - 6) State specifically what steps or beliefs or conditions are required for salvation and defend your answer.
- C. The student will write a position paper of approximately 2000 words, typed or written legibly. Choose a topic relevant to the field of apologetics and narrow enough to be handled well with some depth. Discuss alternative views with ramifications, defend your view using good reasoning. 40% of final grade.
- D. Any late papers will have the grade deducted at a rate of 3% per calendar day, so include the date on which you turned in the late paper, or the date on which Kennard finds it will be assigned to it.
- E. Attendance is expected at all classes. Class participation is 10% final grade.
- F. Criteria for grading:
 - A 90-100
 - B 80-89
 - C 70-89
 - D 60-69

VI. Policies

- A. Regular attendance and submission of assignments on due dates in syllabus is expected. Each student must talk to the instructor about circumstances affecting his or her ability to attend class and complete assignments. Attendance is required at scheduled classes and at the scheduled start time. The student could lose as much as a letter grade for excessive tardiness.
- B. Work is expected on the due date. Students should expect a grade reduction of up to one letter grade on late papers.
- C. *HGST Policy on electronic equipment in classroom.*
It is expected that students will use technology (cell phones, laptops computers, iPads, etc.) during classes only for the purposes of class work. Therefore, students should turn off cell phones and refrain from texting and using laptop computers during classes except for the purposes of taking notes or doing research specifically authorized by the course

instructor. Students who have emergency needs not covered by this policy must ask for an exception from the course instructor.

D. *Incompletes*

In cases of extenuating circumstances, and at the discretion of the instructor, a student may request and apply for an extension on all required assignments, which are not completed by the end of the semester or term, subject to a 5-point grade reduction on the final grade of each assignment. If an extension is granted, the instructor will record a grade of "I" (Incomplete) and set an extension of time, not to exceed thirty calendar days from the end of the class, within which to complete the work. Additional extensions may be granted only by the Academic Dean or Associate Dean and only after a student has petitioned the Dean in writing. If the course work is not completed within the extended time allotment, the grade of "I" will be converted to the grade earned by the student up to that point. The student is responsible to ensure that all necessary paperwork is submitted to the registrar's office by the deadline published in the school calendar.

E. *Plagiarism*

Plagiarism is presenting the work of another person as one's own without giving proper credit for the use of the information. Students must not quote books, articles, essays, or Internet sites without giving proper credit to the author(s). Students should guard against plagiarism by crediting the original author through use of proper citations. Internet plagiarism is a particularly easy and tempting form of intellectual theft. Cutting and pasting sentences and paragraphs from the Internet without citations is plagiarism. Failure to cite Internet sources is plagiarism. Any student who is found guilty of plagiarism is subject to a range of consequences as outlined below.

1. If a faculty member suspects plagiarism, the instructor will investigate. If suspicions are confirmed, the faculty member will present the evidence to the appropriate Associate Dean as a record of the offense. If the Associate Dean concurs with the allegations, the following procedures should be implemented as applicable:
 - The faculty member may discuss the offense with the student following consultation with the Associate Dean, but the student will meet with the Associate Dean.
 - For a first offense, the faculty member, in consultation with the Associate Dean, may give opportunity for a rewrite of the assignment or may assign a grade of zero for the plagiarized assignment.
 - For a particularly egregious case of plagiarism on a major assignment, the consequences could result in automatic failure of the course.
2. The student may appeal the above-mentioned decisions of the faculty member in writing to the Academic Dean.
3. The second confirmed offense will result in expulsion from school. The student will be notified by a letter from the Academic Dean. His or her only opportunity for appeal will be to the President in writing. The President's decision will be final.

F. *Library Usage*

A student's ability to get the most out of library resources will enhance the possibility of earning a high grade in this class. Therefore, students should consider using, in addition to the HGST library, [Search HGST Library Holdings](http://66.196.218.34/common/servlet/presenthomeform.do?l2m=Home&tm=Home&l2m=Home) (<http://66.196.218.34/common/servlet/presenthomeform.do?l2m=Home&tm=Home&l2m=Home>), one or more of the following libraries.

1. *Houston Public Library*— Any resident of Texas can obtain a free Houston Public Library card. Library cardholders have access to all of the books in the library system as well as the use of free interlibrary loans, meaning that HPL cardholders can borrow almost any book available. Cardholders can use the library’s website, www.houstonlibrary.org, to search the catalog and manage interlibrary loans. The website also contains links to WorldCat and other online databases that will enhance your research. The HPL location that is closest to HGST, the Collier Regional Branch (832-393-1740), is located at 6200 Pinemont, which is less than three miles from campus. A better option would be the newly expanded and renovated Central Library (832-393-1313), which is located downtown at 500 McKinney. In addition, HPL has many other locations. The HGST library can give you an application for an HPL library card, or you can print the application form from their website.
2. *Fondren Library at Rice University*— The Fondren Library (713-348-5113) is located at 6100 Main. Please visit www.rice.edu/fondren for more information. The procedure for borrowing books at the Fondren Library is, first, go to the online catalog [www.rice.edu/fondren] to search for available books; second, go to the HGST library and fill out a form, signed by HGST library personnel, to take with you to the Fondren Library for each book; third, retrieve the book(s) yourself; fourth, take the book(s) and the signed form to the circulation desk to complete checkout (return the yellow copy to the HGST library; when the book(s) are returned to the Fondren Library, they will indicate so on the pink and gold copies; return the pink copy to the HGST Library and keep the gold copy for your records).
3. Lanier Theological Library is a new resource for scholarly theological research in the Houston area. The library is open to the public, Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM. The library is a research library with no circulation privileges. Nonetheless, students should consider Lanier Library to be a valuable research option. The catalog of Lanier Library is available online: <http://alexandria.lanierlibrary.net/#>.
4. *Cardinal Beran Library at St Mary’s Seminary*—the home of an extensive theological library, St Mary’s Seminary (713-686-4345) is located at 9845 Memorial Drive, only 4.6 miles from HGST. For more information, please visit <http://beran.stthom.edu>. The Doherty Library on the main campus of University of St Thomas is also an option.
5. *Library of the Presbytery of the New Covenant* – as an HGST student you have borrowing privileges at this library located at 1110 Lovett Blvd, Houston. To search their online catalog, go to <http://www.pbyofnewcovenant.org/cgi-bin/rqm/rqm.cgi>.
6. Other options include Harris County Public Library (www.hcpl.net) and the libraries at the University of Houston and Houston Baptist University.

VI. CLASS SCHEDULE: When assignments are due.

July 8 Syllabus

10 Read Kinnaman; Five Views: Intro and ch. 4 & 5; G: part 1

15 Five Views ch 1-3; G: ch 16-18

- 17 G: ch 9-15, 23
- 22 G: ch 19-22, 24
- 24 **Paper Due**
- 29 G: ch 25-26, appendix 1-2
- 31 Five Views ch 6; **Final Due**