



LEAVELL COLLEGE

AT NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Special Topics in Worldview and Apologetics: LCTH4345

Defend the Faith, January 3-7, 2022

Spring 2022 (223)

Dr. Thomas Doughty
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New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to examine barriers to Christian faith as well as efforts to provide convincing presentations of the Christian faith. Attention is given to biblical foundations, historical development, apologetic method, and contemporary issues related to apologetics.

COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the conclusion of the semester, the student will:

1. Understand the importance of intellectual accountability in relation to issues of ultimate concern to Christian faith.
2. Apply their knowledge and comprehension of how to defend and support Christian belief to academic and ministerial issues.
3. Communicate the Christian faith in a reasonable and attractive form to skeptics and other non-Christians.

COURSE TEXTS

The following textbook is required:

McGrath, Alister. *The Big Question: Why We Can't Stop Talking about Science, Faith and God*. New York, NY: St. Martin's, 2015.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Defend the Faith Attendance (50 points, 10% of total grade): Students will attend the Defend the Faith conference at NOBTS January 3-7, 2022. At the conference, students will attend one class meeting with Dr. Doughty (time and location will be communicated via email) and a talk during each scheduled timeslot (breakouts and plenary sessions). After the conference, students will report the breakouts they attended on Blackboard.
Due Friday, January 14 by 11:59pm
2. Session Summaries (100 points, 20 % of total grade): Students will write 10 session summaries based on attendance or recordings from Defend the Faith. Students are required to report on Dr. Doughty's and Dr. Lemke's breakouts and then may choose any other breakouts or plenary sessions. Summaries should be 2 paragraphs each with one paragraph summarizing the session and one paragraph explaining how the session's content changed the student's understanding of apologetics or can be applied in the student's ministry context. All summaries should be submitted in one document (12 pt. Times New Roman, double-spaced, in .pdf format).
Due Friday, January 28 by 11:59pm
3. Book Review 1 (100 points, 20% of total grade): Students will read the required textbook *The Big Question* and write a 4-page book review (12 pt. Times New Roman, double-spaced, in .pdf format). The review should use parenthetical citations for page references and include:
 - a bibliography entry
 - a brief biography about the author (e.g., career position, degrees, research interests, and other works) (1 paragraph)
 - an assessment of the main purpose and/or thesis of the book (2 paragraphs)
 - a concise summary of the book's contents (no more than 2 pages)
 - a critique of the author's argument including insights which changed the student's understanding of the relation of Christianity and the sciences (1 page)Due Friday, February 18 by 11:59pm
4. Book Review 2 (100 points, 20% of total grade): Students will read one work from the list below and write a 4-page book review (12 pt. Times New Roman, double-spaced, in .pdf format). The book review should follow the same format as Book Review 1.
Due Friday, March 11 by 11:59pm

Students must identify their selection from this list by Friday, January 28 by 11:59pm:

Collins, Francis S. *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*. New York, NY: Free Press, 2007.

Guillen, Michael. *Believing Is Seeing: A Physicist Explains How Science Shattered His Atheism and Revealed the Necessity of Faith*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Refresh, 2021.

Plantinga, Alvin. *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Torrance, Andrew B., and Thomas H. McCall, eds. *Knowing Creation: Perspectives from Theology, Philosophy, and Science*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018.

Stewart, Robert B. *The Future of Atheism: Alister McGrath and Daniel Dennett in Dialogue*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2008.

5. Apologetics Reflections (50 points each, 30% of total grade): Students will research and respond to 3 apologetics reflections. Reflections should be 3 pages each but all should be turned in as one document (12 pt. Times New Roman, double-spaced, in .pdf format). Reflections should evidence background research on the topic, sound biblical reasoning, and pertinent theological application. Students should cite at least 3 outside sources in each reflection. First- or second-person language is allowed when the student is sharing personal experiences or advising another person via case study. Reflections will be graded for grammar, clarity and coherence, biblical and theological reasoning, and substantial application of apologetics in ministry.

Due Friday, April 22 by 11:59pm

Students will choose 3 of the following prompts to reflect on:

- The local public school board is currently debating whether to teach creationism, intelligent design, or biological evolution in middle school. What combination of these approaches would you recommend be offered in the context of a diverse community? Your reflection should include a definition of each approach as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each approach from a Christian perspective.
- A friend recently forwarded you a comment they saw on Facebook: "A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature. The laws of nature cannot be broken, so miracles cannot happen." How would you critique this short argument, and how would you argue that God interacts with creation? Your reflection should include your own definitions of miracles and laws of nature.
- A college student in your church has become concerned that the Bible teaches an outdated picture of the world: the sun does not move (Joshua 10:12-14; Ecclesiastes 1:5); archaeological evidence does not support a global flood or the existence of Babel (Genesis 6-11); the mustard seed was not really the smallest seed in Jesus's time (Matthew 13:31-32). "If the Bible contains scientific errors,"

he asks, “how can we trust it as God’s Word?” How would you respond to his question, and how would you explain these scientific errors in the Bible? Your reflection should address each of the example “errors.”

- In a coffee shop conversation, an atheist tells you that religious faith is nonsensical since it is not supported by any scientifically verifiable evidence. Is there verifiable evidence for the Christian gospel? Would your response seek to establish evidence or critique the notion that knowledge must be verified empirically? Your reflection should address the reliability of some historical facts (such as Jesus’s empty tomb) and alternative justifications of knowledge (sense experience, conscience, oral tradition).
- A small group teacher in your church recently taught that the word “day” in Genesis 1 cannot mean a literal 24-hour day since the natural sciences have shown the universe to be billions of years old. Would you support or challenge this teacher, and how would you communicate different interpretations of the word “day” in Genesis 1? Your reflection should include different ways of reconciling “day” with both young earth and old earth theories.

GRADING (500 Possible Points)

Defend Attendance:	50
Session Summaries:	100
Book Review 1:	100
Book Review 2:	100
Apologetics Reflections:	150
<hr/> Total Possible	<hr/> 500

GRADING SCALE

A:	93 – 100	(465+ pts.)
B:	85 – 92	(425 – 464 pts.)
C:	77 – 84	(385 – 424 pts.)
D:	70 – 76	(350 – 384 pts.)
F:	below 70	(0 – 419 pts.)

COURSE OUTLINE

Week	Assignment Due by 11:59pm Central
Defend Attendance	January 14
Select Review 2 Book	January 28
Session Summaries	January 28
Book Review 1	February 18
Book Review 2	March 11
Apologetics Reflections	April 22

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

1. Attendance Policy: Leavell College follows the attendance policy as stated in the Leavell College catalog. **Students must attend the complete Defend the Faith conference and be present in every session time slot.**
2. Policy for Late Submissions:
 - a. All assignments must be submitted in the course Blackboard shell. Emailed submissions will not be accepted unless by explicit request of the instructor.
 - b. Written Assignments: Written assignments must be completed by the start of class on the assigned deadline. A late written assignment will be assessed a 10 percent penalty if it is submitted after the deadline and a 20 percent penalty after seven calendar days. No written assignment will be accepted after two weeks.
3. Plagiarism Policy: A high standard of personal integrity is expected of all Leavell College students. Copying another person's work, submitting downloaded material without proper references, submitting material without properly citing the source, submitting the same material for credit in more than one course, and committing other such forms of dishonesty are strictly forbidden. *Although anything cited in three sources is considered public domain, we require that all sources be cited.* Any infraction may result in failing the assignment and the course. Any infraction will be reported to the Dean of Leavell College for further action.
4. Classroom and Online Decorum: Each student is expected to demonstrate appropriate Christian behavior. The student is expected to interact with other students in a fashion that will promote learning and respect for the opinions of the others in the course. A spirit of Christian charity is expected at all times. Electronic devices should be used only for classroom purposes as indicated by the professor.
5. Special Needs: If you need accommodations for a disability, please set up a meeting with the professor for consideration of any modifications you may need.
6. Emergency Plan: In the event the NOBTS schedule is impacted due to a natural event, go to the seminary's website for pertinent information. Class will continue as scheduled through the Blackboard site. Please note announcements and assignments on the course's Blackboard site.
7. Technical Assistance: For general NOBTS technical help, go to www.NOBTS.edu/itc/

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, Tawa J., W. Michael Clark, and David K. Naugle. *An Introduction to Christian Worldview: Pursuing God's Perspective in a Pluralistic World*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2017.
- Craig, William Lane. *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.
- Cowan, Steven B., ed. *Five Views on Apologetics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.
- Geisler, Norman. *Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999.
- Groothuis, Douglas. *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.
- Enns, Peter. *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015.
- Keathley, Kenneth D., and Mark F. Rooker, *40 Questions about Creation and Evolution*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2014.
- Lewis, C. S. *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*. New York, NY: HarperOne, 1996.
- McGrath, Alister E. *The Science of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Moreland, J. P. *Christianity and the Nature of Science*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1989.
- Moreland, J. P., Stephen C. Meyer, Christopher Shaw, Ann K. Gauger, and Wayne Grudem, eds. *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017.
- Pearcey, Nancy. *Finding Truth: 5 Principles for Unmasking Atheism, Secularism, and Other God Substitutes*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2015.
- Ruse, Michael, Alister McGrath, and Bruce L. Gordon. *Three Views on Christianity and Science*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2021.
- Strobel, Lee. *The Case for Faith: A Journalist Investigates the Toughest Objections to Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.
- Swinburne, Richard. *The Concept of Miracle*. London: Macmillan, 1970.