

Christian Apologetics

Instructor

Maria Waggoner

Email

maria.waggoner0522@gmail.com

Office Hours

TBA

Course Overview

This course begins by investigating the relationship between faith and reason and ways in which the Christian faith can incorporate evidence, arguments, and narrative to give an account. Students will then learn and evaluate arguments for and against the existence of God. Finally, the course will consider issues unique to Christian teaching, such as questions surrounding the divinity of Christ, the sacraments, and the existence and nature of Hell.

This course will ask students to engage both in a traditional classroom method, involving reading for class, engaging in classroom discussions, and writing papers. Additionally, some of the assignments for this course will also be ‘experienced-based’, in which students are asked to have a conversation with someone outside of class who disagrees with them about a particular apologetical issue. Students will be asked to reflect on both their own beliefs and reasoning, and well as the beliefs and reason given by those they interact with.

Course Materials

Students should purchase the following books:

The Great Divorce, by C.S. Lewis

The Case for the Resurrection of Christ, by Habermas & Licona

All other course materials will be posted on Canvas at the beginning of the semester

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Assignments
Week 1	Why Engage in Apologetics?	1) <i>Handbook of Christian Apologetics</i> , Ch. 1
Week 2	Faith and Reason	1) “Religious Faith and Intellectual Virtue” 2) “Evidence-Seeking as an Expression of Faith”
Week 3	Existence of God – The Moral Argument	1) <i>Mere Christianity</i> , Ch. 1 Assignment 1 due
Week 4	Existence of God – The Problem of Evil	1) “The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism”

Week	Topic	Assignments
		2) “Soul-Making Theodicy”
Week 5	Existence of God – Divine Hiddenness	1) “Does Divine Hiddenness Justify Atheism?” 2) “Divine Hiddenness and the Nature of Belief”
Week 6	Resurrection & Divinity of Christ	1) <i>The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ</i> , Ch. 2-4 Assignment 2 due
Week 7	Resurrection & Divinity of Christ	1) <i>The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ</i> , Ch. 5-8
Week 8	Sacraments: Baptism	1) “Sola Fide Compromised? Martin Luther and the Doctrine of Baptism” 2) Selections from <i>Baptism in the Theology of Martin Luther</i>
Week 9	Sacraments: Eucharist	1) “That These Words of Christ, “This is my Body,” etc., Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics.” 2) John 6 Assignment 3 due
Week 10	Hell and a Good God	1) <i>Swinburne's Hell and Hick's Universalism: Are We Free to Reject God?</i> , Ch. 1 & 2
Week 11	Hell and a Good God	1) <i>The Great Divorce</i> , pp. 9-39
Week 12	Hell and a Good God	1) <i>The Great Divorce</i> , pp. 40-81
Week 13	Poster Presentation	Poster due; poster presentation in class
Week 14	Final’s Week	Final paper due

Course Policies

Assignment Due Dates:

Barring unusual circumstances, the due dates on the syllabus are non-negotiable. If you think you have reason to request an extension, it is best to inform me well in advance. Any late assignments will be subject to a grade penalty.

Classroom Environment:

Please arrive to class on time. All cell phones must be turned off during class. Texting, surfing the web, and the like are not permitted. Abuse of these courtesies may lead to penalties. Please have readings for the day completed, and a copy available for referencing during classroom discussion. I find that students do better when discussing the class readings if they can look back at specific passages or paragraphs during class. I encourage you to print out the readings ahead of time and bring a card copy to class. I strongly discourage the use of tablets and/or laptops in the classroom, even for note-taking purposes. However, I am aware that some students have

difficulty taking notes with a paper and pen, and so if you feel as though you need to use a tablet or laptop for notetaking, use of a laptop or tablet is allowed for these purposes only.

Additional Information

Reading and Doing Philosophy

Many of the reading assignments for this course are short. But don't let that fool you—philosophy is hard. How do you deal with this? Well, here are some suggestions:

- (i) Read the material more than once.
- (ii) After reading an essay, try and summarize the main claims and arguments in your own words—this will help you come up with questions and objections.
- (iii) Start the written assignments early (doing this will help you review your answers with a clear head).
- (iv) Most importantly, if you're puzzled about something, ask questions!