

 Munster Bible College, Cork, Ireland

 **CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS**

 September 25-30, 2023

 **DIPLOMA SYLLABUS**

# Professor

Dr. Bruce A. Ware

# Course Description

The course will discuss first, the nature, methods, and significant issues involved in the discipline Christian apologetics, followed by focused attention on key apologetical areas, including, the existence of God, creation and evolution, the problem of evil, the reliability and authority of Scripture, the question of miracles, the resurrection of Christ, and the exclusivity of Christ and the gospel.

# Course Objectives

1. To increase skills of effective and sensitive defense of important items of the Christian faith.

2. To develop an understanding of the place and necessity of the apologetic task for the Christian faith, especially in light of the postmodern context of contemporary culture.

3. To become acquainted with the main approaches to doing apologetics.

4. To confront some of the most serious challenges to the Christian faith and work together at reasoned, informed responses to them.

5. To explore the relationships between apologetics and evangelism/missions, and apologetics and discipleship.

6. To develop increased confidence in your faith as you seek to be better ready always "to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15).

# Diploma Required Texts

Anderson, Tawa J. *Why Believe: Christian Apologetics for a Skeptical Age*. Hobbs College Library Series, ed., Heath A. Thomas. Nashville, TN: B&H, 2021.

McLaughlin, Rebecca. *Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World’s Largest Religion*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2019.

Shenvi, Neil. *Why Believe? A Reasoned Approach to Christianity*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2022.

# Diploma Course Assignments

 1. Reading

 Required Textbooks for Diploma Students

 Anderson, Tawa J. *Why Believe: Christian Apologetics for a Skeptical Age*

McLaughlin, Rebecca. *Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World’s Largest Religion*

 Shenvi, Neil. *Why Believe? A Reasoned Approach to Christianity*

 2. Reading Summaries of Required Books

 For each required Textbook you read, please write a 4pp (roughly 1,000 words) summary of the key points made in the book, focusing on what you learned that is of value to you.

3. Scripture Meditation

A much neglected discipline of the Christian life and theology is Scripture meditation. Essentially, Scripture medita­tion involves 1) a continuous process of remembering and musing over Scripture's teaching, and 2) a reassessment and a reshaping of one's life in light of that teaching. In this course, we will encourage growth in this discipline by engaging our minds and hearts in some consistent, but non-­burdensome, Scripture meditation. We will read thoughtfully and prayerfully (preferably out loud) all three Scripture passages (listed below) **once a day, three days a week**, for four weeks. At the end, each of us will write, in 2 or 3 pages, our personal reflections on these passages, focusing particularly on how our lives have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about. The papers will not be graded but should be written prayerfully and thoughtfully. Scripture passages to meditate on three days a week for four weeks:

Romans 1:16-2:16

Romans 10:1-15

1 Peter 3:8-16

 4. Course Project

During the course, you are required to dialogue with an unbeliever who has a significant objection to the Christian faith. After sufficient conversation to be sure you have a clear understanding of the objection, you are assigned to do the research necessary to provide an appropriate, informed response to this objection, and then present this response to the person.

A 9-12 pp. paper will be required in which you present the following:

1) Your relationship to the person (e.g., neighbour, family member, college student, etc.) (½ p.).

2) A clear and precise statement of the person's objection (½-1 p.).

3) Your reasoned and informed response to the objection (7-9 pp.). Note: This is the heart of your paper and should be fully researched and documented (using either footnotes or endnotes).

4) A summary of how the conversation with this person went when you shared with him/her your response (1-2 pp.).

5. Assessment of learning

## Meet with your pastor/mentor to talk through ways in which your learning applies to local church ministry and to assess the translation of your learning into ministry.

Discuss these two questions with your pastor/mentor:

* + 1. How does this module impact your life?
		2. How does this module impact your ministry?
		3. Report back on Google Classroom with a one paragraph (150 words) summary of each these two questions

**Note: All assignments are due by 16 December 2023.**

# Grading

1. Reading 20%

2. Reading Summaries 20%

3. Scripture Meditation 10%

4. Course Project 45%

5. Assessment of learning 5%

# Course Structure

Sept 25 Introductory Matters: Nature, Methods, and Issues in Christian Apologetics

 26 Arguments for the Existence of God

27 Defense of Creation in light of the Darwinist Theory of (Macro)Evolution

 27 Answering the so-called Problem of Evil

28 A Defense of the Reliability and Authority of Scripture

 29 Believing in Miracles in an Age of Scientific Naturalism

30 Defending the Miracle of the Resurrection of Christ

 30 Defending the Exclusivity of Christ and the Gospel of Jesus Christ