

**ST 5450**  
**Apologetics**  
**Reformed Theological Seminary, NY**  
**Dr. N. Gray Sutanto ([gsutanto@rts.edu](mailto:gsutanto@rts.edu))**  
**October 19-21 from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.**

**Course Description**

This course introduces the theological discipline of apologetics. It focuses on developing a holistic Reformed apologetic for the contemporary world.

**Course Readings<sup>1</sup>**

Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 2, *God and Creation* (Baker Academic), chpts. 1-2.

Christopher Watkin, *Biblical Critical Theory* (Zondervan, 2022), chapters 1-6.

Cory Brock and N. Gray Sutanto, *Neo-Calvinism: A Theological Introduction*, chapters 2-8, conclusion.

Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, ed. William Edgar (P&R, 2003). Entirety (206 pages)

Matthew Kaemingk, *Christian Hospitality and Muslim Immigration* (Eerdmans: 2018), Entirety.

Rebecca McLaughlin, *Secular Creed* (Gospel Coalition, 2022). Entirety.

James Anderson, "If Knowledge then God: The Epistemological Theistic Arguments of Plantinga and Van Til," *CTJ* (2005): 49-75.

Alvin Plantinga, "Two Dozen (or so) Theistic Arguments" (PDF provided – 25 pages)

**Course Requirements:**

1. Reading Pledge (10%)
  - a. Students will write a pledge on how many percent of the reading have been completed.
  - b. Due July 16th
2. Apologetics Term Paper (40%) – 4000 words maximum.
  - i. Option 1: Students will write a paper responding to an alternative faith or worldview, while utilizing the material from the course readings. You will interact with a section from a classic or contemporary text (e.g. Voltaire's *Candide*, Hume's *Dialogue Concerning Natural Religion*, Hitchens' *Religion Poisons Everything*, Yuval Harari's *Homo Sapiens*), and respond to it from a

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<sup>1</sup> This list is also sequenced according to suggested reading order.

- Christian perspective. Have your topic/text approved by the professor beforehand.
- ii. Option 2: Students will write a paper on the discipline of Christian apologetics itself. Papers can explore, compare, contrast, or defend particular apologetic approaches, consider historical-theological questions on apologetics, or examine changes in apologetic methodologies or emphases through a period.
    - b. You should show from your paper an application of the course material and readings.
    - c. Cite at least eight sources for your paper
    - d. The paper will be graded on the basis of its fairness to the opposing viewpoint, theological clarity, cogency of argumentation, and understanding of apologetic method.
    - e. Due December 8<sup>th</sup>.
3. Final Exam (50%)
    - a. Short and long essay questions covering the lecture and reading material.
    - b. A study guide will be provided
    - c. The exam will be available for the whole week of December 4-8<sup>th</sup>.
  4. Extra Credit: In place of reading Van Til's *Christian Apologetics*, write an Annotated Summary of Cornelius Van Til's *Defense of the Faith*. (Sample of an annotated summary will be provided in the Files Section on Canvas). Three points will be awarded to your overall grade (which would bump whatever grade you receive a half a letter grade; e.g from A- to A). The summary will be divided into fourteen sections, in correspondence to the fourteen chapters in the book, and each section will be no more than 200 words, with footnotes not included in the word count. Your summary will thus be no more than 2800 words. For every sentence or two that you write, provide a citation that shows where from the text you are getting your claim, and use the other reading material as additional material for your annotations. Van Til is notoriously difficult to grasp, and the point of this assignment is not that you would agree with everything he says, but that we would come to grips with his overall thought.

### **Course Topics:**

1. Introduction to Apologetics as a Theological Discipline and Biblical Warrant for Apologetics
2. The World: Secularism as Post-Christianity
  - a. Norms without Theology and Metaphysics?
  - b. On "Common Sense"
3. Reformed Theology for Apologetics: Subversive Fulfillment and Disclosure/Homecoming
  - a. God and Analogical Reasoning
  - b. Trinity and Creation
  - c. Antithesis and Common Grace
  - d. Kuyper and Warfield
4. Transgenderism
5. Principled Pluralism
6. The Place of Natural Theology – Reformed Approaches

## Select Bibliography

- Mark Allen and Joshua Chatraw, *Apologetics at the Cross: An Introduction for Christian Witness* (Zondervan, 2018)
- James Anderson, *Paradox in Christian Theology: An Analysis of its Presence, Character, and Epistemic Status* (Paternoster, 2007)
- James Anderson, *Why Should I Believe in Christianity?* (Christian Focus, 2018)
- Greg Bahnsen, *Van Til's Apologetic: Readings and Analysis* (P&R, 1998).
- Craig Bartholomew, *Contours of the Kuyperian Tradition* (IVP, 2017)
- Heman Bavinck, *Christian Worldview*, eds. N. Gray Sutanto, James Eglinton, and Cory Brock (Crossway, 2019)
- Herman Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation: A New Annotated Edition*, eds. Cory Brock and N. Gray Sutanto (Hendrickson, 2018).
- Johan Bavinck, *Johan Bavinck Reader* (Eerdmans, 2013)
- Johan Bavinck, *Church Between Temple and Mosque* (Eerdmans, 1981)
- Johan Bavinck, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions* (P&R, 1993)
- Johan Bavinck, *The Riddle of Life* (Eerdmans, 2017)
- Joshua Chatraw, *Telling a Better Story: How to Talk About God in a Skeptical Age* (Zondervan, 2020)
- Steven Cowan (ed.), *Five Views of Apologetics* (Zondervan, 2010)
- William Lane Craig and J.P. Moreland, *Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology* (Blackwell, 2012)
- William Lane Craig, *On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision* (David Cook, 2010)
- William Edgar, *Reasons of the Heart* (P&R, 2003)
- William Edgar, *Created and Created: A Biblical Theology of Culture* (IVP, 2016)
- William Edgar and Scott Oliphint (eds.), *Christian Apologetics: Past and Present*, 2 vols. (Crossway, 2009-11).
- Paul Gould, *Cultural Apologetics: Renewing the Christian Voice, Conscience, and Imagination in a Disenchanted World* (Zondervan, 2019)
- J.V. Fesko, *Reforming Apologetics: Retrieving the Classical Reformed Approach to Defending the Faith* (Baker Academic, 2019)
- John Frame, *Apologetics: A Justification of Christian Belief* (P&R, 2015)
- John Frame, *Cornelius Van Til: An Analysis of His Thought* (P&R, 1995)
- Abraham Kuyper, *A Centennial Reader*, ed. James Bratt (Eerdmans, 2003)
- Abraham Kuyper, *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology: Its Principles* (Scribner & Sons, 1898).
- Keith Johnson, *Karl Barth and the Analogia Entis* (Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2010).
- Matthew Levering, *Proofs of God: Classical Arguments from Tertullian to Barth* (Baker Academic, 2016)
- Russell Re Manning, John Hedley Brooke, and Fraser Watts (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Natural Theology* (Oxford, 2013)
- Alan Noble, *Disruptive Witness: Speaking Truth in a Distracted Age* (IVP, 2018)
- Thom Notaro, *Van Til and the Use of Evidence* (P&R, 1980)
- Scott Oliphint, *Covenantal Apologetics: Principles and Practice* (Crossway, 2013)
- Scott Oliphint, *Know Why You Believe* (Zondervan, 2017)
- Scott Oliphint, *Reasons For Faith* (P&R, 2007)
- Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford, 2000)
- Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies* (Oxford, 2012)
- Richard Pratt, *Every Thought Captive: A Study Manual of a Defense of Christian Truth* (P&R, 1980)
- Lane Tipton and Scott Oliphint, *Revelation and Reason: New Essays in Reformed Apologetics* (P&R, 2007)
- James K. A. Smith, *Whose Afraid of Postmodernism? Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to Church* (Baker Academic, 2006).
- Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Harvard, 2007)

Cornelius Van Til, *Common Grace and the Gospel*, ed. Scott Oliphint, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (P&R, 2014).  
 Greg Welty, *Why is there so much evil in the world?* (Christian Focus, 2018).  
 Christopher Watkin, *From Plato to Postmodernism* (Bristol Classical Press, 2011)  
 Christopher Watkin, *Thinking Through Creation* (P&R, 2017)

## Grading System

<b>A</b>	(97-100)	4.00
<b>A-</b>	(94-96)	3.66
<b>B+</b>	(91-93)	3.33
<b>B</b>	(88-90)	3.00
<b>B-</b>	(86-87)	2.66
<b>C+</b>	(83-85)	2.33
<b>C</b>	(80-82)	2.00
<b>C-</b>	(78-79)	1.66
<b>D+</b>	(75-77)	1.33
<b>D</b>	(72-74)	1.00
<b>D-</b>	(70-71)	0.66
<b>F</b>	(below 70)	0.00
<b>I</b>	(incomplete)	–
<b>W</b>	(withdraw)	–

The grade “I” indicates that the work required for the course was not completed. It is given only when special, extenuating circumstances (such as illness) prevent the student from completing the work or taking the examination.

A written request for an extension must be submitted prior to the due date of the work concerned. If the request is granted, it remains the responsibility of the student to complete all work for the course as soon as possible. In any case, an “I” grade must be removed within the extension time granted; otherwise it will be changed to “F.”

The grade “W” indicates that a student has withdrawn from a course after the drop deadline. This grade is granted by the academic dean only in extenuating circumstances.

If a course is retaken, the original grade remains on the transcript and is included in the GPA.

### Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: ST 5450

Professor: Sutanto

Campus: Washington, D.C.

Date: Spring 2020

<b><u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u></b> <i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<b><u>Rubric</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong</li> <li>• Moderate</li> <li>• Minimal</li> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>
<b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	Reading, lectures, and writing, focus on content, clarity, persuasive argumentation, and logical analysis.
<b>Scripture</b>	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Moderate	Lectures and reading will emphasize that Scripture is a resource, rather than a hindrance, for apologetics.
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Lectures and reading will show how Reformed theology impacts our understanding of apologetics.
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	Lectures and reading focus on understanding our theology better and the world better so that we might grow in confidence and patience.
<b>Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	This is a specific focus of this course.
<b>Winsomely Reformed</b>	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Moderate	The course will focus on engaging with and understanding alternatives to the Christian faith for the sake of persuasion.
<b>Pastoral Ministry</b>	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	Moderate	Ministers should be able to aid their congregants through some of the intellectual and existential challenges against the Christian faith.

