

Apologetics
RTS-Atlanta – 2024

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:9–11

It is true that the best apologetics can be given only when the system of truth is well known. But it is also true that the system of truth is not well known except it be seen in opposition to error. Systematic theology itself has been developed, to a large extent, in opposition to error. The two disciplines are therefore mutually dependent upon one another.

Cornelius Van Til, Introduction to Systematic Theology

I. Course Description

- A. Students are introduced to a Reformed apologetic approach centered on the triune God and his self-revelation in Scripture. In addition, they are equipped to engage a variety of challenges to the Christian faith in a way that honors the risen Christ in terms of the approach's warrant, content, manner, and method. Special attention is paid to the way the progress of redemptive history frames the task and goals of a Reformed Christian apologetic.

II. Course Details

- A. Dates: January 16–19, 2024
- B. Times: Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday-Friday 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM
- C. Location: RTS-Atlanta Campus
- D. Instructor: Dr. R. Carlton Wynne
- E. Contact: c.wynne@wmpca.org

III. Course Goals

- A. To exhibit a deeper love for the absolute and personal triune God, His Word, and His church.
- B. To grasp the biblical and theological warrant, principles, content, manner and method of a Reformed apologetic approach.
- C. To develop the ability to apply a Reformed apologetic approach to a selection of intellectual, philosophical, and pastoral challenges to the Christian faith.

IV. Philosophy and Purpose of the Course

- A. The task of commending and defending the faith is one that is graciously mandated in the Word of God (1 Cor 10:31–33; 2 Cor 10:5; 1 Pet 3:15; Jude 3). By engaging in apologetics, Christians manifest their union with Christ by faith, love others, and endure spiritual warfare (Eph 6:10–20; 2 Tim 2:22–26). In that sense, apologetics is for every believer. But it especially important that those training for various expressions of gospel ministry understand the dimensions and function of apologetics so that, as you minister, you might honor the Lord as you help others to fulfill their apologetic task. Additionally, ministers of the Word must be able to communicate the gospel in a way that winsomely and forthrightly addresses challenges to the Christian faith.
- B. How we think about apologetics will determine its content and its goal. In this course, we will follow an approach to apologetics called, most generally, “presuppositionalism,” a method often associated with Dutch theologian Cornelius Van Til (1895–1987). While the term “presuppositionalism” is not particularly helpful today, given the term’s flexibility and common misunderstandings, the biblical and theological warrant, principles, content and method of Van Til’s approach will be set forth in this course.
- C. Any single course on apologetics has to be selective. Unfortunately, we cannot cover the whole

terrain of apologetics in one semester. We will not be able to cover the history of apologetics or explore other apologetic methods in detail. Instead, our primary aim will be to unfold from Scripture and the Reformed tradition a God-honoring apologetic method that, by the power of the Spirit working by and with the Word, is able to “destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take captive every thought to obey Christ” (2 Cor 10:5).

- D. By the end of this course, the student should (1) be equipped to articulate a biblical/theological basis for apologetics; (2) understand key concepts and ideas related to apologetics; and (3) be able to apply a Reformed apologetic approach to a variety of challenges to the faith. Hopefully, the groundwork will be laid for years of fruitful reflection and service in Christ’s church, to his glory!

V. Course Requirements

A. Attendance and Class Participation

1. All registered students are expected to attend all class sessions.
 - i. NB: Computers used in class should be for note taking only. The temptation to surf the internet, check email, etc., during class time should be denied (see Rom 8:13).
 - ii. There will be opportunity for class participation and questions during lectures.
2. Though the course will generally feature lecture format, class discussion and questions are welcomed and expected. Because of time constraints, though, tangential comments should be reserved for outside of class time. If the need arises, we may set aside certain times for questions and discussions only.

B. Reading Assignments

1. Required:
 - i. Van Til, Cornelius. *The Defense of the Faith*. 4th ed. Ed. K. Scott Oliphint. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2008. **ALL**
 - ii. Van Til, Cornelius. “My Credo.” In *Jerusalem and Athens: Critical Discussions on the Philosophy and Apologetics of Cornelius Van Til*, ed. E. R. Geehan, 3–21. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1980. (available online [HERE](#)).
 - iii. Oliphint, K. Scott & Tipton, Lane G., eds. *Revelation and Reason: New Essays in Reformed Apologetics*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2007. **Ch. 1, 2, 4, 6**
 - iv. Vern Poythress, *Inerrancy and Worldview*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, chs. 1–2, 3–4, 18–20, 23, 26–28, 30, 31, 34, 36 (available online [HERE](#)).
2. Note on Required Reading:
 - i. **Please read *I&W*, chs. 1–2, 3–4, 18–20, 23, 26–28, 30–31; *R&R*, ch. 1, 6; and Van Til, “My Credo” PRIOR TO THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS on January 16.**
3. Required for Paper (Note: the three essay selections for this assignment will be available in PDF format on our “Canvas” page).
 - i. Schmidt, Mark Ray. *Constructing a Life Philosophy: Opposing Viewpoints*. San Diego, CA: Greenhaven, 2002.
4. Required (but not tested):
 - i. Clowney, Edmund P. “Preaching the Word of the Lord: Cornelius Van Til, V.D.M.” *Westminster Theological Journal* 46, no. 2 (1984): 233–53. **ALL** (Note: this article will be available in PDF format on our “Canvas” page).
 - ii. (Note: This assignment is meant to be for your own edification and enjoyment. It combines the best of scholarship with some very practical and central ideas that should help you see how Reformed apologetics relates to your own faith and ministry. I will ask you on the final exam if you have read this and the other assigned readings).

C. Argument Analyses

1. You will be asked to analyze one essay from among three selections from *Constructing a Life Philosophy: Opposing Viewpoints* (see the essay options listed below) and write an argument analysis for the essay.
2. In each analysis, (1) briefly reproduce the author's main argument, or one of the author's main arguments, in your own words (1–2 sentences). In a separate section, (2) lay out the premises of the argument numerically, walking through the author's rationale for his/her conclusion. Be as specific and concise as possible, showing the connections and flow of the argument (or lack thereof). Pay special attention to “argument indicators” such as “so,” “because,” “since,” “therefore,” etc. Refer to Fisher's *Critical Thinking* and to the CTW handouts for help in identifying the premises and their logical relations. The goal is to accurately reproduce the author's argument such that he or she would say, “Yes, you've correctly understood my argument. Congratulations.”
3. Then, in a third section, (3) identify the primary problematic premise(s) and *briefly* explain why they are problematic from a Reformed, covenantal perspective. To do this you must *try to get over onto the ground of the view you disagree with, in order to show from within how it fails to live up to its own claims*. I.e., *please do not critique your author's argument simply by stating that he/she does not believe the Bible*. Instead, you might explore whether a premise in the opposing argument manifests inconsistency, arbitrariness, or equivocation (i.e., ambiguous use of terms); or (especially) how the unargued assumptions behind some aspect of the argument (e.g., the mind is operating normally, God may be understood properly apart from Scripture, denial of the Creator-creature distinction, arbitrary appeal to authority, etc.) undermines key claims of the argument, itself. You might also identify whether the author has misrepresented some aspect of the Christian worldview, but this should make up only part of an internal critique of your opponent's essay. In short, identify where you would exploit a weakness or conflict within the author's worldview and briefly explain why. No need to give a full-blown critique of the essay as a whole.
4. Each argument analysis should be 1–2 pages in length (12-point font, single-spaced).
 - i. Page numbers in the top, right-hand corner of each page.
 - ii. The first page containing all of the following: your name, the name and year of the course; the professor's name.
 - iii. These formatting features are important to the assignment and will factor into the grading process.
5. As a guideline for you, I have uploaded to our Canvas page (<https://rts.instructure.com>; select “Apologetics” from the courses menu) a sample “Argument Analysis.” The sample analyzes Richard Robinson's essay, “Life Has No Purpose—We Create It,” found on pp. 41–45 in *Constructing a Life Philosophy*.
6. The purpose of the argument analyses is to equip you to enter into an unbelieving argument in order to expose its internal weaknesses from a Reformed perspective. This is a skill that is indispensable to, but not exhaustive of, a Reformed apologetic method. These analyses will also provide you with the “steel beams” of your apologetics paper (see “D” below).
7. **NB: Please choose one (1) essay from the following selections from *Constructing a Life Philosophy* (PDF's posted on Canvas site):**
 - i. Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli. “Hinduism Teaches that All Ways Lead to God.” In *Constructing a Life Philosophy: Opposing Viewpoints*, 110–15. Edited by Mary E. Williams. Farmington Hills, MI: Greenhaven, 2005.
 - ii. Miller, Donald E. “Liberal Christianity Finds Many Ways to Seek God.” In *Constructing a Life Philosophy: Opposing Viewpoints*, 86–94. Edited by Mark Ray Schmidt. San Diego, CA: Greenhaven, 2002.
 - iii. Zindler, Frank R. “Religion is Not Needed in Moral Decisions.” In *Constructing a Life Philosophy: Opposing Viewpoints*, 160–69. Edited by Mark Ray Schmidt. San Diego, CA:

Greenhaven, 2002.

8. Please check the schedule below and submit all argument analyses on our Canvas page by the **DUE DATE: February 2, 2024, at 11:59 PM.**
 - i. Your assignment grade will be docked ½ letter grade for each day it is late (Sunday excepted). Early submission is fine.

D. Paper Assignment

1. You will be asked to analyze your chosen essay from *Constructing a Life Philosophy: Opposing Viewpoints* and write a paper expanding on your prior analysis and critique.
2. General Instructions on the Paper Assignment
 - i. The paper is to consist of an apologetic argument with the author of the essay you choose. You must address the issues and the underlying presuppositions of the philosophy or argument set forth by your author. You must strive to be persuasive, and not simply enunciate your disagreements. In order to accomplish this, again, it is important to respond to the author's essay in such a way as he or she would say, "Yes, you have accurately represented my position." More than that, you must try to "sympathize" with the view you disagree with. Where might there be formal truths with which you can agree? Are there perspectives or questions that you appreciate? Beyond this, though, it is critical that, in your refutation, you strive to apply the "transcendental approach" as you will have learned it in the course. After applying this critique to your author's essay, you will be in a position to address the issue(s) briefly from a Christian perspective, organically leading to a call for repentance and faith in the gospel.
 - ii. Though this paper is not your standard "research" paper, you may want to do enough research (and relevant footnoting) beyond your chosen essay, itself, that will help you (a) explain your selected author's case against Christian theism (e.g., is he/she drawing on other works or ideas? If so, what are they? Have others dealt with this issue before?); and (b) present your own apologetic response (e.g., are there any historical or theological resources that helpfully support your critique and response? Are any of our course readings relevant to your response? Hint! Hint!). The library and ATLA database are your best resources. Again, the nature of this assignment requires that you do enough research to provide a well-informed analysis and critique of your chosen essay. However, if you think that you have enough information from the essay, itself, to offer an apologetic response, you will not be penalized for lack of other sources in your footnotes. you will likely do more "standard" research in papers for other classes.
3. Special Directions for the Paper Assignment
 - i. Each paper should include at least five distinct features: (1) A clearly defined thesis statement (E.g., "This paper argues that . . ." or "This paper's thesis is . . .").
 - ii. Second, (2) a brief summary of the author's main argument, or one of the author's main arguments, in your own words (1–2 sentences). What is he arguing for? What is his overall goal in writing?
 - iii. Third, (3) a brief description of the distinct reasons or supports in the essay that serve the overall goal of the essay. Be as specific and concise as possible. If possible, show how the reasons or supports (i.e., the premises of the argument) connect or relate to one another (or, perhaps, do not connect to one another). Pay special attention to "argument indicators" such as "so," "because," "since," "therefore," etc. The goal is to accurately reproduce the author's argument such that he or she would say, "Yes, you've correctly understood my argument. Congratulations."
 - iv. Fourth, (4) a treatment of where, by God's common grace, the author may offer formal insights. Is everything he says completely bankrupt? Or is there a grain of truth—even formal or twisted truth—in what he is saying? This step requires wisdom and discernment, without capitulating to the basic assumptions of the essay, itself.
 - v. Finally, (5) an extended analysis of the basic, non-Christian assumptions in the essay and

briefly explain why they are problematic not only from a Christian perspective but also *for the unbelieving author's argument itself*. To do this you must try to get over onto the ground of the view you disagree with, in order to show from within how it fails to live up to, or support, its own insights and claims. I.e., *please do not critique your author's argument simply by stating that he/she does not believe the Bible*. Instead, you might explore whether a claim in the opposing argument manifests inconsistency, arbitrariness, or equivocation (i.e., ambiguous use of terms); or (especially) how the unargued assumptions behind some aspect of the argument (e.g., the mind is operating normally, God may be understood properly apart from Scripture, denial of the Creator-creature distinction, arbitrary appeal to authority, etc.) undermines key claims in the argument, itself. You might also identify whether the author has misrepresented some aspect of the Christian worldview, but this should make up only part of an internal critique of your opponent's essay. In short, identify where you would exploit a weakness or conflict within the author's worldview and briefly explain how it undermines the author's argument for an unbelieving position (no need to give a full-blown critique of the essay as a whole). Then, you will be in a good position to offer a *brief* commendation of the issue at hand from a biblical and revelational perspective, centered on the gospel of Christ.

- vi. Again, as a guideline for you, I have uploaded to our Canvas page a sample "Argument Analysis" of Richard Robinson's essay, "Life Has No Purpose—We Create It," found on pp. 41–45 in *Constructing a Life Philosophy*. Though it is not a full paper (as you will write), this document offers the kind of analysis that will help you write your paper on the essay of your choosing.
4. About Footnotes and Research
 - i. Please use a recognized scholarly style for citations (e.g., Chicago/Turabian, SBL). E.g., Richard Robinson, "Life Has No Purpose—We Create It," in *Constructing a Life Philosophy: Opposing Viewpoints*, ed. Mark Ray Schmidt (San Diego: Greenhaven, 2002), 41–45.
 5. Length and Format: 2500–3500 words (~8–10 pp.), including footnotes.
 - i. **Any paper over the upper word limit (not including a cover page) will be deducted 1/2 letter grade (an "A-" quality paper gets a "B+", a "B+" quality paper gets a "B," a "B-" quality paper gets a "C+", etc.).**
 - ii. Part of learning to write well includes not only what to say, but how much to say. You have 3500 words to say what needs to be said.
 - iii. Please include a first page containing all of the following: your name, the name and year of the course; the word count of your paper; the professor's name.
 - iv. Double-spaced, with 12-point font in "Times" or "Times New Roman" font.
 - v. Page numbers in the top, right-hand corner of each page of a hard copy, if mailed.
 - vi. Stapled pages in hard copy, if mailed.
 - vii. The following statement at the end of your paper and signed by you: *I understand and have not violated the Seminary's position on plagiarism.*
 - viii. You will be penalized if you do not observe the requirements and guidelines above.
 6. Please check the schedule below and upload all papers on our "Canvas" page by the **DUE DATE: February 16, 2024.**
 - i. Your assignment grade will be docked ½ letter grade for each day it is late (Sunday excepted). Early submission is fine.
 7. As an aside, your reading assignment/reporting and research integration project (i.e., the course paper), along with appropriate guidance and feedback by the professor on the latter assignment, is designed to satisfy RTS's accreditation requirement for a 2-credit class.
- E. *Final Exam*
1. A 2-hour final exam will cover course lectures, as supplemented by assigned readings.
 2. The exam will likely consist of identifications, short answer questions, and one long essay

- question.
3. An unmarked English (or native tongue) translation of the Bible (without study notes, etc.) and/or Hebrew/Greek Scripture texts may be used. You may not use any class notes or other study resources.
 4. NB: The final exam must be proctored by a non-family member from your church (e.g., pastor, elder, etc.). Please note the name and email address of the proctor on your exam.
 5. **FINAL EXAM DUE DATE: February 23, 2021**
- F. *About Grades*
1. In this course, grades are a fallible way for the instructor to assess your comprehension of the course material as you prepare for gospel ministry.
 2. The grading rubric (see below) will serve as a guide for grading the written assignments. Please use it as a guide for completing the written exams.
 3. If you think it would be useful to your growth in Christ (see Phil 2:14), I will be happy to discuss your exam/paper grades with you.
 4. The final course grade is calculated as follows:
 - i. *Course Reading: 15%*
 - ii. *Argument Analysis: 15%*
 - iii. *Course Paper: 30%*
 - iv. *Final Exam: 40%*

VI. RTS Zoom Policy

- A. Your professor may allow you to Zoom into class or watch Zoom recordings for excused absences based on the professor's discretion and subject to the availability of equipment.
- B. Students should contact their professor well in advance of the class meeting. For a third absence the Registrar should be consulted. Your professor may require additional interactive assignments to offset the absence of classroom interaction. Sync or Remote Live courses have priority for the limited Zoom equipment.

VII. RTS Extension Policy

- A. All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class. Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.
- B. Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Registrar's Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p.46 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 18)
- C. Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 49)

Grading Rubric for Written Assignments

| | Content | Organization and Coherence | Mechanics |
|---------|--|---|---|
| A / 95% | Accurate representation of the source, penetrating and insightful exposition. Nothing significant overlooked. | Clear, coherent, and efficient. No oddities or unnecessary this or that; all the essential pieces included and well balanced. | Entirely free of spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors. Maybe a slip up here or there, but clearly the paper was proofread with care. |
| B / 85% | Excellent and accurate summary; no factual inaccuracies but less recognize of implicit issues. | Good organization; coherent and clear, though perhaps not optimally clean or comprehensive. | May contain a few errors, which may annoy the reader but not impede understanding. |
| C / 75% | More or less accurate representation of the reading; significant oversights and even one or two misrepresentations of the reading. | Good. However, some oddities (unneeded material, missing links, counter-intuitive structure) may cause confusion. | Contains several mechanical errors which may confuse the reader but not impede the overall understanding. Inadequate proofreading. |
| D / 65% | The number of inaccuracies is high. General failure to connect with the reading. | Quite confusing. More disorganized than organized. Significant gaps or unnecessary material that compromises readability. | So many errors that the paper is barely intelligible. The paper was written hastily and not proofread. |
| F | No detectable relationship between the student's work and the reading. | No appreciable organization; lacks transitions and coherence. | Unintelligible due to errors. |

Lecture Outline
(Subject to change due to time constraints)

- I. Introduction
 - A. What Matters Most?
 - 1. Apologetics and the Glory of God
 - 2. Epistemological Self-Consciousness
 - B. Cornelius Van Til (1895–1987)
 - C. General Orientation to Apologetics
 - 1. Definitions of Apologetics
 - 2. Misconceptions and Objections
- II. The Biblical Warrant for Apologetics
 - A. Old Testament Warrant
 - 1. Genesis 1–3
 - a) Adam as Covenant-bound Creature of God
 - (1) Extended Excursus: WCF 7.1
 - (a) Main Points and Implications
 - (b) Divine Knowledge and Christian Mystery
 - b) Adam as Image of God
 - (1) Adam’s Uniqueness as Image (Gen 1:26–27)
 - (2) Adam’s Vicegerency as Image (Gen 1:28, 2:16–17)
 - c) Adam as Apologist in Eden (Gen 2:15)
 - (1) The Theocratic Context of Adam’s Task
 - (2) The Theocratic Calling of Adam’s Task
 - (3) The (Prospect of) Theocratic Completion of Adam’s Task
 - (4) Extended Excursus: The Myth of Neutrality
 - d) A Study of Enmity/Antithesis (Gen 3:15)
 - 2. OT “Holy War” in Canaan (Theocratic Apologetics)
 - a) Introduction
 - (1) Apologetic Encounters in Genesis
 - (2) The Exodus from Egypt (Ex 12–14)
 - (3) The Crossing of the Jordan (Josh 3)
 - (4) The Angel of the Lord (Josh 5)
 - b) Israel as Apologist in Canaan
 - (1) The Theocratic Context of Israel’s Task
 - (2) The Theocratic Calling of Israel’s Task
 - c) Implications for Apologetics (Discontinuities and Continuities)
 - B. New Testament Warrant
 - 1. Christ as the Preeminent Apologist
 - a) The Inaugurated Kingdom of God
 - b) Christ as the Last Adam (Luke 3:21–4:13)
 - c) The Great Commission (Matt 28)
 - 2. Christians as Apologists in Christ Today
 - a) The Non-Theocratic Mode of our Apologetic Task
 - (1) Cross-Bearing Service
 - b) The Non-Theocratic Context of our Apologetic Task
 - (1) The Wilderness Pilgrimage of the Church
 - c) The Non-Theocratic Calling of our Apologetic Task
 - (1) The *Locus Classicus* (1 Pet 3:15)
 - (2) Other Passages

(a) Eph 6:10–18

(b) 2 Cor 10:1–6

III. The Theological Basis of Apologetics: Part I

A. The Doctrine of God

1. Introduction
 - a) The Trinity as Absolute Personality
2. Three Features of Reformed Trinitarianism
 - a) God's Absoluteness
 - b) God's Triunity
 - c) God's Exhaustive Personality
3. Implications for a Christian Worldview

B. The Doctrine of Revelation

1. The "Covenantal Coordination" of General and Special Revelation
2. The Sufficiency of General and Special Revelation
3. Epistemological Conclusions

IV. The Theological Basis of Apologetics: Part II

A. Apologetics as a Theological Discipline

1. The Interrelationship of Scripture, Theology, and Apologetics
 - a) J. P. Gabler (1753–1826)
2. A Reformed Response
 - a) A Reformed View of History
 - b) A Reformed View of Theology
 - c) A Reformed View of Hermeneutics

B. Reformed Theology to the Glory of God

1. B.B. Warfield (1851–1921)
2. John Murray (1898–1975)

C. An Alternative Approach: Classical Apologetics

1. Key Figures
 - a) Justin Martyr (100–165)
 - b) Gordon Clark (1902–1985)
 - c) Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274)
2. Basic Approach: Blockhouse Method
 - a) Reformed Critique
3. Case Study: Argument From Design (Teleological Argument)
 - a) Reformed Critique
4. Conclusion

D. The *Principia* of Theology

1. Philosophical Background and Definition
2. Twin Reformed *Principia*
 - a) *Principium Essendi*
 - b) *Principium Cognoscendi*
3. Debate over *Principia*
 - a) Continental Rationalism and British Empiricism
 - b) Reformed Critique
4. Archetypal and Ectypal Knowledge

E. The Doctrine of Revelation (*Principium Cognoscendi*)

1. The Essence of Scripture
2. The Attributes of Scripture
 - a) The Necessity of Scripture
 - (1) The Necessity of General Revelation
 - b) The Authority of Scripture

- (1) The Authority of General Revelation
 - c) The Sufficiency of Scripture
 - (1) The Sufficiency of General Revelation
 - d) The Perspicuity of Scripture
 - (1) The Perspicuity of General Revelation
- F. The Doctrine of God (*Principium Essendi*)
 - 1. Application to Thomistic “Proofs”
- G. The Doctrine of Man
 - 1. Romans 1:18–32
 - a) The truth revealed: its content and character
 - b) The suppression: its form and dynamics
 - 2. Application to Apologetics
- H. Common Grace
 - 1. The “Question” of Common Grace
 - 2. The Terminology of Common Grace
 - 3. Three Aspects of Common Grace
 - 4. Application to Apologetics
- V. Apologetics Applied
 - A. The Covenantal Apologetic Approach
 - 1. Introduction: Review of Biblical and Theological Foundations
 - 2. Van Til’s “Transcendental” Method
 - a) Definitions: “Transcendental” vs. “Transcendent”
 - b) Philosophical Background: Kant vs. Van Til
 - c) Misconceptions and Clarifications
 - 3. Rationalist-Irrationalist Dialectic
 - a) Description
 - b) Theological Rationale
 - B. Examples
 - 1. Joseph Fletcher’s *Situation Ethic*
 - 2. Bruce Kuklick’s “Critical” Historiography
 - 3. Alex Rosenberg’s Evolutionary Naturalism
 - 4. Richard Dawkins’ Atheistic Ethic / The Problem of Evil

Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Apologetics
 Professor: Rev. Dr. R. Carlton Wynne
 Campus: Atlanta
 Date: Winter Term 2024

| <u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u> <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> | | <u>Rubric</u> Strong Moderate Minimal None | <u>Mini-Justification</u> |
|---|---|---|---|
| Articulation (oral & written) | Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. | Strong | Students will study a distinctively biblical and Reformed approach to apologetics and express their own ability to apply it to non-Christian challenges through multiple written assignments, including a brief argument analysis, a term paper, and a written final exam. |
| Scripture | 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.) | Strong | Students will explore how Scripture ought to inform and shape a Reformed approach to apologetics, beginning with an understanding of the biblical warrant for apologetics. They will also explore how a redemptive-historical reading of Scripture undergirds a distinctively Reformed apologetic approach. |
| Reformed Theology | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards. | Strong | Students will integrate God's redemptive revelation in Scripture with confessional and Reformed theology with explicit appeal to the Westminster Standards. |
| Sanctification | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification. | Moderate | Students will see how fellowship with the ascended Christ ought to impel their own holiness when engaging in apologetics. |
| Desire for Worldview | Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. | Strong | Students will seek to order their deepest epistemological and metaphysical |

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---|----------|---|
| | | | commitments according to God's Word when engaging in apologetics. |
| Winsomely Reformed | 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.) | Strong | Students will learn how their fellowship with Christ's death and resurrection inspires the cross-shaped piety and heaven-centered hope that is indispensable to apologetics. They will also seek to love their neighbor and exalt Christ as redeemer rather than score points with opponents. |
| Preaching | Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm. | Minimal | The course's training in apologetics will indirectly inform the student's approach to addressing challenges to the Christian faith from the pulpit. |
| Worship | Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service. | Minimal | Students will learn how a Christ-centered worldview cherishes the corporate worship of Christ, though this is not a feature aspect of the course. |
| Shepherd | Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide. | Strong | Students will explore how the principles and priorities in apologetics should guide their approach to caring for the church, non-church members, as well as non-Christians worldwide. |
| Church/World | Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. | Moderate | Students will learn how God's common grace and the structures of unbelief inform public issues, and how Christians ought to approach such issues in the name of Christ. |