

ST5450 Apologetics (v. 110125)

Josh Malone

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Day: Tuesdays

Time: 10am-12pm

Room: **TBD**

TA: TBD

Catalog Description

Students examine the various approaches to apologetic methodology and engage the most frequently raised objections to the Christian faith.

Course Requirements

Participation (15%): Each student is required to attend course, answer questions when asked, and participate in class discussions. The following rubric explains how students will be evaluated:

A to A- (100-94)	B+ to B- (93-86)	C+ to C- (85-78)	D+ to D- (77-70)	F (69 – 0)
Provided many good ideas for class consideration; inspired others; clearly communicated desires, ideas, questions, and comments. Was respectful of others.	Participated in discussions; shared questions and comments. Was respectful of others.	Listened mainly; occasionally asked a question or offered a comment. Was respectful of others.	Seemed bored with discussions; rarely spoke up, and questions or comments were off topic. Was disrespectful of others. Or, dominated class time by not permitting others to ask their questions.	Failed to attend class—missed more than three lecture periods total.

Reading Briefs (15%): For each week (after the first week) there is a reading brief due. Students are required to upload to Canvas a reading brief for the *first listed reading only on Lecture Schedule*. The purpose of the brief is to summarize the thesis, outline, and argument, as well as to state one's own analysis of it (in the form of questions, confirmations, objections, etc.). Briefs may include quotations from various points in the text (so long as page numbers are referenced). Briefs should be no less than 200 words and no more than 350 words. They should be written in complete sentences and edited carefully, and uploaded to Canvas before class begins on Tuesdays.

Research Paper (40%): you must write a 12-15 page research paper written in a 12 point Times New Roman font, with 10 point Times New Roman footnotes, double-spaced, footnotes single-spaced. *You must use at least ten sources, three of which should be journal articles.*

Students will write a paper responding to an apologetic question (one they have or commonly encounter), identifying the alternative faith or worldview, and utilizing the material from the course readings.

- a. You should show from your paper an application of the course material and readings.
- b. 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.
- c. Approvals: Topics must first be approved by the professor beforehand.

Paper formatting: **Please use *The Chicago Manual of Style* or *Turabian's Manual for Writers of Term Papers* for a style guide.** Please also note the following grading rubric:

A to A- (100-94)	B+ to B- (93-86)	C+ to C- (85-78)	D+ to D- (77-70)	F (69 – 0)
Follows assignment rules re. format, length, and sources; engages primary sources; provides analysis, not simply rehearses information.	Follows assignment rules re. format, length, and sources; engages minimal primary sources and is more reliant upon secondary sources; has more repetition of information than analysis	Fails to meet assignment rules re. format, length, and sources; does not engage primary sources; relies upon secondary sources exclusively; has minimal analysis.	Fails to meet assignment rules re. format, length, and sources; relies upon secondary sources exclusively, and has no analysis.	Fails to submit paper or significantly fails to meet assignment rules.

Note, failure to reach (1) the required minimum pages (12), (2) the required number of sources (10, with 3 journal articles) will result in the loss of one to two letter grades on your paper. Due on the last week of class, Saturday at 11:59pm (May 2, 2025).

Final Exam (30%): Students will sit for a two-hour exam that covers questions drawn from lectures and assigned readings. ***Exam will be given on Canvas during finals week.***

Textbooks & Required Reading

Holy Bible (any version)

NOTE: Students who would like to pursue an advanced course of study may negotiate different assigned readings with the instructor. This must be done during the first week of class and may not be recanted once agreed upon.

Brian Morley, *Mapping Apologetics: Comparing Contemporary Approaches* (IVP, 2015). ISBN: 9780830840670.

John Fesko, *Reforming Apologetics: Retrieving the Classic Reformed Approach to Defending the Faith* (Baker, 2019). ISBN: 9780801098901.

Joshua Chatraw, *Telling a Better Story: How To Talk about God in a Skeptical Age* (Zondervan: 2020). ISBN: 9780310108634.

Supplementary PDF readings will be provided on Canvas.

Course structure:

1. Introduction to Apologetics (Defeaters, Biblical Warrant, Doctrinal Concerns)
2. Method
 - a. Classical Varieties
 - b. Reformed(ish) Varieties
 - c. Evidential Varieties
3. Reformed Apologetics
 - a. Light of Nature, Notions, Calvin
 - b. Aquinas, Worldview
 - c. Transcendental Args, Dualisms, Book of Nature
4. Cultural APL1 – Modern World: Secularism and Lost Story
5. Cultural APL2 – Objections to the Story: Oppressive/Unloving/Untrue
6. Existence of God
7. Science & Scripture
8. Problem of Evil & Suffering
9. Apologetics & LBGTQ+
10. Critical Theory & The Gospel

Lecture Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Readings
1	Jan 27	Introduction to Apologetics Classical Varieties	Morley, 9-55 (skim) Morley, 190-291 WL Craig, <i>Reasonable Faith</i> (excerpt)
2	Feb 3	PMV - No Class	Discussion Board Question
3	Feb 10	Reformed(ish) Varieties	Morley, 59-189 Van Til, <i>The Defense of the Faith</i> , Ch. 6
4	Feb 17	Evidentialist Varieties	Morley, 292-365 Habermas, <i>Experiences of the Risen Jesus</i>
5	Feb 24	Nature, Notions, Calvin, Aquinas	Fesko, ch 1-4 (pp 1-96) Casselli, "Creation & Law"
6	Mar 3	Worldview, TAs, Dualisms, Book of Nature & APL	Fesko, ch 5-8 (pp 97-219) Anderson, <i>If knowledge, then God</i>
7	Mar 10	Spring Break	
8	Mar 17	Modern World: Secularism & Lost Story	Chatraw, part 1 (pp 1-74) Chatraw, part 2 (pp 75-170)
9	Mar 24	Objections to the Story: Oppressive/Unloving/Untrue	Chatraw, part 3 (pp 171-226)
10	Mar 31	Existence of God	Plantinga, <i>A few dozen (or so) arguments for God</i> Frame, <i>Apologetics</i> , Ch 5
11	Apr 7	Science and Scripture	Keller, Reason for God, Ch. 6 McLaughlin, <i>Confronting Chr.</i> , Ch 7
12	Apr 14	Problem of Evil & Suffering	Frame, <i>Apologetics</i> , Ch. 7-8
13	Apr 21	Apologetics & LGBTQ+	McLaughlin, <i>Confronting Chr.</i> , Ch. 9 <i>Homophobic?</i>
14	Apr 28	Critical Theory & the Gospel	Shenvi, <i>Social Justice, Critical Theory, and Christianity: Are They Compatible?</i>
15		Finals Week	

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: ST5450 Apologetics

Campus: Jackson, MS

Professor: Josh Malone

Date: Spring 2026

<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. 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.
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.)	MODERATE	Lectures and reading will emphasize that Scripture is a resource, rather than a hindrance, for apologetics.
Reformed Theology	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.
Sanctification	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.
Worldview	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.
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.)	MODERATE	The course will focus on engaging with and understanding alternatives to the Christian faith for the sake of persuasion.
Pastoral Ministry	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.

