

Note:

Course content may be changed, term to term, without notice. The information below is provided as a guide for course selection and is not binding in any form, and should not be used to purchase course materials.

COURSE SYLLABUS

APOL 310

APOLOGETICS IN THE SECULAR AGE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course develops an apologetic approach which takes into account the values and plausibility structures of the late modern, secular age. Particular emphasis will be given to understanding current cultural movements and values and constructing a person-centered approach to the apologetic task.

RATIONALE

Apologetics is an important area of study for all believers. It serves a dual role of not only providing answers to the tough questions people ask but also strengthening one's own faith along the way. In order to communicate the Christian story/narrative effectively, we must be able to understand the "air we breathe" as a culture – knowing/understanding both how we got here and how to move forward. This course teaches the characteristics of the current culture – what the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor calls the "Secular Age" – and how to craft an effective apologetic response.

I. PREREQUISITE

For information regarding prerequisites for this course, please refer to the [Academic Course Catalog](#).

II. REQUIRED RESOURCE PURCHASE

Click on the following link to view the required resource(s) for the term in which you are registered: <http://bookstore.mbsdirect.net/liberty.htm>

III. ADDITIONAL MATERIALS FOR LEARNING

- A. Computer with basic audio/video output equipment
- B. Internet access (broadband recommended)
- C. Blackboard [recommended browsers](#)
- D. Microsoft Office
- E. School of Divinity Writing Guide:
<https://www.liberty.edu/divinity/index.cfm?PID=28160>

IV. MEASURABLE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- A. Identify the current plausibility structures of late modernism.
- B. Understand the importance of presuppositions in a worldview and where they can be challenged.
- C. Recognize the complexity of belief and the need for a person-centered apologetic.
- D. Develop effective strategies for engaging apologetically with current cultural plausibility structures.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Textbook readings and lecture presentations.
- B. Course Requirements Checklist

After reading the Course Syllabus and [Student Expectations](#), the student will complete the related checklist found in Module/Week 1.

- C. Discussion Board Forums (2)

Discussion boards are collaborative learning experiences. Therefore, the student is required to create a thread in response to the provided prompt for each forum. Each thread must be at least 350 words and demonstrate course-related knowledge. In addition to the thread, the student is required to reply to 1 other classmates' thread. The reply must be at least 250 words. (MLO: A, B, C, D)

- D. Essay

The student will write a 1,800–2,000-word research-based Essay in current Turabian format that focuses on the application of apologetics in the Secular Age. The Essay must include at least 10 scholarly references in addition to the course textbooks and the Bible. These must be credible articles or books. No unscholarly websites or blogs will be accepted as sources. The Essay will be completed in 3 phases:

Phase 1: Pick a topic, Selected Bibliography

Phase 2: Introduction Paragraph, Thesis Statement, Outline, Annotated Bibliography

Phase 3: Final Draft

Each phase will be graded separately and will be due in intervals throughout the course. (MLO: A, B, D)

E. Reading Reflections (7)

Throughout the term, the student will compose 7 Reading Reflections centered on the respective module/week’s reading assignment. For some module/weeks, the student will respond to a particular claim made by a hypothetical atheist. This will be a chance to apply that module/week’s reading in an apologetic scenario. For other module/weeks, the student will be asked to pick out a quote (or point) from the reading and interact with it by offering analysis, explanation, etc. Each reading reflection must be 7–8 sentences in length and demonstrate course-related knowledge. (MLO: A, B, C, D)

VI. COURSE GRADING AND POLICIES

A. Points

Course Requirements Checklist	10
Discussion Board Forums (2 at 150 pts ea)	300
Essay	
Phase 1 (Topic and Bibliography)	50
Phase 2 (Intro, Thesis, Outline, Annot. Bib.)	100
Phase 3 (Final Draft)	200
Reading Reflections (7 at 50pts ea) (Modules 1–5, 7–8)	350
Total	1010

B. Scale

A = 900–1010 B = 800–899 C = 700–799 D = 600–699 F = 0–599

C. Disability Assistance

Students with a documented disability may contact Liberty University Online’s Office of Disability Accommodation Support (ODAS) at LUOODAS@liberty.edu to make arrangements for academic accommodations. Further information can be found at www.liberty.edu/disabilitysupport.

If you have a complaint related to disability discrimination or an accommodation that was not provided, you may contact ODAS or the Office of Equity and Compliance by phone at (434) 592-4999 or by email at equityandcompliance@liberty.edu. Click to see a full copy of Liberty’s [Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) or the [Student Disability Grievance Policy and Procedures](#).

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Chatraw, Joshua D. & Mark D. Allen. *Apologetics at the Cross: An Introduction for Christian Witness*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018. ISBN: 9780310524687.
- Clark, David K. *Dialogical Apologetics: A Person-Centered Approach to Christian Defense*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 1999. ISBN: 9780801025730.
- Crouch, Andy. *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2013. ISBN: 9780830837557.
- Guinness, Os. *Fool's Talk: Recovering the Art of Christian Persuasion*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015. ISBN: 9780830836994.
- Heclo, Hugh. *On Thinking Institutionally*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. ISBN: 9780199946006.
- Highfield, Ron. *God, Freedom & Human Dignity: Embracing a God-Centered Identity in a Me-Centered Culture*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013. ISBN: 9780830827114.
- Keller, Timothy. *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*. Detroit, MI: Gale Cengage Learning, 2009. ISBN: 9781594483493.
- Köstenberger, Andreas, Darrel Bock and Josh Chatraw. *Truth Matters: Confident Faith in a Confusing World*. Grand Rapids, MI: B&H Academic, 2014. ISBN: 9781433682261.
- Köstenberger, Andreas, Darrel Bock and Josh Chatraw. *Truth in a Culture of Doubt: Engaging Skeptical Challenges to the Bible*. Grand Rapids, B&H Academic, 2014. ISBN: 9781433684043.
- McGrath, Alister E. *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012. ISBN: 9780801014161.
- Morley, Brian K. *Mapping Apologetics: Comparing Contemporary Approaches*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015. ISBN: 9780830840670.
- Stackhouse, Jr. John G. *Humble Apologetics: Defending the Faith Today*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. ISBN: 9780195307177.
- Sweis, Khaldoun A. and Chad V. Meister, eds. *Christian Apologetics: An Anthology of Primary Sources*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012. ISBN: 9780310325338.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J., Charles A. Anderson and Michael J. Slesman. *Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007. ISBN: 9780801031670.
- Volf, Miroslav. *A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2013. ISBN: 9781587433436.

COURSE SCHEDULE

APOL 310

Textbooks: Keller, *Making Sense of God: Finding God in the Modern World* (2018).
Smith, *How (Not) to be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (2014).

MODULE/ WEEK	READING & STUDY	ASSIGNMENTS	POINTS
1	Keller: Preface, ch. 1 Smith: Preface, Introduction 1 presentation	Course Requirements Checklist Class Introductions Reading Reflection 1	10 0 50
2	Keller: ch. 2 Smith: chs. 1–2 1 presentation	Essay – Phase 1 Reading Reflection 2	50 50
3	Keller: ch. 3 Smith: chs. 3–4 1 presentation	DB Forum 1 – Thread Reading Reflection 3	75 50
4	Keller: ch. 4 Smith: ch. 5, Conclusion 1 presentation	Essay – Phase 2 Reading Reflection 4	100 50
5	Keller: chs. 5–7 1 presentation	DB Forum 1 – Reply Reading Reflection 5	75 50
6	Keller: ch. 8 1 presentation	Essay – Phase 3	200
7	Keller: chs. 9–10 1 presentation	DB Forum 2 – Thread Reading Reflection 6	75 50
8	Keller: chs. 11–12, Epilogue 1 presentation	DB Forum 2 – Reply Reading Reflection 7	75 50
TOTAL			1010

DB = Discussion Board

NOTE: Each course module/week (except Module/Week 1) begins on Tuesday morning at 12:00 a.m. (ET) and ends on Monday night at 11:59 p.m. (ET). The final module/week ends at 11:59 p.m. (ET) on **Friday**.