



Introduction to Christian Apologetics (3 units)

Trinity Southwest University

College of Archaeology

<Revised 13 May 2025>

I. Course Description

Apologetics is the science of explicating the absolute truth claims of Scripture in such a way as to remove intellectual barriers to the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. This course will equip the student to practice evidential apologetics, the cornerstone of which is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The rules of evidence are applied to the documented eyewitness accounts of Christ's resurrection to determine the strength of that evidence and thereby reach a verdict concerning the factuality or nonfactuality of the resurrection event.

[90 Academic Contact Hours (ACH)]

II. Required Textbooks

Boa & Bowman, *Faith Has Its Reasons: An Integrative Approach to Defending Christianity*

Collins, *The Defendable Faith: Lessons in Christian Apologetics* Mazar, A. (1990) *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible – 10,000-586 BCE*. New York: Doubleday.

Recommended Reading:

Brown, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus*

Clark, *Dialogical Apologetics*

France, *The Evidence for Jesus*

Geisler, *The Battle for the Resurrection*

Geisler & Howe, *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties*

Habermas, *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ*

McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*

Montgomery, *Faith Founded on Fact*

Montgomery, *The Suicide of Christian Theology*

Phillips & Okholm, *Christian Apologetics in the Postmodern World*

Sproul, Gerstner & Lindsley, *Classical Apologetics: A Rational Defense of the Christian Faith and a Critique of Presuppositional Apologetics*

III. TSU College of Archaeology—Mission Statement

The mission of the TSU College of Archaeology is to study the organic, cause-and-effect relationships between biblical and ancient Near Eastern history discernable from archaeological, anthropological, and comparative literary inquiry, with the purpose of developing competent, biblically-grounded archaeologists who are able to: (1) perform and/or direct methodologically-sound archaeological research, exploration, and excavation in the field; (2) demonstrate the historical authenticity and veracity of biblical narratives via professional publication and media; (3) contribute to a hermeneutical framework that comprehends the biblical record in the light of ancient Near Eastern contexts.

IV. Master of Arts in Archaeology & Biblical History—Objectives

- A. To investigate and demonstrate that ancient Near Eastern history and biblical history, properly understood, constitute the selfsame reality.
- B. To develop archaeological research and fieldwork skills to a significant level of competency.
- C. To apply dialogical analysis in the interpretation and application of archaeological data vis-à-vis the Bible.
- D. To articulate the value of archaeological data in defending the historical authenticity and accuracy of the Bible.
- E. To illuminate biblical narratives from ancient Near Eastern contexts, including material culture and literature.

V. Learning Outcomes/Requirements for this course

Through this course the student will:

- A. appreciate the history of biblical archaeology.
- B. understand the archaeological data, as generally interpreted, used to determine the ebb and flow of the Ancient Near Eastern archaeological periods.
- C. become familiar with general excavation methods.
- D. comprehend how a dialogical synthesis of archaeology and biblical studies works to advance each of these disciplines.
- E. analyze biblical data in terms of its ancient Near Eastern context.
- F. develop and express your own viewpoint regarding the relative importance of archaeology for biblical studies.
- G. evaluate scholarly views concerning the historical vs. non-historical nature of the biblical text.

VI. Measures of Outcomes: Each of the above outcomes will be measured in the following specific ways:

- #1. Outcome A will be measured by:
 - a. completing the live or video lectures and notes
 - b. completing the assigned reading in the texts
 - c. completing the assigned written exam over the material covered
- #2. Outcome B will be measured by:
 - a. completing the live or video lectures and notes
 - b. completing the assigned reading in the texts

- c. completing the assigned written exam over the material covered
- #3. Outcome C will be measured by:
 - a. completing the live or video lectures and notes
 - b. completing the assigned reading in the texts
 - c. completing the assigned written exam over the material covered
- #4. Outcome D will be measured by:
 - a. completing the live or video lectures and notes
 - b. completing the assigned reading in the texts
 - c. completing the assigned written exam over the material covered
- #5. Outcome E will be measured by:
 - a. completing the live or video lectures and notes
 - b. completing the assigned reading in the texts
 - c. completing the assigned written exam over the material covered
- #6. Outcome F will be measured by:
 - a. completing the live or video lectures and notes
 - b. completing the assigned reading in the texts
 - c. completing the assigned written exam over the material covered
- #7. Outcome G will be measured by:
 - a. completing the live or video lectures and notes
 - b. completing the assigned reading in the texts
 - c. completing the assigned written exam over the material covered

VII. Course Requirements, Grading, and Assignments

A. Live and/or Video/Audio Lectures (20 ACH) [20% of grade]

Complete all live and/or video/audio lectures, taking thorough notes. If attended live, the professor-of-record must sign the student's lecture/seminar attendance sheet, which will be submitted by the student in demonstration of lecture attendance. If done by video/audio, the student will submit one single-spaced page of typed notes, or two single-spaced pages of handwritten notes, for each of the 30 ACH.

B. Reading (20 ACH) [20% of grade]

The student is expected to read all required books by the end of the course. The student will submit one single-spaced page of typed notes, or two single-spaced pages of handwritten notes, for each of the 20 ACH.

C. Research Exam (30 ACH) [40% of grade]

This is a *research exam* for which the student will write a series of eight (8) essays focusing on the salient themes of this course. One should draw upon the books and materials listed under -Required Textbooks as well as related research, lectures/seminars, and prior knowledge of subject matter. How well each essay reflects an incorporation of these multiple sources will determine the grade.

The question, instruction, or statement to which the student will respond must be written out in full immediately preceding each essay. Be sure all essays are identified by number. One will enhance the grade by formulating essays according to the following model: a) an initial summary statement consisting of a crisp, cogent answer/response to the question/instruction, ideally

compacted into a single sentence; b) an expansion of the response revealing logical complexities, alternative viewpoints, and general mastery of the material assumed by the question/instruction; and c) a succinct concluding or summative statement.

The student will *not use direct quotations* in the essays, but will synthesize pertinent information in his/her own words. In support of each essay, document key sources of information in the following manner: After stating the enumerated question/instruction upon which an essay is based, cite sources using an appropriate academic citation format (Such as SBL or Turabian), including correct bibliographical information, and specific page number(s). Here is an example:

1. Discuss and compare concepts x, y & z.

Doe, J.J. *The Comprehensive Explanation of X, Y & Z* (New York: ABC Press, 2017) 211-213.

Jones, I.R. *Contemplations on X, Y & Z* (Chicago: Academic Press, 2001) 56-59.

[Your essay begins here.]

It is not necessary to use numbered note citations as you would when using traditional footnotes.

In all the essays, answers/responses must be as complete as possible within the scope of each question/instruction. The *minimum length* for each essay is three pages, with 1.5 spacing (use a Roman-style, 12-point font as in this Syllabus, with one-inch margins). The *maximum length* for a response is five pages, 1.5 spacing.

Research Exam AP501 Essay Instructions:

1. Define and clarify the purpose and importance of Christian apologetics.
2. Is it biblical to defend the Faith? Build a biblical case for doing Christian apologetics.
3. Discuss the proper relationship between faith and reason.
4. Discuss the absolute and exclusive claims of Jesus and the need for apologetics in light of them.
5. Evidentially, the Christian claim boils down to the claim that Jesus rose from the dead. Discuss Jesus' resurrection as the centerpiece of the Christian Faith.
6. Discuss taking a "legal" approach in defense of the claim that Jesus rose from the dead. Does using jurisprudential approaches—like the legal rules of evidence—have legitimacy in the formulation of Christian apologetics?
7. Discuss the use of "secular" means to prove the claims of Christ (i.e. legal, historical and/or empirical means). What are the advantages and disadvantages of such approaches?
8. Analyze and discuss views regarding the historicity of the Bible, including both Old and New Testaments.
9. What is the biblical worldview? Explain it in relative detail. How does it contrast with other worldviews?

10. React to the following statement: "Many Christians do not hold a biblical worldview, but one that is closer to that of Hinduism."

11. How might Christian apologetics adapt to meet the subjectivism of the postmodern age?

12. Respond to the following: "All religions are practically alike. Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, Krishna—they are all the same. Jesus was simply a good, moral teacher."

D. Research Paper or Practical Application/Ancillary Assignment (20 ACH) [20% of grade]

The student will select one of the following two assignments:

1. Research Paper

The student will write a research paper relevant to this course.

Paper length is between 15-18 pages (not including title page and bibliography). SBL or Turabian Style is to be followed and the student should use no less than eight sources and no more than two of these may be internet sources.

2. Practical Application/Ancillary Assignment—select one option

The student will complete one of the following practical application assignments, approved by the course professor (totaling 20 clock hours, including preparation time):

- a. Accrue lab/workshop participation beyond that required for titled lab/workshop courses.
- b. Accrue lecture/seminar attendance—either live or live-streamed—beyond that required for titled courses.
- c. Participate in archaeological fieldwork.
- d. Participate in Museum of Archaeology activities and projects.
- e. Complete tasks in the Archaeology Research Center laboratory.
- f. Produce a booklet or short video for children on archaeology and the Bible related to this course of study.
- g. Accrue sessions teaching young people or adults about archaeology and the Bible.
- h. Present a paper at an annual meeting of a professional society, such as the American Schools of Oriental Research or the Near East Archaeological Society.
- i. Create your own ancillary assignment with approval from the course professor.

The student will arrange a method of submission with the course professor.

VIII. TSU Course Grading Scale

Grading will be based on percentages per assignment-categories. The final grade will be based on the TSU Grading-Scale chart, below. All the assignments must be completed on time by the course end date in order to pass the course.

Grading Scale:

A	97-100
A-	94-96
B+	91-93

B	88-90
Bó	86-87
C+	83-85
C	80-82
Có	78-79
D+	75-77
D	72-74
Dó	70-71
F	69ô Below

Note: At the masterø and doctoral level, B- is a failing grade. Thus, course credit can only be given if the grade is B or better.