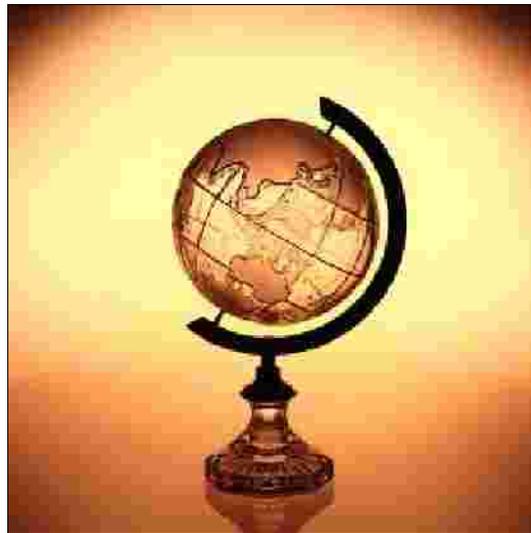


INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM

THE 401 APOLOGETICS



COURSE SYLLABUS

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THE 401 APOLOGETICS
Revision 7/2013

DESCRIPTION

This course will examine the evidence that supports the Christian faith

TEXTBOOKS

A Ready Defense, by Josh McDowell (ISBN: 0840744196)

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Cite historical, literary, and archaeological evidence in favor of Christian faith
2. Explain the flaws in typical arguments used against the Christian faith
3. Describe key differences between Christianity and other belief systems

PROCEDURES

Read the entire syllabus before starting any work and follow all directions carefully. If you have any questions, contact your instructor as soon as possible. Your instructor will also provide you with a class schedule and any deadlines for completing course assignments.

Begin with Lesson One, and complete the assigned reading and homework for each lesson before starting the next lesson. When you finish the last lesson, gather all your completed homework assignments and submit them for grading. If you are unable to email your homework, mail a printed copy for grading, but always keep a copy of your originals in case your homework is lost and must be resubmitted.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Each student is required to submit written answers to the assigned homework questions. The answers will be found in the assigned reading and will always be either a few words or a short sentence. Your final grade will be determined based on the percentage of correct answers.

COURSE OVERVIEW

- Lesson 1: The Bible
- Lesson 2: Answering Critics
- Lesson 3: Jesus
- Lesson 4: Non-Christian Religions
- Lesson 5: Cults & the Occult
- Lesson 6: Common Questions

LESSON 1: THE BIBLE

Reading

Read *A Ready Defense*, Chapters 1-9

Assignment

Write out the following questions and the associated answers found in the reading:

1. How many New Testament manuscripts (handwritten copies) are there?
2. Which noted 18th century French infidel predicted the extinction of Christianity?
3. What does the term "canon" mean when applied to Scripture?
4. What are the three basic principles of historiography (given by C. Sanders)?
5. When was the famous Qumran Isaiah scroll (1Q Is) written?
6. Who did Isaiah predict would give a command to rebuild the Temple?
7. Who scraped the old site of Tyre clean and left it a bare rock?
8. Where did Jesus raise the widow's son from the dead?
9. Which biblical cities are mentioned in the Ebla tablets (Genesis 14)?
10. Where was the Pontius Pilate inscription found?

LESSON 2: ANSWERING CRITICS

Reading

Read *A Ready Defense*, Chapters 10-16

Assignment

Write out the following questions and the associated answers found in the reading:

1. Who taught that events must have a natural explanation because miracles can't happen?
2. What is the law of non-contradiction?
3. What is the goal of textual criticism?
4. What are the two broad disciplines that make up Higher Criticism?
5. Who proposed the Documentary Hypothesis in 1895?
6. When did Mithraism begin to gain a foothold in the Roman Empire?
7. What does the term "plenary" mean?
8. What is a good rule to follow for proper biblical interpretation?
9. What is a simile?
10. What is an anthropomorphism?

LESSON 3: JESUS

Reading

Read *A Ready Defense*, Chapters 17-23

Assignment

Write out the following questions and the associated answers found in the reading:

1. What is the main problem people have with the virgin birth?
2. Why is the Roman historian Tacitus important for Apologetics?
3. Which New Testament persons does the Jewish historian Josephus mention?
4. Why couldn't Jesus deliberately attempt to fulfill Jewish prophecies?
5. What historical fact is the very basis for the truth of Christianity?
6. Why is Paul's conversion powerful evidence for the resurrection of Jesus?
7. What are the three possibilities regarding Jesus' claims of being God?
8. What two aspects of deity did Jesus claim for Himself in John 8:58?
9. What is one of the most powerful evidences that Jesus lived, died and rose from the dead?

LESSON 4: NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

Reading

Read *A Ready Defense*, Chapters 24-31

Assignment

Write out the following questions and the associated answers found in the reading:

1. What are the three ways salvation is attained in Hinduism?
2. What is the key concept and final goal of Buddhism?
3. What did Mencius teach regarding human nature?
4. Who are the divine descendents of the gods within Shintoism?
5. What are the three branches of modern-day Judaism?
6. What is the creed (Kalima) of Islam?
7. What is the definition of an agnostic?
8. What is the definition of an atheist?
9. What was Marx's first reason for promoting atheism?
10. What was Marx's second reason for promoting atheism?

LESSON 5: CULTS & THE OCCULT

Reading

Read *A Ready Defense*, Chapters 32-39

Assignment

Write out the following questions and the associated answers found in the reading:

1. What is the basic definition of a cult?
2. What does the Watchtower believe about the doctrine of the Trinity?
3. What do Mormons believe about the doctrine of God?
4. What does Armstrongism teach about the final destiny of man?
5. What is the definition of witchcraft?
6. Who founded the Church of Satan in 1966?
7. What determines one's "life pattern" according to astrology?
8. What is the biblical test of a false prophet (Deut 18:21-22)?
9. Where is our authority over Satan rooted?

LESSON 6: COMMON QUESTIONS

Reading

Read *A Ready Defense*, Chapters 40-45

Assignment

Write out the following questions and the associated answers found in the reading:

1. Is belief in the Trinity belief in three Gods?
2. Isn't it enough just to be sincere (Acts 4:12)?
3. Is the Christian experience just a delusion?
4. What did Paul's conversion imply about Jesus (according to Lord Lyttleton)?
5. What did the willful suffering of early Christians verify for succeeding generations?
6. Who claimed that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church?
7. What evidence exists that the Christian experience is valid?

CAVEATS

Although the textbook accurately presents many concepts regarding the Christian faith, the author writes from the perspective of traditional, Sunday-observing Christianity; therefore, some corrections should be noted.

On page 59, the author provides a calculation of the 69 weeks prophecy based on a fixed 360 day year, but this approach does not follow the seasons of the year nor is there any other prophecy that is based on such a system. The Hebrew calendar is the basis for time keeping in the Old Testament; it combines both solar and lunar cycles by occasionally adding an additional thirteenth month to the year to stay in step with the seasons.

Rather than inventing a fictional, 360 day “year” without any biblical basis, some scholars have proposed counting Daniel’s prophecy from the decree of Artaxerxes to Ezra in 457 B.C. which would terminate in 27 A.D. (approximately when the ministry of Jesus Christ began). The crucifixion, therefore, would have occurred on a Wednesday in either 30 or 31 A.D.

On page 131, the author attempts to explain how a Friday crucifixion and Sunday resurrection could fit into three days and three nights by suggesting that this was only an idiom and that Jesus was in the tomb for parts of three days and three nights, but this explanation fails on two points. First, even if one uses a part of one day and one night (i.e., 50 hours), a Friday sunset burial to a Sunday sunrise resurrection will not fit. Second, the Greek grammar of Matthew 12:40 is not an idiom; the phrase “three days and three nights” is an “Accusative of Time” that requires a full 72 hours in the tomb.

Other scholars have proposed a Wednesday crucifixion based on the fact that Jesus was buried just before the start of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, an annual Sabbath that could fall on a different day of the week each year. In the Bible, days are reckoned from sunset to sunset. Thus, Jesus was in the tomb from Wednesday sunset to Sabbath sunset, a full three days and three nights, just as He had predicted.