

Syllabus

Name of the subject – Apologetics (VKTJ.06.15)

Workload 3 ECTS. 18 contact hours (45'), 60 individual work hours.

Lecturer David Jakobsen (Denmark)

Assessment non-differentiated (pass/fail)

Language of Instruction – English, but can also given dispensation to be written in Estonian.

Dates: May, 4-6, 2022. Place: Nuutsaku.

Goal of the subject.

The goal of the lecturer is that the student has an overview of current problems pertaining to the truth and rationality of the Christian faith, various approaches to meet these and engage, through analysis, the different arguments given to establish the truth of the central claims of Christianity.

Learning outcomes. After passing the course successfully, the student will be able to:

- Know of various approaches, current as well as traditional, to meet the rational challenges that face Christianity.
- Make critical analysis of central truth-claims of Christianity.
- Know of worldview thinking
- Know of the role logic and science has in providing a defense of the Christian faith.
- Engage critically in discussion about the rationality of the Christian faith.
- Know of scientific, philosophical and historical reasons to believe in the Christian faith.

Assessment Methods and Criteria

Assessment Methods	Due date	Assessment Criteria
Literature review: Chose one of the major books in the literature list and write a 5 page review in which you critically engage in one of the central claims of the book. You can also choose one of the films and write about that.	June 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Length of the essay is 2200-2500 words (5 pages)• main themes of the book are summarized• 1 or 2 major points of the book are presented in a clear fashion and given an argument as to whether you think this point (or these points) are right or wrong.• Review includes the reflection on how this, book or film, could be used in church-life, or in a critical discussion with society.• There are at least 3 other references included beside the book or article in your reflection.

Formation of the final mark

After the literature review is presented and fulfills the assessment criteria.

Study flow

The class will proceed as lectures with class discussion and group work.

Before class: See: Lee Strobel's The Case for Faith:

[youtube.com/watch?v=vaQxCyoalJQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vaQxCyoalJQ)

Independent work (before contact hours)	Time	Contact hours (lecturers)
Text: 1, 3, 5, 6, 10	May 4	6 hours: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to Apologetics.• Faith and reason.• The existence of God I:• The Cosmological Argument,• Anselm's Ontological Argument.
Text: 1, 2, 7, 8, 12.	May 5	6 hours: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The existence of God II:• The Teleological Argument.• The Moral Argument for God's existence.• The problem of Evil.
Text: 1, 4, 11.	May 6	6 hours: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The historical Jesus.• The Resurrection of Jesus.• Critical engagement with cultural issues.
Final date for the homework	June 15	Hand in of written assignment. In English or Estonian.

Learning materials

Primary literature:

1 - Craig, William L: (2008): "Reasonable faith". Crossway Books.

This is one of the most important books written in the 20th century on Apologetics. The student will get a broad knowledge of the themes discussed in the lectures by engaging with this book in their assignment. **In difficulty this will be a 4/5.**

2 - Plantinga, Alvin: (1974): "God freedom and evil". William B Eerdmans Publishing Co.

This is a good read, on one topic, it however deals with the topic in a way that gives a general perspective on other problems as well, such as God's foreknowledge of human freedom. One of the most important Christian philosophers of the 20th century. **In difficulty it is 3/5.**

3 - Plantinga, Alvin (2000): "Warranted Christian Beliefs", Oxford University Press.

A very important book in which Plantinga's scholarly work on epistemology is applied to Christian beliefs. It is very well argued and a good, but difficult read. **In difficulty it is 4/5.**

4 - Wright, N.T. The Resurrection of the Son of God., Fortress Press, 2003.

A strong defence of the historical resurrection of Jesus based on a historical assessment of the peculiarity of early Christian view on eschatology. It is very well argued and is perhaps

one of the strongest arguments made for the resurrection, though see also Michael Licona, William L. Craig's and Gary Habermas books on the topic as well. It is quite long. **In difficulty it is 4/5.**

5 - Craig W. L., Habermas G., Frame J., Feinberg P. (2000): "Five Views on Christian Apologetics". Zondervan.

This is a fine introduction to the various perspectives on apologetics. Is not a difficult read and gives a good overview by various representatives of the different positions. **In difficulty it is 2/5.**

6 - Prior, A.N. Can Religion be Discussed, *Australasian Journal of Psychology and Philosophy*, 1942. (Will be handed out in class).

This is a historically important article in which the question: Can Religion be Discussed is taken up, from a Barthian perspective in a symposium style discussion between various voices of that debate. A good and quite fun read. **In difficulty it is 2/5.**

7 - Plantinga, A. (2002), *The Ontological Argument*, in *Philosophy of Religion, a reader and a guide* (Craig, W.L (eds). Edinburgh University Press.

A fantastic book on the ontological argument, which goes through the various views. **In difficulty it is 4/5.**

8 - Draper, P., (2002), *Pain and Pleasure: An evidential problem for Theists*, in *Philosophy of Religion, a reader and a guide* (Craig, W.L (eds). Edinburgh University Press.

This is an article by the atheist P. Draper who argues, that while Christian's can answer the logical problem of evil, they have a harder time with the evidential problem of evil. He argues that all the meaningless evil in humans and animals makes it unlikely that a good and benevolent God exists. **In difficulty it is 4/5.**

9 - Flew, A (2007): "There is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind". HarperCollins.

This is a book written by one of the major atheists in the 20th century, Antony Flew, who toward the end of his life changed his mind and came to believe in the existence of God. In this book he gives the argument why. **In difficulty it is 3/5.**

10 - Moreland, James, P (1997): "Love God with All Your Mind." NavPress.

A very well written, easy to read book on why Christian's should engage critical thinking and use their mind to think deep and hard about their faith. It is an invitation to use our minds to love God. **It is not difficult to read (though all is relative here). 1/5.**

11 - Koukl, Greg. (1998) *Relativism: Feet firmly planted in mid-air*, Baker books.

This is a very helpful book dealing with the problem of relativism, the view that there are no absolute universal truths of moral and religious kind. **It is not a difficult read. 2/5.**

12 - Copan, P. (2011) *Is God a Moral Monster?: Making Sense of the Old Testament God*, Baker books. A very well written book that defends a biblical perspective on The God of the Old Testament. **In difficulty this is 3/5.**

Secondary literature:

Licona, Michael (2010) *The Resurrection of Jesus: A new historiographical approach*, IVP Academics.

Strobel, Lee (2016) *The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus*, Zondervan.

Geisler, N. and Turek, F. (2004) *I don't have enough faith to be an atheist*, Crossway.

Holland, D. (2021) *Dominion*, Basic Books.

Nash, R. (2013) *Life's Ultimate Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy*, Zondervan Academics.

Media:

Strobel, Lee: The Case for Faith, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vaQxCyoalJQ>

Debate between William L Craig and Bart Ehrman on The Resurrection of Jesus:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MW5_nJYSKyk&t=20s

Habermas, Gary on the Resurrection of Jesus:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKcWgqsqJGg>

Wright, N.T. (2006) *Resurrection*,

<https://www.amazon.com/Resurrection-N-T-Wright/dp/0830834354>