



Ready Defense: An Introduction to Christian Apologetics (D3)

Fall 2021 (Sept 14-Nov 18) Tuesdays 5:30-8:00pm
Columbia Christian School 9101 E Burnside St - Portland, OR 97216

Instructor: Wes Hanson

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I. Course Description: This course is intended as an introduction to the definition, purposes, and methodologies of effective Christian apologetics. We will examine several standard lines of reasoning that affirm the truth of Christianity. We will also consider well-reasoned responses to some of the more common arguments and objections laid against Christianity. From Gregory Koukl's book, *Tactics*, we will introduce a practical methodology for crafting conversational conditions that promote active thinking about the reasonableness of belief in Christianity while gently pointing out serious flaws in other systems of thought. Importantly, as ambassadors for Christ, we will maintain a focus on the appropriate attitude, tone, and demeanor of one making a defense for the faith of Jesus Christ with gentleness and respect.

II. Course Objectives:

- Equip students with proper attitudes for engaging in apologetic conversations.
- Equip students with general knowledge of practical methodologies and skills for defending the faith of Jesus Christ in a civil and courteous manner.
- Equip students with general knowledge of how to address common arguments and objections to Christianity.
- Encourage students to have greater confidence & competence for defending the faith of Jesus Christ.
- Inspire students to have a deeper affection for Christ in view of the reasonableness of the Christian faith.
- Inspire students to have a deeper love for others that manifests in gracious and respectful dialogue with others about issues of great importance.

III. Course Texts:

A. Required:

- Koukl, Gregory. *Tactics (Updated and Expanded): A Gameplan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions*. Zondervan, 2019. ISBN: 978-0-310-10146-8.
- ESV Study Bible. Crossway, 2008. ISBN: 978-1-4335-0241-5.

B. Referenced/Recommended for Further Reading:

- Anderson, James N. *What's Your Worldview: An Interactive Approach to Life's Big Questions*. Crossway, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-4335-3892-6.
- McDowell, Josh. *The Resurrection Factor: Compelling Evidence Which Proves the Resurrection of Jesus Christ Beyond Reasonable Doubt*. Authentic Media, 2005. ISBN: 978-1850786405.
- Mouw, Richard J. *Uncommon Decency (Revised and Expanded): Christian Civility in an Uncivilized World*. Intersity, 2010. ISBN: 978-0830833092
- Newman, Randy. *Corner Conversations: Engaging Dialogues About God and Life*. Kregel, 2006. ISBN: 0-8254-3323-1.
- Newman, Randy. *Questioning Evangelism: Engaging People's Hearts the Way Jesus Did*. Kregel, 2004. ISBN: 0-8254-3324-x.
- Stedman, Rick. *31 Surprising Reasons to Believe in God: How Superheroes, Art, Environmentalism, and Science Point Toward Faith*. Harvest House, 2017. ISBN: 978-0-7369-6983-3.
- Strobel, Lee. *The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus*. Zondervan, 1998. ISBN: 0-310-20930-7.

IV. Course Requirements

A. Project Antioch Students: Attendance & Participation will Be Monitored. Students are expected to engage in class discussions making relevant and appropriate comments, listen attentively to the instructor and other discussion participants and take notes. Weekly reading assignments should be completed in advance of class meeting time.

B. ACSI Continuing Education Units (CEU). The Northwest School of Discipleship is an approved ACSI Continuing Education Unit provider. Participation in the entire course will result in 3 CEUs. The instructor will keep a record of attendance and provide that information to the NWSD director to process CEUs. Students can only miss one class session and still receive the full number of CEUs. Please tell the instructor on the first night of class that you are taking the class for CEU credit.

V. Course Outline

Date	Topic	Tactics Reading:	Scripture Reading:
Sep 14	Definitions & Purposes of Apologetics; Biblical Bases for Apologetics		
Sep 21	Attitudes & Manner in Apologetics (Making Friends vs. Making Enemies); Maintaining Civil Dialogue; Finding Common Ground	Tactics Ch. 1-2	Acts 17:1-4; 22-34; 26:24-29; Rom 1:18-20; 2:14-15
Sep 28	The Power of Good Questions; Introducing the "The Columbo Tactic" Methodology	Tactics Ch. 3-5	Luke 5:17-26; 10:25-37; 20:1-8;
Oct 5	NO CLASS		
Oct 12	NO CLASS		
Oct 19	Tactical Questioning; More Columbo Tactics; Practical Tips & Tricks	Tactics Ch. 6-9	Luke 7:36-50; John 8:1-11
Oct 26	Tactical Listening- Listening to Determine Worldview, Bias, Emotional Objections, Flawed Logic, etc.	Ch. 10-12	Matthew 19:16-30; 22:23-33
Nov 2	Readying Defense of the Uniqueness of the Historical Case for Christian Belief	Ch. 13-15	Luke 1:1-4; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8
Nov 9	Readying Defense of the Existence of God (Science, Reason, Morality, Beauty, Experience)	Ch. 16-17 Film: Expelled?	Psalms 8; 19; Romans 1:18-20
Nov 16	Readying Defense Against Objections & Accusations; The Problem of Human Suffering; Cultural Biases; Pluralism	Ch. 18-19	Acts 14:8-22; 19:21-41