

Apologetics: World Religions

Time: Wednesday 7-9pm

Instructor: Michael Smokovitz Email: gods_invitation@yahoo.com

Goal: Having completed the course, students will be able to articulate and defend why they believe Christianity is the one true religion among all others.

Approach: Apologists must choose their battles wisely. We will not battle or challenge every claim or doctrine of each worldview, but rather to take the most important topics and battle to claim that ground. We are seeking to win where the stakes are highest, meaning that we want to selectively engage in a topic of confrontation that is “winner takes all.” Say, for instance, that if we fight on battlefields A, B, C, and D (and win) then the war continues – moving on to a new battlefield next time. But if we fight on battlefield Z (and win) then the war is over. Which is the wisest option for choosing our battlefield? Obviously battlefield Z. This illustrates the approach to apologetics we will take in this course.

Reason: To destroy the work of the enemy in these areas, and to liberate captives of falsehood with the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Who: To name just a few, we will engage; Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, New Age, Neo-Paganism, Occultism, Tribal Religion, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormonism, Nation of Islam, Moorish Science Temple, Black Hebrew Israelites, Nation of Gods and Earths (Five Percent Nation), and Egyptologists.

How: Many of the religions in the above list share (and are based upon) a few common concepts. This means that if one concept is soundly refuted, all religions that are founded upon that concept are refuted along with it. Students will see that by soundly refuting just a few foundational concepts, all of the above religions will be refuted and left hopeless. Only Christianity, whose theology stands apart from all others, will prove itself as possessing the only solution for mankind’s most desperate need. In short, we will let Christianity prove itself true while letting the other world religions prove themselves false.

Textbooks

Martin, Walter. *The Kingdom of the Cults*. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 2003.

Halverson, Dean, C., ed. *The Compact Guide to World Religions*. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1996.

Brooks, Christopher. *Urban Apologetics: Answering Challenges to Faith for Urban Believer*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2014.

GRADING

There are 200 total points available in this class.

Weekly homework assignments	100 points
Midterm exam	50 points
Final exam	50 points

ATTENDANCE

The Detroit Bible Institute requires that each student who receives credit must attend 10 of the 12-week sessions (please see DBI Student Catalog for further details). If a student must miss a session due to illness or emergency, it is the student's responsibility to "make-up" the session by obtaining the notes of a fellow student and any handouts.

Week 1: April 4. Introduction. An analogy to consider. Overview of world religions.
Homework: Read chapters 1-5 and answer all review questions.

Week 2: April 11. The thought experiment. When does justice occur? Homework: Read chapters 6-9 and answer all review questions.

Week 3: April 18. The pathetic human predicament. But who will pay it? An impossible dilemma? Five common concepts. Homework: Read chapters 10-12 and answer all review questions.

Week 4: April 25. Systems of karma and reincarnation. Homework: read chapters 13-14 and answer all review questions.

Week 5: May 2. Three facts again. Forgive and forget. Good deeds weighed against bad deeds. Homework: Read chapters 15-16 and answer all review questions.

Week 6: May 9. Sacrificial systems. An illustration. Three options. Four possible substitutes. How many substitutes? Homework: Read chapters 17-18 and answer all review questions.

Week 7: May 16. Midterm exam. Sin, purity, and heaven. Still no substitute. Our doomed fate. Four things that we need. Why is the Trinity important? Homework: Read chapters 19-21 and answer all review questions.

Week 8: May 23. Eternal God yet finite man. Only one hope. Revisiting the three options with your choice.

Week 9: May 30. Jehovah's Witnesses

Week 10: June 6. Mormonism

Week 11: June 13. Urban apologetics: Moorish Science Temple, Nation of Islam, Nation of Gods and Earths (Five Percent Nation), Black Hebrew Israelites, Egyptologists.

Week 12: June 20. Final exam. Resources and tools for further study. Course re-cap.