

Birmingham Theological Seminary  
2200 Briarwood Way  
Birmingham, Alabama 35243  
205-776-5650

AP8525 Apologetics and the Bible

E-mail address: brobbins@briarwood.org

Professor: Dr. Steve Cowan/ Mr. Brandon Robbins

Phone: 205-243-7912

Class Hours: 2

### **COURSE PURPOSE**

A discussion of and apologetic response to the major challenges to the Bible's inspiration, inerrancy, and authority, whether philosophical, methodological, textual, historical, scientific, ethical, or theological in nature. Topics addressed will include the nature of biblical inspiration, inerrancy, and authority; the benefits and dangers of higher biblical criticism; the integrity of the biblical text; the authenticity of the canon; the historical reliability of the old and new testament texts; the compatibility of the Bible with contemporary science; and the justification of belief in the Bible's divine inspiration.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Students will:

- Gain an understanding of the various types of challenges to biblical authority.
- Gain an understanding of the philosophical and theological assumptions made by critics of the Bible.
- Learn how to respond to the various challenges to biblical authority with intellectual integrity, doctrinal faithfulness, and Christian charity.
- Gain deeper hermeneutical and critical thinking skills for meeting present and future challenges to biblical authority.
- Gain a richer understanding of the nature of biblical inspiration, inerrancy, and authority.
- Learn the theological rationale and epistemological justification for believing in the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of Scripture.

### **COURSE TEXTS**

#### **Required Texts:**

Steven B. Cowan and Terry L. Wilder, eds. *In Defense of the Bible: A Comprehensive Apologetic for the Authority of Scripture*. Nashville: B&H, 2013.

Michael J. Wilkins and J.P. Moreland, eds. *Jesus Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents the Historical Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Masters Students

The student will complete the following assignments which are due on the appropriate dates. (See schedule below).

- ***Textbook Reading Assignments.*** Students are expected to read and comprehend the material assigned from the course textbooks. This course is very textbook driven! Lecture material clarifies, supplements, and in some cases critiques textbook material. Students will be given a reading guide consisting of questions related to each reading assignment. Students will be called upon to answer these questions in class. Additionally, students are required to read the *Jesus Under Fire* text in its entirety during the course. (10% of final grade)
- ***Bible Difficulty Project.*** Each student will be given four “Bible difficulties” consisting of an alleged contradiction or historical error in the Bible. The student will write a 2-4 page (double-spaced) paper offering a plausible solution to the difficulty. (40% of final grade)
- ***Comprehensive Final Exam.*** There will be one, comprehensive exam at the end of the course. The exam will be open-book, open-note, and will consist of essay questions related to course material. (50% of final grade)

### Certificate students

The student will complete the following assignments which are due on the appropriate dates. (See schedule below).

- ***Textbook Reading Assignments.*** Students are expected to read and comprehend the material assigned from the course textbooks. This course is very textbook driven! Lecture material clarifies, supplements, and in some cases critiques textbook material. Students will be given a reading guide consisting of questions related to each reading assignment. Students will be called upon to answer these questions in class. Additionally, students are required to read the *Jesus Under Fire* text in its entirety during the course. (10% of final grade)
- ***Bible Difficulty Project.*** Each student will be given two “Bible difficulty” consisting of an alleged contradiction or historical error in the Bible. The student will write a 2-3 page (double-spaced) paper offering a plausible solution to the difficulty. (40% of final grade)
- ***Comprehensive Final Exam.*** There will be one, comprehensive exam at the end of the course. The exam will be open-book, open-note, and will consist of essay questions related to course material. (50% of final grade)

## GRADING

1. Reading Assignments 10%
2. Biblical Difficulties Project 40%
3. Final Exam 50%

## Course Schedule

TEXT

### **Week 1**

**IDB Intro, Chap. 1**

Introduction to the Course; What are the challenges?  
What do we believe about the Bible? The Problem of Divine Speech.

### **Week 2**

**IDB Chapter 2-3**

The Bible and Truth, The challenge of Higher Criticism

### **Week 3**

**IDB Chapter 5-6**

The integrity of the biblical text

### **Week 4**

**IDB Chapter 7-8/handout**

Authorship Issues, The Bible and pagan mythology

### **Week 5**

**IDB Chapter 9-10/JUF Chap. 3-4/8**

The historical reliability of the Bible

### **Week 6 – Mission Conference Break**

### **Week 7**

**IDB Chapter 11**

The challenge of contradiction

### **Week 8**

**IDB Chapter 12-13**

The challenge of genocide, The challenge of slavery and sexism

### **Week 9**

**IDB Chapter 14**

The Bible and science

### **Week 10**

**IDB Chapter 15-16**

The unity of the Bible, The canon of Scripture

**Week 11**

**IDB Chapter 17**

A Case for the Inspiration of Scripture

Week 12 – Easter Week

**Week 13**

**JUF Chapters 2-6**

A Case for the Inspiration of Scripture

*Bible Difficulty Project due*

**Week 14 – Final Due**

**BTS FORMAT AND STYLE STANDARDS**

Note: BTS uses the Turabian style of formatting as a standard for papers. However, students should regard individual professor preferences if they communicate any variance in outlining their requirements for papers. Professors retain discretion in determining how “formal” a paper must be. In this technological age, information is readily available; make sure that you understand about giving reference sources the proper recognition.

**Bibliography**

Blomberg, Craig. *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*. (IVP)

Bruce, F.F. *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* (IVP)

Corduan, Winfried. *No Doubt About It*. (Broadman & Holman)

Evans, C. Stephen. *Philosophy of Religion: Thinking about Faith*. (IVP)

France, R.T. *The Evidence for Jesus*. (IVP)

Geisler, Norman L. *Miracles and the Modern Mind*. (Baker)

Geisler, Norman and William Watkins. *Worlds Apart: A Handbook on World Views*. (Baker)

Geisler, Norman, ed. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. (Baker)

Geisler, Norman and Thomas Howe. *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties*. (Victor)

Geivett, Douglas and Gary Habermas, eds. *In Defense of Miracles*. (IVP)

Habermas, Gary R. *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ*. (College Press)

Moreland, J.P. *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity*. (Baker)

Murray, Michael, ed. *Reason for the Hope Within*. (Eerdmans)

Nash, Ronald H. *The Gospel and the Greeks*. (Probe)

Nash, Ronald H. *Is Jesus the Only Savior?* (Zondervan)

Nash, Ronald H. *Christian Faith and Historical Understanding*. (Zondervan)

Nash, Ronald H. *World Views in Conflict*. (Zondervan)

Nicole, Roger and J.R. Michaels, eds. *Inerrancy and Common Sense*. (Baker)

Pinnock, Clark. *Biblical Revelation*. (P&R)

Schaeffer, Francis. *Escape from Reason*. (IVP)

Schaeffer, Francis. *He Is There and He Is not Silent*. (Tyndale)

Sire, James. *The Universe Next Door: A Basic World View Catalog*. (IVP)

Sproul, R.C. *Reason to Believe*. (Zondervan)

Wilkins, Michael and J.P. Moreland, eds. *Jesus Under Fire*. (Zondervan)