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PH 610 Systematic Apologetics

Kevin Paul Kinghorn

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Syllabus

Course: PH610 X1 (SP 2009)
Title: Systematic Apologetics
Hours: 3.00
Published: Yes, on 10/15/2008
Prerequisites:

None

Department: Philosophy
Faculty: Dr. Kevin Kinghorn



Email: kevin.kinghorn@asburyseminary.edu
Office: EXL EXL
SPO:

Meetings:

During 02/09/2009 to 05/22/2009 Online via ExL.

Maximum Registration: 22

Catalog Description: This course will aim to "defend the faith" by making the positive case that orthodox Christianity is an intellectually as well as existentially satisfying worldview.

Objectives:

- (1) We will gain an awareness of how the history of philosophical ideas from the Middle Ages onward has shaped Christian belief.
- (2) We will think through the points of contact Christians might explore with nonbelievers, such as human anxiety, imagination, and sense of longing.
- (3) We will identify some of the common intellectual obstacles to Christian belief and practices.
- (4) We will identify some of the common, alternative worldviews to Christianity, so as to understand better why others might have various kinds of reactions to the claims of the gospel.
- (5) We will gain an understanding of five broad approaches to Christian apologetics, evaluating these approaches and learning to identify which approach other Christians may be using.
- (6) We will become familiar with the arguments and claims of perhaps the most influential critic of Christianity today, Richard Dawkins; and we will develop responses to the methodology he uses to reach his conclusions.
- (7) We will explore the nature of the response, or choice, God would have us make to His prevenient grace-remaining mindful of the kinds of choices humans can and cannot make, and with an eye to what we might evangelistically encourage nonbelievers to do as a first step of faith.

Required Texts:

- (1) Colin Brown, *Philosophy and the Christian Faith: A Historical Sketch from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (InterVarsity, 1969).
- (2) Alister McGrath, *Intellectuals Don't Need God (& Other Modern Myths)* (Zondervan, 1993).
- (3) Steven Cowan, ed., *Five Views on Apologetics* (Zondervan, 2000).

(4) Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Black Swan, 2007).

(5) Alister McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion* (SPCK, 2007).

Course Requirements:

01 Module - Due Tues. February 24* 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time

Approaches to Apologetics - part 1
reading assignment: *Five Views*, pp. 7-206

02 Module - Due Tues. March 10* 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time

Approaches to Apologetics - part 2
reading assignment: *Five Views*, pp. 207-381

03 Module - Due Tues. March 24* 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time

Historic Connections Between Philosophy and Apologetics
reading assignment: Brown, *Philosophy and the Christian Faith*

PAPER #1 - Due Tues. March 31 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time

Topic TBA

04 Module - Due Tues. April 14* 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time

Apologetic Methods and Points of Contact
reading assignment: McGrath, *Intellectuals Don't Need God*

PAPER #2 - Due Tues. April 21* 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time
Topic TBA

05 Module - Due Tues. May 5* 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time

The Arguments Against Christianity
reading assignment: Dawkins, *The God Delusion*;
McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion*

06 Module - Due Tues. May 12* 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time

Choices Available to Nonbelievers
reading assignment: Kinghorn, *The Decision of Faith*, chpt. 2 (available within module)

PAPER #3 - Due Mon. March 9

Topic TBA

Evaluation:

For each of the modules, each student will be expected to give answers to all assigned questions, as well as responses to at least two other classmates' answers to the assigned questions. My expectations are that the answers to each question will be thoughtful and be 1-2 paragraphs-as opposed to superficial, 1-2 short sentences. 25% of students' final grades for the class will stem from these posts, which constitute our online 'class discussion'. I won't assign a specific grade to your posts for each module; I'll simply make a note in my grade book that the posts either: (1) fulfilled class guidelines/expectations; (2) fell short in some way of class guidelines/expectations; or (3) surpassed class guidelines/expectations. Then, at the end of the semester I'll look through my marks for each module and assign a class participation grade for this portion of your final, overall grade.

The remaining 75% of a student's overall grade for the course will be determined by three 5-7 page papers, which will be assigned in the course. Each paper will constitute 25% of a student's final, overall grade.