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PH 610 Systematic Apologetics

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PH610
CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

Fall, 2008
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Tuesdays 2:30-5:15

Office Hours: TBA

[Cokesbury will no longer be available on the Florida-Dunnam Campus. **All students are responsible for ordering their textbooks online or from another source.** Some possible online sources are: www.cokesbury.com, www.amazon.com, www.christianbook.com, or www.bookfinder.com. If you need assistance or have any questions please contact Kandace Brooks at 407-482-7584.]

I. PURPOSE:

It is the purpose of this course to give the student reasonable response to some of the most challenging questions for the Christian faith today. Some people tend to define faith (since it apparently lies beyond the senses, perhaps even the realm of their experiences altogether) as trying to believe in something they can't quite believe in, that's just out of reach, just beyond belief. They sometimes ask, "Must I check my brain at the door of the church or does the Christian faith make sense? Furthermore, what's the point? What's in it for me?" Since Pentecost there have been Christians called to respond to such questions. We will study several of these in expectation of strengthening our understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

II. OBJECTIVES:

Students completing this course will

1. gain a better understanding of how Christian orthodoxy stands up the challenge of all other high religions around the world,
2. gain a stronger sense of why the Christian message is intellectually and existentially satisfying, and
3. gain skill and confidence in articulating the truth of this message to others.

III. REQUIREMENTS:

1. Students are required to read assignments before class and come prepared to make significant contributions to the discussion.
2. A twenty page paper on "Why I Believe the Christian Faith" will be **due the last day of class**. Before writing the paper, you must interview at least five different people who do not believe the Christian faith to be true and why.

IV. TEXTS:

1. Burson and Walls, *C.S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer*.
2. G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*.
3. Blaise Pascal, *Pensees*.
4. Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ*.
5. Robert Tuttle, Jr., *Shortening the Leap*.

V. **TOPIC LISTINGS AND SEQUENCE** (Subject to some modification).

Sept. 2: "Why Jesus?" (Exploring the basic content of faith)

Assignment: "Shortening the Leap," Chapter 1; Strobel, "The Case for Christ," Parts 1&2.

Sept. 9: "Can God Forgive a Sinner Like Me?" (The importance of repentance and faith)

Assignment: "Shortening....," Chapter 2; Chesterton, "Orthodoxy," the entire book.

Sept. 16: "How Can I Forgive?" (Confronting the past)

Assignment: "Shortening....," Chapter 3; Pascal, "The Pensees," Part 1 (Man without God).

Sept. 23: "How Can I Overcome?" (The universal question)
Assignment: "Shortening..." Chapter 4; Pascal, "The Pensees," Part 2 (Man with God).

Sept. 30: "What about the Other Religions of the World?" (Have You Read the *Qur'an* Lately?)
Assignment: "Shortening..." Chapter 5; Appendix (A Synopsis of the Other Major Religions of the World).

Oct. 7: "How Can Bad Things Happen to Good People?" (The age-old question)
Assignment: "Shortening..." Chapter 6; Burson and Walls, "C.S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer," Chapters 1&2.

Oct. 14: "What about Life after Death?" (How Can I Stop Grieving?)
Assignment: "Shortening..." Chapter 7; Burson and Walls, "Lewis and Schaeffer," Chapters 3&4.

Oct. 21: "Must I Belong to a Church To Be a Christian?" (Why do I Need God, or Others?)
Assignment: "Shortening..." Chapter 8; Burson and Walls, "Lewis and Schaeffer," Chapters 5&6.

Oct. 28: "What about Faith and Doubt and the Issues of Politics?" (Is Jesus a Republican or a Democrat?)
Assignment: "Shortening..." Chapter 9; Burson and Walls, "Lewis and Schaeffer," Chapter 7.

Nov. 4: "How Can I Know the Will of God?" (The future)
Assignment: "Shortening..." Chapter 10; Burson and Walls, "Lewis and Schaeffer," Chapter 8.

Nov. 11: "What About the Unforgivable Sin?" (Can God's Call on My Life Be Renewed?)
Assignment: "Shortening..." Chapter 11; Burson and Walls, "Lewis and Schaeffer," Chapter 9.

Nov. 18: "Is Faith In Jesus Christ the Only Way to Heaven?" (The Perennial Question)

Assignment: "Shortening..." Chapter 12; Strobel, "The Case..."
Part 3 & Conclusion;

Week 12: READING WEEK (Nov. 24-28)

Dec. 2: "What about the Next Generation?" (Overcoming Barriers to
Spirit-Assisted Ministry)

Assignment: "Shortening..." Chapter 13 & Conclusion; Burson and
Walls, "Lewis and Schaeffer," Chapter 10.

PAPER DUE

NO FINAL EXAM