

Course Syllabus
Introduction to Christian Apologetics: The Art and Science of Christian Persuasion
Wycliffe College
Toronto School of Theology
Winter 2021

Instructor Information

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Course Identification

Course Number: WYT 2620H
Course Format: *Online*
Course Name: Introduction to Christian Apologetics: The Art and Science of Christian Persuasion
Course Location: Wycliffe College
Class Times: 12 week, online
Prerequisites: None

Course Description

This course is an introduction to Christian apologetics and its relationship to evangelism. The course will teach the biblical, theological and historical foundations of Christian apologetics. Additionally, the course will serve as a primer of cultural exegesis and cultural hermeneutics, the goal of which is to equip students with the critical analytical tools to engage contemporary of cultural issues as the relate to matters of faith. Topics include comparative worldview, science and faith, secularism, aesthetics and ethics. Through required and recommended readings, group discussions and lectures the student will gain a clearer understanding of how to navigate and respond pastorally to some of today's most challenging issues while at the same time formulating a cohesive Christian response to them.

Course Resources

Required Course Texts

- Andy Bannister, *The Atheist Who Didn't Exist* (Monarch Books, 2015)
- McGrath, Alister E. *Mere Apologetics : How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011.)
- Morley, Brian. *Mapping Apologetics : Comparing Contemporary Approaches*. (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2015)
- Cowan, Steven, ed. *Five Views on Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.

- Weekly readings will be available on Quercus as pdfs.

Course Website(s)

- Quercus <https://q.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Blackboard for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT portal login page at <http://portal.utoronto.ca> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Blackboard-based courses. (Your course registration with ROSI gives you access to the course website at Blackboard.) Note also the information at <http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students>. Students who have trouble accessing Blackboard should ask the registrars office for further help.

Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes

COURSE OUTCOMES	COURSE ELEMENT	PROGRAM OUTCOMES
By the end of this course, students	This outcome will be achieved through these course elements:	This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe's statements of outcomes (MTS, MDiv)
Will have begun to learn how to integrate mind, heart and imagination in the communication of the Christian message	Readings, lectures, assignments	M.Div: 2.1 MTS: 1.2, 2.1
Will have begun to develop an ability to articulate the Gospel in ways which connect with people of other faith traditions and those who are of no tradition.	Readings, lectures, assignments	M.Div: 2.2, 2.3 MTS: 2.1
Will have come to understand Christianity as a worldview, addressing the major questions of life in relation to challenges of contemporary culture.	Readings, journal, lectures.	M.Div: 1.6 MTS: 1.4, 3.1

Evaluation

Requirements

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in **five** areas:

1. Discussion Board or Zoom Webinar Participation (20% of final mark)

Students will be expected to actively participate weekly, either in the online discussion board on Quercus or in a Zoom webinar discussion. (You can mix and match, e.g. do six discussion board postings and six webinars).

2. Book Report (15% of final mark)

You should submit a critical review (by critical, that means you don't merely summarise what the author said, but you engage deeply with it—probing the book's strengths and weaknesses, as well as bringing other reading into dialogue with the book you are reviewing).

3. Interview somebody from a different worldview (15% of final mark)

Find somebody from a different worldview (e.g. a different religion, or an atheist/agnostic, or a humanist etc) and interview them about their beliefs. In particular, discuss some of the worldview questions you will have picked up from your reading in Lesson #3 ("Comparative Worldviews") with your friend. At the end of the interview, type up a summary of what your friend shared—and then show it to them and have them agree you have captured what they said. (The goal of this exercise is not to critique what they believe, but show you have listened well). Anonymized summaries will be posted to the discussion forum and form the basis for the discussion the following week.

4. Reflection / Reading Journal (20% of final mark)

You should journal your experience from course readings (or video/audio materials), discussion boards and the interview. This can include actually learning moments, interactions with other students or professors and the overall spiritual/educational impact the various elements had.

5. Final Oral Exam (30% of final mark)

Pick one of challenges to the Christian faith we have covered during the. You will then have a one hour Zoom call with one of the lecturers or TA's during which they role play somebody deploying that objection or position. We then want to see you engage with them, answer their questions, and winsomely and thoughtfully share the Christian perspective. We are looking not just for your understanding of the material, but your ability to engage in conversations, ask good questions, and convey the gospel both by your manner as well as by your words (1 Peter 3:15-16).

Grading System

A+ (90-100)
A (85-89)
A- (80-84)
B+ (77-79)
B (73-76)
B- (70-72)
Failure

Please see the appropriate handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

Late work (BD). Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. [The instructor should stipulate the penalty for late work.] This penalty is not applied to students with medical or compassionate difficulties; students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor. The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course. Students who for exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness) are unable to complete work by this date may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An SDF must be requested from the registrar’s office in the student’s college of registration no later than the last day of classes in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor’s college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/grading.htm>) or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto’s Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4871>. A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document “Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing” published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm.

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>.

Back-up copies. Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

Obligation to check email. At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at www.utorid.utoronto.ca. The course instructor will not be

able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. *Students should check utoronto email regularly* for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

Email communication with the course instructor. The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students in conjoint programs should be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

Course Schedule

1. Apologetics: Why do you need it? Biblical Mandate, Theology, History

SET READING:

- Alister McGrath, *Mere Apologetics* — chapters 1 through 3
- N. T. Wright, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense* — chapters 1 through 4.

ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) READING:

- Mary Jo Sharp, *Defending the Faith: Apologetics in Women's Ministry* — especially chapters 2, 3 5 and 6.
- Sean McDowell (editor), *Apologetics for a New Generation: A Biblical and Culturally Relevant Approach to Talking about God* — read especially the introduction
- Peter Kreeft and Ronald K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics* — especially part 1 ('Introduction').
- William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics* — especially the introduction but also chapter 1 ('How do I know that Christianity is true?')

ONLINE RESOURCE(S):

- If you have time, watch RZIM's Michael Ramsden lecture "The Biblical Mandate for Apologetics" @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3SmdHRImZs>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION FORUM / ZOOM WEBINAR:

- Is ‘apologetics’ a helpful word, or does that make it sound too technical? How might you explain to a lay person what ‘apologetics’ is without using the word?
- How do “evangelism” and “apologetics” relate to one another?
- 1 Peter 3:15 says we should “always be prepared to give a reason for the hope we have”? How do think *faith* and *reason* work together in the Christian life?
- Surveys have shown that one of the major reasons that young Christians fall away from their faith at high school or university is because they have questions that their churches never address. Can apologetics help with the discipleship of Christian youth and young adults?

2. Comparative Apologetics

SET READING:

- Stanley Gundry & Steven B Cowan, *Five Views on Apologetics* — read the introduction and also chapter 1, 3 or 4.
- Holly Ordway, *Apologetics and the Christian Imagination: An Integrated Approach to Defending the Faith* — chapter
- Clifford Williams, *Existential Reasons for Belief in God: A Defense of Desires and Emotions for Faith* — chapters 1 and 2

ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) READING:

If you have the chance, leaf through a chapter or so of a few of the books below. As you read, ask yourself “What approach to apologetics is the author taking here?”

- Os Guinness, *The Long Journey Home*
- Timothy Keller, *Making Sense of God: An Invitation to the Sceptical*
- C S Lewis, *Mere Christianity*
- Rebecca McLaughlin, *Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World’s Largest Religion*
- Francis Schaeffer, *A Francis Schaeffer Trilogy: The God Who Is There, Escape from Reason, He Is There and He Is Not Silent*

- Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ*

ONLINE RESOURCE(S):

- Dip into *The Beginner's Guide to Apologetics* series on the Solas website (<https://www.solas-cpc.org/a-beginners-guide-to-apologetics-introduction/>) — you'll find lots of different approaches modelled there.
- If you have time, read Paul Coulter's essay 'An Introduction to Christian Apologetics' (<https://www.bethinking.org/apologetics/an-introduction-to-christian-apologetics>), especially the section on 'Approaches to Apologetics'.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION FORUM / ZOOM WEBINAR:

- Are there any well-known evangelists or apologists with whom you're familiar? (Maybe you've read them before this course, or watched them, or heard them). What method of apologetics do you think they were using?
- Of the various "schools" or approaches to apologetics you have seen or read about, to which are you more naturally drawn?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of some of the different approaches to apologetics?
- Is it better to focus on and develop one type of apologetics, or to learn to be able to draw from a wide range of approaches, depending on who you're talking to?

3. Comparative Worldviews

SET READING:

- Abdu Murray, *Grand Central Question* — prologue and chapter 1
- Andy Bannister, *Do Muslims and Christians Worship the Same God?* — chapter 3
- James Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog* — chapters 1 and 2 and one other chapter of your choice from chapters 3-9.
- N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* — chapter 5 ('Theology, Authority and the New Testament', paying especially attention to the discussion of 'Worldview Questions'.

ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) READING

- Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* — chapter 2.

- Ellis Potter, *Three Theories of Everything* — read as much of this very short little book as you can manage

ONLINE RESOURCE(S):

- Os Guinness: “Worldviews - How do you see the world and why?” @ https://youtu.be/w6M9Is_BwWE
- Nancy Pearcey, “Test Everything: Five Principles for Answering Any Worldview” @ <https://youtu.be/UR11Kmk0GSA>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION FORUM / ZOOM WEBINAR:

- How is the concept of a “worldview” helpful for engaging with how our friends, neighbours and colleagues think about life?
- What are some key questions you might ask a friend to help explore their worldview?
- How might you respond to somebody who said: “I don’t have a worldview, I don’t believe *anything*, I’m an atheist”?
- If after you’ve asked them questions about their worldview, a friend were to say to you: “So what do you believe?” how might you respond in a way that connects the gospel to some of the key worldview questions?

4. Case Study: Contemporary Atheism

SET READING:

- Andy Bannister, *The Atheist Who Didn’t Exist* — chapter 2 (on whether atheism is actually a belief system)
- William Lane Craig & Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, *God? A Debate Between a Christian and An Atheist* — read chapters 1 and 2 (arguments from either side for and against God)
- Alister McGrath, *The Twilight of Atheism: The Rise and Fall of Disbelief in the Modern World* — skim read chapters 1-6 (your aim is not to read all of the material, but to get a basic overview of the history of atheism)
- Randal Rauser, *Is The Atheist My Neighbour?* — chapters 1 and 6

ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) READING

- Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* — skim read a few chapters of this classic work of (new) atheism
- John Gray, *Seven Types of Atheism* — introduction and chapters 1 through 3
- Nick Spencer, ‘Sapiens, maybe. Deus, no’ — have a read of this brilliant essay engaging with the increasingly well-known Israeli atheist, Yuval Noah Harari @ <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/comment/2020/07/07/sapiens-maybe-deus-no>
- John Lennox, *Gunning for God: Why the New Atheists are Missing the Target* — flick through the first few chapters and see how Lennox engages with/responds to Dawkins et al
- Peter Hitchens, *The Rage Against God* — chapter 1
- James K. A. Smith, *How (Not) To Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* — introduction

ONLINE RESOURCE(S):

- Watch ‘Dawkins vs. Lennox: The God Delusion Debate’ @ <https://youtu.be/zF5bPI92-5o>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION FORUM / ZOOM WEBINAR:

- Do you have any atheist friends, family members, or colleagues? Have you tried to share the gospel with them? What has been the response and how have the conversations gone?
- What are some good questions you might ask an atheist friend to get the conversation onto spiritual things, rather than immediately into argument?
- As you read the dialogue/debate between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, what arguments from both sides did you find the most compelling? If you were an atheist, how might you respond to Craig? And as a Christian, what would your response to Sinnott-Armstrong be?
- Sometimes debates/dialogues between Christians and atheists consist of atheists spending all their time critiquing and Christians spending all their time defending. Are there ways that Christians can turn this round and ensure that atheists realise that they, too, have a worldview and beliefs they need to defend?

5. Islam

SET READING:

- Andy Bannister and Tanya Walker, *Islam in Context: Opening the Door to Understanding* — read all 40 pages of this short ebook, available free of charge as a PDF at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/zlk33vz0khpqb07/Islam%20in%20Context.pdf?dl=0>
- Nick Chatrath, *Reaching Muslims: A One-Stop Guide for Christians* — read Part 2 (“Developing Open-Hearted Friendships: Tips for Connecting with Muslims”)
- Peter G. Riddell and Peter Cotterell, *Islam in Context: Past, Present and Future* — read chapter 4 (“Qur’an and Christianity”)
- Andrew Rippin, *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (2nd Edition) — read chapters 1 through 3 (“Prehistory”, “The Qur’an” and “Muhammad”)

ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) READING

- Norman Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in the Light of the Cross* — read especially section 2 (“A Christian Response to Basic Muslim Beliefs”)
- Nabeel Qureshi, *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus* — read as much of this best-selling story of one Muslim’s journey from Islam to Christ
- Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur’an* — dip into this helpful book outlining some of major theological themes of the Qur’an
- Richard Shumack, *Jesus Through Muslim Eyes* — a fascinating little book exploring the Jesus of the Qur’an and comparing/contrasting him with the Jesus of the gospels

ONLINE RESOURCE(S):

- Andy Bannister, “Three Questions Muslims Ask” @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Vf9KE1wd6Q> — this was a talk that Andy gave at the RZIM youth conference, REBOOT, in London, in September 2019.
- Abdu Murray, “From Slaves to Sons: Freedom for Muslims in the Gospel” — a talk from former Muslim, Abdu Murray, at the ‘Understanding and Answering Islam Summit’ in Atlanta, Georgia, in January 2019 @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhqtImIWuRY>
- Nabeel Qureshi and Shabir Ally, “What is God Really Like: Tawhid or Trinity?” — a Christian (and former Muslim) and a well-known Muslim debater dialogue on the question of the nature of God in Christianity and Islam @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWpqqqZn7Kg>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION FORUM / ZOOM WEBINAR:

- Have you ever talked to a Muslim about their faith (and yours)? If so, how did the conversation go? If not, what are some steps you might take to befriend a Muslim?
- What are some of the similarities between Christianity and Islam and what are some of the main differences? How can we use the similarities to build bridges with our Muslim friends, without ignoring the massive differences?
- What questions might you ask a Muslim friend or neighbour to find out more about their faith? How could you then introduce Jesus naturally into the conversation?
- In the session on worldview, we saw how four important worldview questions are “Who is God?”, “Who are human beings?”, “What’s wrong with the world?” and “What’s the solution?” How do you think Islam might answer those four questions.
- As the number of Muslims continues to grow rapidly here in western countries like Canada, what might be some ways that Christians and churches could be more effective at engaging and reaching them with the gospel?

6. Do All Religions Lead to God?

SET READING:

- Michael Green, *But Don't All Religions Lead to God?* — chapters 1 through 4
- Rebecca McLaughlin, *Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World's Largest Religion* — chapter 3
- Stephen Prothero, *God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Rule the World* — read the Introduction and Conclusion
- Ravi Zacharias, *Jesus Among Other Gods* — chapters 2 and 3

ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) ONLINE RESOURCE(S):

- Karen Armstrong, ‘Compassion or Toleration? Two Approaches to Pluralism’ — Karen is a pluralist and her essay gives an insight into how somebody from the “all faiths are the same” position might argue: <https://www.pluralism.ca/event/annual-lecture-2018/>

- Mark Durie, ‘The Abrahamic Faiths Fallacy’ @ https://www.newenglishreview.org/Mark_Durie/The_Abrahamic_Fallacy/
- Alister McGrath, ‘Religious Pluralism’ on the BeThinking website @ <https://www.bethinking.org/truth/religious-pluralism>
- Miroslav Volf & Nabeel Qureshi, ‘Do Muslims & Christians Worship the Same God?’ — link to audio debate and Nabeel’s response @ <https://www.rzim.org/read/rzim-global/do-christians-and-muslims-worship-the-same-god-debate-with-nabeel-qureshi-and-dr-miroslav-volf>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION FORUM / ZOOM WEBINAR:

- How would you respond, clearly but kindly, to a friend who said “It’s arrogant of you Christians to think that Jesus is the only way to god!”
- Why do you think pluralism has become such a popular and attractive worldview—it seems to be far more common today than a few generations ago?
- If somebody said to you: “Okay, what *is* unique/special about Jesus?” — what would you say?

7. Has Science Buried God?

SET READING:

- Francis Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*— chapters 7 through 10
- David Hutchings and Tom McLeish, *Let There Be Science: Why God Loves Science and Science Needs God* — chapters 1 and 2
- John Lennox, *Can Science Explain Everything?* — chapters 1 through 4

ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) READING

- Fern Elsdon-Baker, *The Selfish Genius: How Richard Dawkins Rewrote Darwin’s Legacy* — especially the introduction and chapters 1-3, 6 and 7
- James Hannam, *God’s Philosophers: How the Medieval World Laid the Foundations of Modern Science* — the whole book is worth skimming, but especially the introduction and chapters 1, 19, 20, 21 and the conclusion

- Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion and Naturalism* — chapters 5-10 (especially chapter 10, Plantinga’s “Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism”)

ONLINE RESOURCE(S):

- Watch John Lennox dialogue/debate with Michael Ruse as they discuss “Science, faith and the evidence for God” on *The Big Conversation* @ <https://www.thebigconversation.show/john-lennox-and-michael-ruse>
- Read Sarah Bodbyl Roels’ essay, “Are science and Christianity at war?” @ <https://biologos.org/common-questions/are-science-and-christianity-at-war/>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION FORUM / ZOOM WEBINAR:

- How might you respond and try to begin a conversation with a friend who says “We don’t need God, science can explain everything?”
- “Science answers the *how* questions; religion answers the *why* questions.” Is this a helpful way to help our friends think about science and faith?
- There’s sometimes a tendency for Christians to only think about science in terms of The Evolution Question—with sadly Christians sometimes at times dividing along lines according to theological position (Young Earth, Old Earth, I Don’t Know How Old Earth But I Know You’re Wrong and so on). Why is this and how we make sure we don’t let internal Christian theological disagreements get in the way of sharing our faith with those outside the church?
- How might we get a conversation from questions about God and science to an opportunity to talk about Jesus? What are some of the connecting points along the way?

8. Problem of Evil and Suffering

SET READING:

- Sharon Dirckx, *Why? Looking at God, Evil and Personal Suffering* — Introduction and chapters 1-2.
- Os Guinness, *Unspeakable: Facing Up to Evil in an Age of Genocide and Terror* — chapters 10-12
- C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* — chapters 1-4
- Rick Stedman, *31 Surprising Reasons to Believe in God*— chapter 29

ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) READING

- Given COVID-19 and the pandemic, two great books looking at the question of suffering through that lens are:
 - John Lennox, *Where is God in a Coronavirus World?*
 - Tom Wright, *God and the Pandemic: A Christian Reflection on the Coronavirus and Its Aftermath*
- Stephen T Davis, *Encountering Evil: Live Options In Theodicy* — dip into this survey of several different Christian approaches to the problem of evil and suffering
- Terry Eagleton, *On Evil* — read as much as you can: Terry is an atheist, but nevertheless sees real weaknesses in atheism's inability to properly name evil as 'evil'.
- Diane Komp, *A Window to Heaven: When Children See Life in Death* — read as much of this powerful reflection on suffering as you can. Diane is a paediatrician and has seen suffering and pain firsthand, but still holds very much to the goodness of God.

ONLINE RESOURCE(S):

- Read Arthur Leff's famous essay on the problems that atheists have in even speaking of "good" and "evil" @ <http://bit.ly/leff>
- Vince Vitale, 'Why Suffering: Suffering and the Love of God' @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2fWxoqiXco>
- Watch 'Living with Cancer', an interview with Dominic Smart @ <https://www.solas-cpc.org/living-with-cancer/>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION FORUM / ZOOM WEBINAR:

- Questions about evil, pain and suffering can be very personal, not just philosophical. If a friend asks you about Christianity and the problem of evil, how might you navigate the conversation both pastorally and apologetically?
- In his book, *Fool's Talk: Recovering the Art of Christian Persuasion*, Os Guinness talks of the evangelistic/apologetic strategy of "turning the tables"—taking a question and turning it back on the questioner (Jesus did this often). If atheist friends ask about evil and suffering, what are some of the ways we could gently turn this question back on their own worldview?

- Some have suggested that the more important question is not so much “Why evil?” as “How can we live faithfully *with* suffering, pain and evil?” Do you agree or disagree?
- If suffering and evil are such a “strike” against God, why do you think it is that questions about it are far more common in the west, than in parts of the world where people’s experience of suffering and injustice are far more common?
- If a friend asks “Where is God in ...” and speaks of an example of suffering, pain or injustice, how might you begin with their question but naturally weave Jesus and the gospel into the conversation.

9. What does it mean to be human? (Sexuality, AI, and Morality)

SET READING:

- John Lennox, 2084: Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Humanity — chapters 1, 4, 5 and 6
- Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* — chapters 1 and 2
- Derek C. Schuurman, *Shaping a Digital World: Faith, Culture and Computer Technology* — chapters 2-4
- Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More From Technology and Less From Each Other* — chapters 8 and 9

ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) READING

- Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* — read part 1 (‘What is a person?’)
- Sharon Dirckx, *Am I Just My Brain?* — check out especially chapters 3 and 4, which explore the question we are just machines
- Dale S. Kuehne, *Sex and the iWorld: Rethinking Relationship Beyond an Age of Individualism* — esp. chapters 3 and 4
- Jaron Lanier, *You Are Not a Gadget* — skim read as much as possible of this brilliant little book

ONLINE RESOURCE(S):

- Watch Sherry Turkle's TED talk (*Connected But Alone*) @ https://www.ted.com/talks/sherry_turkle_alone_together
- Read Nicholas Carr's essay 'Is Google Making us Stupid?' in *The Atlantic* @ <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/07/is-google-making-us-stupid/306868/>
- Watch John Lennox's lecture, 'Should We Fear Artificial Intelligence?' @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLwIdoqnRhg>
- Watch the challenging little documentary made by *The Guardian* newspaper, 'Rise of the Sex Robots' @ <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/video/2017/apr/27/rise-of-the-sex-robots-video>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION FORUM / ZOOM WEBINAR:

- How can Christians be prepared and ready for the new questions (artificial intelligence; sex robotics; trans-humanism) that technology is rapidly raising?
- Does the growth of artificial intelligence (AI) reveal that we are just machines?
- The famous Israeli atheist, Yuval Noah Harari (www.ynharari.com) says '*History began when humans invented gods, and will end when humans become gods*'. Harari thinks that technologies like AI and transhumanism open up a future where humans can live forever, free of work, enjoying unending happiness, pleasure, and power. What might a Christian response to this look like?
- Does our increasingly digital world make evangelism easier ... or tougher?

10. The Bible

SET READING:

- Craig Blomberg, *Can We Still Believe the Bible? An Evangelical Engagement with Contemporary Questions* — chapters 2 and 6
- Amy Orr-Ewing, *Why Trust the Bible?* (the second, not the first, edition) — chapters 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9
- Peter J. Williams, *Can We Trust the Gospels* — chapters 1-4

ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) READING

- Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* — especially chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5

- Hixson, Elijah and Gurry, Peter J., *Myths and Mistakes in New Testament Textual Criticism* — read especially chapters and 3
- N. T. Wright, *Scripture and the Authority of God: How To Read the Bible Today* — especially chapters 1-3

ONLINE RESOURCE(S):

- “New Evidences the Gospels were Based on Eyewitness Accounts” — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5Ylt1pBMm8> — a brilliant lecture by Dr. Peter Williams of Cambridge University, summarising Richard Bauckham’s work (above).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION FORUM / ZOOM WEBINAR:

- Does somebody need to believe and trust the *whole* Bible before they can become a Christian?
- How might you respond to somebody who says “We can’t trust the Bible because it was written by fallible human beings?”
- Other religions have “holy books” as well as Christianity. Why, then, trust the Bible and not, say, the Qur’an or the Book of Mormon?
- “The Bible is the Word of God in text, designed to lead us to the Word of God made flesh”. Do you think that’s a good/fair summary of the gospel and is it helpful evangelistically or not?

11. Jesus

SET READING:

- Andy Bannister, *The Atheist Who Didn’t Exist* — chapter 11
- Bruxy Cavey, *Re(Union): The Good News of Jesus for Seekers, Saints, and Sinners* — chapters 4, 5 and 6
- John Dickson, *Is Jesus History?* — chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5
- Rebecca Manley Pippert, *Discovering the Real Jesus* — read as much of this short book about using Jesus and the gospels in evangelism as you can manage

ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) READING

- John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* — as much of chapters 1-9 as you can manage

- N. T. Wright, *Simply Jesus* — chapters 13, 14 and 15

ONLINE RESOURCE(S):

- Read Derek McIntyre's essay 'A Beginner's Guide to the Argument from the Life of Jesus' in the *Beginner's Guide to Apologetics* series on the Solas website @ <https://www.solas-cpc.org/a-beginners-guide-to-the-argument-from-the-life-of-jesus/>
- Watch Gary Habermas and Antony Flew's Veritas Forum discussion: "Jesus' Resurrection: An Atheist and Theist in Dialogue" @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVb3Xvny8-k>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION FORUM / ZOOM WEBINAR:

- In his book *Re(Union)*, Bruxy offers the gospel in 1 word, 5 words, and 30 words. How might you explain the gospel and the importance of Jesus simply and clearly to a friend who has no Christian background?
- What are some ways we might introduce Jesus into every day conversations that are naturally, engaging, and non-cringe-worthy?
- Is personal testimony a helpful way to talk about Jesus and what he's done? What are some of the pros and cons of relying heavily upon it?
- Arguably a person can't appreciate what Jesus did for them on the cross until they understand what it means to be dead in their sins. Given that "sin" is largely meaningless as a word for post-Christian secular people, how can we communicate that key Christian idea in a way that people can engage with?

12. Practical Approaches: How Do We Use (and Teach Others To Use) Apologetics as an Evangelistic Tool

SET READING:

- Randy Newman, *Questioning Evangelism* — chapters 1, 2, and 3
- Rebecca Manley Pippert, *Out of the Saltshaker and Into the World: Evangelism as a Way of Life* — chapters 8 through 12
- Doug Pollock, *Godspace: Where Spiritual Conversations Happen Naturally* — chapters 3 through 6.

ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) READING

- Conrad Gempf, *Jesus Asked (What He Wanted To Know)* — read as much as you can of this brilliant little study of Jesus's use of questions in the gospels
- Greg Koukl, *Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions* — especially chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6
- Randy Newman, *Unlikely Converts: Improbable Stories of Faith and What They Teach Us About Evangelism* — read the prologue and then dip into a couple of chapters. Encouraging stories about those who come to faith but also lessons to learn from their journeys
- Glen Scrivener, *321: The Story of God, the World, and You* — chapters 1-5 offer a number of thoughtful ways to engage people in discussions about Jesus

ONLINE RESOURCE(S):

- Listen to a few of the PEP Talk podcasts (<https://www.solas-cpc.org/category/podcast/pep-talk/>) — lots of food for thought there on evangelism
- Watch Randy Newman's lecture on "Questioning Evangelism" @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WuuFkCXawLk>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION FORUM / ZOOM WEBINAR:

- We saved the session on practical evangelism until the end: should it really have been the first session?
- Why do you think many Christians are afraid or nervous about evangelism (especially at work or school?)
- When you have tried to share your faith with friends, what's gone well? What has gone less well? What have you learnt?
- Why do you think questions and conversations are such a powerful evangelistic tool?
- How might you share what you've learnt especially in this section with friends at church?
- How could you put what you've learnt into practice in your normal week?
- What's the role of prayer and of the Holy Spirit in all of this? How can we avoid making "asking good questions" just another clever evangelistic formula?

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