



**Malyon**  
**THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE**

**Master of Divinity, Master of Ministry  
and Related Programs**

**PE620**  
**Christian Apologetics**

**Semester 1, 2019**

**Malyon College**  
is an approved institution of the  
**Australian College of Theology**

PE620 is offered by Malyon College as part of the Master of Divinity and Related Programs authorized for distance and contact delivery by the college, which is an accredited award of the Australian College of Theology (ACT).

## ***MALYON COLLEGE***

At Malyon we recognise that the world is changing. These are times of great challenge and opportunity. Our commitment is to raising up a generation of influential Christians who have a strong biblical base, skills in leadership and ministry, and a heart for God.

We have been training Christian leaders for over 100 years, and we've learnt a few things about theological training. Our graduates are serving all over the world as pastors, cross-cultural workers, workplace leaders, chaplains, church leaders and theological faculty.

Malyon offers full-time and part-time study options through lecture, intensive and distance modes. We have excellent resources for students including a large library, wireless internet and 24 hour access to the campus. All our awards are accredited through the Australian College of Theology.

## ***The Australian College of Theology***

The ACT was established under the auspices of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia in 1891. The ACT is a company limited by guarantee governed by a nine-member Board of Directors. The Anglican Primate of Australia presides as the chairman of meetings of the company which consists of 54 persons (in 2010). The ACT is an Australasian provider of state accredited higher education courses leading to awards in theology and other disciplines related to Christian ministry. The ACT operates as an ecumenical consortium of some 2,500 students enrolled in 19 Bible and theological colleges approved to teach the awards of the ACT. These awards range from two-year diplomas, three-year undergraduate and coursework masters degrees to masters and doctoral research degrees.

The ACT has a centrally devised and managed curriculum and a quality assurance process that are applied across the whole network of affiliated colleges. The day-to-day educational system is managed by the Dean from the ACT office in Sydney. Academic governance is the responsibility of the Academic Board which oversees all academic activities of the College. The standing committees of the Academic Board share this responsibility by monitoring the quality of delivery and resourcing, developing policy, and reviewing the course structure for research, coursework and diploma courses. The membership of the Academic Board and its committees is comprised mostly of faculty members of affiliated colleges. A number of senior university academics are represented to help ensure that ACT practice (especially in the outcome of the consideration of research examiner's reports and general academic policy) remains comparable with the standards of and best practice in the university sector.

As a HEP under the Higher Education Support Act, the College was required to undergo a quality audit conducted by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA). The AUQA Audit Report was publicly released on the AUQA website in February 2007.

In 2010 the company consists of 54 members composed in the following way:

- (1) the Anglican Primate of Australian and the Dean of the ACT,
- (2) the principals of 10 Anglican Theological Colleges,
- (3) 21 persons elected by the House of Bishops of the General Synod,
- (4) the principals of 11 affiliated colleges approved to deliver the research degrees of the ACT,
- (5) 5 graduates holding an ACT research degree,
- (6) 5 graduates holding any other degree of the ACT.

## **UNIT DETAILS**

### ***Unit Description***

Malyon Theological College believes that education is about “more than knowledge”. We exist to form faithful-image bearers of Christ, who love God, listen to His Word, serve the church, engage their culture, and are committed to the mission of God in this world. And yet, we cannot faithfully and effectively engage a world and intellectual culture which we do not understand. Our calling to disciple the nations to align with the kingdom of God requires Christians to know the gospel, know the culture, and translate. That is, as Christ’s witnesses, and in the power of the Spirit, we are called to the task of Christian persuasion, giving a reason for the hope that lies within (1 Peter 3:15). Through the study of Christian Apologetics, students will be positioned with the wisdom, skills and desire to defend and commend the Christian faith in our challenging post-Christendom context.

This unit provides an introduction to, and overview of, Christian apologetics in relation to history, theology, epistemology, philosophy, and methodology. We will first explore the nature of apologetics, tracing its use, development, and the various schools of thought across history in the broadest terms. Second, we will consider historical, philosophical, and behavioural critiques of the Christian faith, and how Christians may respond. Third, we will consider alternatives to Christian belief within a worldview frame of reference, exploring how Christians may winsomely reply toward the upbuilding of the Other.

As a reworking of a [previously taught unit](#), this present iteration takes account of the existential and postmodern challenges to the Christian faith and the apologetic enterprise itself. Classes and module notes reflect this move away from one-way lecture delivery, instead embracing dialogue, case studies, and workshops, towards forming real-life responses to pressing questions and objections. This works towards loving one’s neighbour and the flourishing of all citizens in our simultaneously secular and pluralistic setting.

### ***Credit Points***

This unit is valued at 4 credit points.

### ***Co- and Pre-Requisites***

8cp of 500-level OT and/or NT and/or CH and/or PE and/or TH.

### ***Exclusions***

None.

The unit is made up of the following sections and sub-sections:

### **Section A: Apologetics and the Nature of Truth**

- 1 The definition of apologetics; its relation to theology, study of religion and mission.
- 2 A brief review of intellectual attacks upon Christian faith and Christian responses, including the Apologists, Augustine, Aquinas, the Enlightenment, Darwinianism, and secular humanism.
- 3 A review of Christian faith and its bearing upon truth as discerned in history, nature and society; the uniqueness of Christian revelation; the questions of truth, presuppositions and verification; epistemology.

### **Section B: Critiques of Christian Faith**

- 4 Historical: the reliability of the Scriptures; the historicity of Christ and his Resurrection; the emergence of the church.
- 5 Philosophical: atheism, pantheism, monism, deism, divine providence and miracles; scientific method; evil and suffering.
- 6 Behavioural: anthropological, sociological and psychological; behaviourism; Freudianism.

### **Section C: Alternatives to Christian Belief**

- 7 Non-supernatural alternatives: agnostic humanism; atheistic existentialism; Marxism; moralism; scientism and technocracy.
- 8 Supernatural alternatives: occultism; religious relativism; syncretism; New Age movements.

N.B. Given the breadth of the issues explored, this unit cannot be expected to equip students with a complete apologetic response to any one critique of, or alternative to, the Christian faith. Rather, this unit will develop students in their ability to flexibly and rapidly integrate and deploy their theological, philosophical, and historical knowledge in forming cogent and coherent responses to alternative constructions of reality. This unit serves as a comprehensive introduction to Christian apologetics, that they may continue their reading and thinking in areas of interest and concern upon completion of this subject.

## ***Unit Outcomes***

On successful completion of this unit, student should be able to:

### **A. Know and Understand (Knowledge):**

- A1. Apologetics as the defence and commendation of the Christian gospel
- A2. Apologetics, theology and the nature of truth
- A3. Critiques of Christian faith
- A4. Alternatives to Christian belief
- A5. Strategies to defend and commend Christian faith
- A6. Historic and contemporary approaches to Christian apologetics

### **B. Be Able To (Skills):**

- B1. Analyse the nature of Christian apologetics
- B2. Compare and contrast critiques of Christianity from a Christian perspective
- B3. Critique alternatives to Christian belief from a Christian perspective
- B4. Engage in Christian apologetics
- B5. Present a critical evidence-based argument or perspective
- B6. Evaluate historic and contemporary approaches to Christian apologetics

### **C. Be In a Position To (Application):**

- C1. Integrate responses to critiques of Christianity into biblical interpretation and Christian thinking
- C2. Use Christian responses to critiques of Christianity for personal understanding and in ministry contexts
- C3. Defend and commend the truth claims of the Christian faith

## ***Workload Requirement***

A unit will generally require about 10 hours per week for lectures for contact students or home study for distance students, preparation and revision, and assignment work over thirteen weeks. In addition, two study weeks are worked into each semester. Excluding the study weeks, this generally averages out as follows:

- 1. Contact students:
  - a. Lectures – 3 hours per week;
  - b. Preparation – 3 hours per week (2 hours pre-reading; 1 hour notes review);
  - c. Assessments – 4 hours per week.
- 2. Distance students:
  - a. Home study; including reflection activities and revisions – 6 hours per week;
  - b. Assessments – 4 hours per week.

## ***Learning Guides***

Students should access the Learning Guides on the unit Moodle page for guidance through their studies for the semester.

## ***Assessment Requirements***

The student shall complete the following assessment requirements:

1. **3000 word Forum Posts**, 10 entries (40%, assessing section A, B and C of the Unit).  
Journals 1-5 (1500 wds) due *Tuesday March 26, 2019* (week 7) = 20%  
Journals 6-10 (1500 wds) due *Tuesday May 21, 2019* (week 13) = 20%
2. **4000 word Research Assignment** (60%, assessing sections B and C of the Unit Outline)  
Due *Wednesday June 5, 2019* (SWOT Vac).

*Contact students will be expected to attend all lectures; reflection activities are the distance student's equivalent of classroom interaction. Just as class attendance is compulsory for on-campus students, reflection activities are compulsory for distance students.*

***Students who fail to attend lectures or complete reflection activities and forum posts satisfactorily may be failed.***

## Required Resources

Unlike previous versions of this course, **there is no set text for Christian Apologetics**. In order to complete the unit, the student will be required to have access to learning resources made available on Moodle, our Online Learning Centre. These resources may include articles, extracts, videos/mp3, contact lecture notes and other learning activities. Interaction with these sources is an assessed criteria as part of the forum posts, not an optional extra.

On Moodle, I will distinguish between a *recommended reading* and *optional readings*. It is expected that you will read for 2 hours per week (~40 pages), comprised of one recommended pre-reading plus whatever else interests you in either the recommended or optional readings. (This does not include reviewing notes.) This diversity of sources and freedom to follow your interests will position you for case-studies/workshops each module, as together we construct responses to contemporary challenges to the Christian faith.

The following texts, while not required for purchase, are central to this course:

Boa, Kenneth, and Robert M. Bowman. [\*Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to Defending the Christian Faith\*](#) (2d. ed.). Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2005.

Chan, Sam. [\*Evangelism in a Skeptical World: How to Make the Unbelievable News About Jesus More Believable\*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018.

Chatraw, Josh, and Mark D. Allen. [\*Apologetics at the Cross: An Introduction for Christian Witness in Late Modernism\*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018.

Craig, William Lane. [\*Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008.

Graham, Elaine L. [\*Apologetics Without Apology: Speaking of God in a World Troubled by Religion\*](#). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017.

Graham, Elaine. [\*Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Public Theology in a Post-Secular Age\*](#). London: SCM, 2013.

Keller, Timothy. [\*Making Sense of God: An Invitation to the Skeptical\*](#). London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2016.

Keller, Timothy. [\*The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism\*](#). New York: Dutton, 2008.

McGrath, Alister E. [\*Bridge-Building: Effective Christian Apologetics\*](#). Leicester: IVP, 1992.

McGrath, Alister E. [\*Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith\*](#). Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012.

Sire, James W. [\*The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog\*](#) (5th ed.). Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009.

Stackhouse, John G., Jr. [\*Humble Apologetics: Defending the Faith Today\*](#). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

## Lecture Schedule

Classes are on Wednesday nights, 6:15–9:00pm, in Lecture Room 3 (breaks 7:05-7:10pm and 8:00-8:05pm).

**Period 1** is typically student discussion: prayer for non-Christian friends, sharing off-the-cuff responses to questions of our biblical 'big story', and debriefing last week's forum post and this week's readings;

**Period 2** is typically direct teaching, framing the topic/issue/question;

**Period 3** is typically a workshop: constructing responses to the forum questions and statements for that particular module.

N.B. Required pre-reading is 2 hours (~40 pages) per week = \*one\* recommended pre-reading plus whatever else is of interest in either recommended or optional readings, all available on Moodle.

Wk	Date	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3
1	Feb 13	"What Story Am I In?" ... Narrative & Apologetics	Unit Introduction + The Apologist's Prayer	What Is Apologetics? ... The pitfalls and promise of Christian persuasion (interview)
Assessment		<b>Journal 1</b> posted to Moodle Module Forum before next class: Respond to one of the following questions: (a) What is apologetics, and why bother with it? or (b) How does the role of apologetics relate to <i>theology, evangelism and mission</i> ?		
2	Feb 20	Apologetic highpoints across the ages	Apologetic types & strategies with verificationism as ideal	An Apologetic Method: unpacking the approach for workshops & assessment
Assessment		<b>Journal 2</b> posted to Moodle Module Forum before next class: With which apologist do you most identify? What is your primary strategy in defending and commending the Christian faith, and what is its greatest strength and its fundamental weakness?		
3	Feb 27	Prayer, "Big Story" responses, forum recap, & readings debrief (+ qns. on <i>Apologetic Method</i> )	Foundations: epistemology, revelation, & presuppositions	Worldview analysis & Christian Theism: key faith tenets, and the Bible's role
Assessment		<b>Journal 3</b> posted to Moodle Module Forum before next class: On what basis do you argue that Christianity is "the truth"? And how strong—or certain—a claim do you hope to support? (cf. Mod. 1)		
4	Mar 6	Prayer, "Big Story" responses, forum recap, & readings debrief	Philosophical Challenges to Christianity 1: deism, atheism, science, miracles, and evolution: God's 2 Books	Workshop: Debating God's Existence? &/or open class discussion on scientism, creation and evolution
Assessment		<b>Journal 4</b> posted to Moodle Module Forum before next class: Respond to one of the following statements: (a) "Modern science has buried belief in God. So how can you seriously argue for supernatural events like creation and miracles in the Twenty-First Century?"; or (b) "The only things worth believing in are physical, as discerned through the five senses and tested by logic. Christian theism fails this test, so it must be dismissed"		
5	Mar 13	Prayer, "Big Story" responses, forum recap, & readings debrief	Philosophical Challenges to Christianity 2: violence, postmodernism & "freedom"	Workshop: Evil & Suffering, both present & future (Hell)
Assessment		<b>Journal 5</b> posted to Moodle Module Forum before next class: Respond to one of the following statements: (a) "All your religious 'truth' claims are simply a ploy to control my life; why submit to Jesus when I'm free right now?"; or (b) "Look how bad the world is; either God doesn't exist, or isn't worth trusting"; or (c) "I refuse to trust a being who damns people to suffer in hell for eternity simply because they haven't heard the 'good news' or won't do what the bully demands"		
6	Mar 20	Prayer, "Big Story" responses, forum recap, & readings debrief	Historical Challenges to Christianity 1: the reliability of the Scriptures	Workshop: Answering the Westwing + Penn & Teller's Deconstruction
Assessment		<b>Journal 6</b> posted to Moodle Module Forum before next class: Respond to one of the following statements: (a) "Why should I take seriously your claim that the Bible—an ancient book of oral legends finally penned by goat herders and uneducated fishermen—is not only true, but also relevant in the modern world?"; or (b) "It's stupid, dangerous and violent to literally apply the Bible in a modern pluralistic democracy"		



<b>7</b>	<b>Mar 27</b>	Prayer, "Big Story" responses, forum recap, & readings debrief + apologetic approaches to commending Jesus	Historical Challenges to Christianity 2: historicity of the resurrection & church emergence: Jesus on Trial I	Workshop: Jesus on Trial II
<i>Assessment</i>		<p><b>Requirement 1A:</b> Submit on Moodle a collated version (including a title page and evidence of weekly interaction with others in response) of <u>5</u> of your Journals from weeks 1-6 (1500 wds, not counting words for interaction with others) due March 26, 2019 (week 7) = 20%</p> <p><b>Journal 7 posted to Moodle Module Forum before next class:</b> Respond to one of the following statements: (a) "Dead people don't come back to life. Jesus' resurrection may have been convincing to ignorant ancients, but it's impossible for people today to believe"; or (b) "Jesus is a poignant myth, a model of love's power in the face of oppression, but nothing more"</p>		
<b>8</b>	<b>Apr 3</b>	Prayer, "Big Story" responses, forum recap, & readings debrief + apologetic approaches to commending Jesus	Behavioural Challenges to Christianity 1: Behaviourism and Freudianism	Workshop: structuring an apologetics talk—deconstructing Ricky Gervais' defeater beliefs
<i>Assessment</i>		<p><b>Journal 8 posted to Moodle Module Forum before next class:</b> Respond to one of the following statements: (a) "Christian belief is pure projection—wish fulfilment to avoid facing one's fears of futility and death. It's time we grew up"; or (b) "Belief in an imaginary friend like God may have been a survival-enhancing belief propagated in the past, but now this brain-washing meme is counterproductive to the progress of humanity. We need facts, not faith, as we move into the future"</p>		
<b>April 10</b>		<b>Study Week</b>		
<b>April 17</b>		<b>Study Week</b>		
<b>9</b>	<b>Apr 24</b>	Prayer, "Big Story" responses, forum recap, & readings debrief (+ revisit <i>Apologetic Method</i> )	Behavioural Challenges to Christianity 2: sociological, anthropological, and psychological challenges ... Christianity & Feminism	Workshop: Responding to Religious Pluralism
<i>Assessment</i>		<p><b>Journal 9 posted to Moodle Module Forum before next class:</b> Respond to one of the following statements: (a) "How ignorant and intolerant to believe that Jesus is the only way to God in a religiously plural world"; or (b) "The Church is repressive of women and predatory upon children, which isn't surprising given that its framing myth is an all-powerful Father abusing his child, then saving the world through this male scape-goat"</p>		
<b>10</b>	<b>May 1</b>	Worldviews 1: agnosticism and Marxism, naturalism, scientism and secular humanism. Case study: public theology for the common good in education	Case study cont.: "(Un)Common Good: Peaceable Dialogue for Partisan Times" (online <a href="#">here</a> ; 2016 Tinsley <a href="#">Lecture/script</a> )	Workshop: Responding to the "Fourth R", keeping religion out of "secular" schools
<i>Assessment</i>		<p><b>Journal 10 posted to Moodle Module Forum before next class:</b> Respond to one of the following statements: (a) "The public square, including neutral institutions like secular education, is no place for the imposition of some people's religious perspectives upon all"; or (b) "Christianity has been unjustly privileged in the west for far too long. Equality demands affirmative action, silencing this powerful voice to let minority perspectives be truly heard"</p>		
<b>11†</b>	<b>May 8</b>	Prayer, "Big Story" responses, forum recap, & readings debrief + Introduce Worldviews 2 on nihilism and existentialism	Worldviews 2: moral relativism	Workshop: "Everything's Bent"—a public theology Christian response to Westwing, Safe Schools and claims of bigotry
<i>Assessment</i>		<p><b>Journal 11 posted to Moodle Module Forum before next class:</b> Respond to one of the following statements: (a) "Who are you to say what is morally right and wrong? How intolerant!"; or (b) "Anyone who judges homosexuality on religious grounds is a bigot; provided people give their full consent, and no harm is done, everything is permissible and your opposition is oppression"; or (c) "You don't need to be religious to be good, nor believe in God to objectively discern the difference between right and wrong"</p>		

<b>12</b>	<b>May 15</b>	Prayer, "Big Story" responses, forum recap, & readings debrief	Worldviews 3: Eastern pantheistic monism + New Age, syncretism, and occultism	Workshop: Responding to "The Secret" and the sufficiency of "mindfulness"
<i>Assessment</i>		<b>Journal 12</b> posted to Moodle Module Forum before next class: Respond to one of the following statements: (a) "We are responsible for everything in our lives; my life is as it is because I created it myself. That's karma. Christian appeals to forgiveness and 'grace' are infantilising, a move away from maturity"; or (b) "Meditation is the key to modern happiness. Once you let go of your desire to distinguish right from wrong, truth from lies, and proving that Jesus is the only way, you will discover the unity of all things and the true joy for which you strive"		
<b>13</b>	<b>May 22</b>	Prayer, "Big Story" responses, forum recap, & readings debrief	Course Review & Open Discussion	Apologetics as Science & Art; Humble & Prayerful Apologetics
<i>Assessment</i>		<b>Requirement 1B:</b> Submit on Moodle a collated version (including a title page and evidence of weekly interaction with others in response) of <u>5</u> of your Journals from weeks 7-12 (1500 wds, not counting words for interaction with others), due May 21, 2019 (week 13) = 20%. **N.b. Distance students to submit signed <i>Reflection Activity Log</i> in the same word.doc.		
<b>May 29</b>		<b>Study Week and Final Assignments</b>		
<i>Assessment</i>		<b>Requirement 2:</b> Research Assignment (4000 wds) due June 5, 2019 = 60%.		

† n.b. Week 11 (Wednesday May 8) Dave is away. A guest lecturer will guide this session through.

## UNIT LECTURER



**Dave Benson** (BAppSci.HMS-Ed; MA; PhD) is the course preparer, lecturer and marker for this subject. As a former high school teacher, youth worker and Pastor of Evangelism and Community Outreach, he is passionate about commending Christ and His Kingdom in Australia's post-Christendom culture. Dave lectures at Malyon College in the areas of evangelism, apologetics, worldviews, faith-work integration, and practical theology. This parallels Dave's work as Director of [Traverse](#) (the Malyon centre for bridging church and culture), the founder of "[Christ's Pieces](#)" with his wife Nikki as an intentional Christian community, the founder and ongoing associate of [Logos](#) apologetics ministry, blog writing with "[Wondering Fair](#)", consultancy and generating resources with [Scripture Union](#) and the [Bible Society](#) for cultural and [Scripture Engagement](#), [Christian Schools Australia](#) on [Locating Learners in God's Big Story](#) ("[God's Curriculum](#)"), and his ongoing work with the [Lausanne World Evangelization Movement](#), serving as Chair of the Programme Committee for the 2016 [Younger Leaders Gathering](#) (YLG) in Jakarta. In 2009 he completed a research Masters at Regent College (Vancouver) under Prof. John G. Stackhouse, Jr., entitled "[The Thinking Teen](#)", exploring how to commend the plausibility, credibility and relevance of the Bible to non-Christian adolescents. This laid the foundation for Dave's 2016 [Practical Theological dissertation](#) under A/Prof. Neil Pembroke at The University of Queensland. Entitled "[Schools, Scripture and Secularisation](#)," this project considers the telos of competing curricular visions and the place of religions and their revelations in Australia's contemporary pluralistic educational sphere.

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## UNIT ASSESSMENT

### Assessment Instructions

In completing assessments, students should note that:

1. The **College requirements** for the writing and submission of assignments are to be adhered to at all times, as marks will be deducted for incorrect and poor presentation. Of particular importance is that the official College title page is to be used, and that the word length be indicated.
2. The current **Assignment Style and Writing Guides** are available to all students on the Moodle site; it should be studied, both when starting out and at the beginning of each academic year as adjustments or changes may be made from time-to-time.
3. With respect to **length**, students are permitted to write at a length of 10% either side of the stated length; for example, a 1000-word assignment should be within a 900-1100 word length. Students will be penalized 10% over the word limit and may be required to resubmit the assignment in terms of the stipulated word length.
4. With respect to the **List of References**, a specific number of references will not be set; however, students should note the guidelines indicated for the specific assessment requirement. However, students should note that:
  - a. Bibles (including study Bibles), basic dictionaries and devotional guides are not regarded as academic references.
  - b. Electronic sources should generally not number more than half the required number of references, and should be used with caution.
5. The failure to adhere to the stipulated assessment **format** requirements will be penalized as follows:
  - a. Body of assignment:
    - i. 1<sup>st</sup> level – 1%
    - ii. 2<sup>nd</sup> and subsequent levels – 2%
  - b. List of References and referencing:
    - i. 1<sup>st</sup> level – 1%
    - ii. 2<sup>nd</sup> and subsequent levels – 2%

## **Grade Criteria**

*Graduate Diploma and Master's students at the advanced graduate degree 600-level should note that grades are awarded on the following criteria:*

Units at advanced level build upon foundational studies. Critical issues raised by a broad range of contemporary scholars are introduced and evaluated; primary sources are analysed in depth; and the critical and evaluative faculties of the students are developed in dialogue with scholarly literature.

### **Pass**

- ✓ Demonstrates ability in engaging the primary sources, is beginning to understand their setting and historical context.
- ✓ Evidences a grasp of the foundational features of the discipline.
- ✓ Demonstrates emerging skills in the task of critically evaluating a range of scholarly viewpoints.

### **Credit**

- ✓ Demonstrates pronounced ability in engaging primary sources and understands their setting and historical context.
- ✓ Evidences a sound grasp of the foundational features of the discipline.
- ✓ Shows an ability to evaluate critically a range of scholarly viewpoints with empathy.

### **Distinction**

- ✓ Demonstrates pronounced ability in the analysis of primary sources and understands their setting and historical context.
- ✓ Evidences a confident grasp of the foundational features of the discipline.
- ✓ Exhibits an ability to evaluate and assess empathetically a range of scholarly viewpoints that suggests the emergence of independent thinking and research skills required at early postgraduate level.

### **High Distinction**

- ✓ Demonstrates superior ability in the analysis and critique of primary sources and ideas and understands their setting and historical context.
- ✓ Evidences a confident grasp of the foundational features of the discipline.
- ✓ Exhibits superior ability in assessing and reporting on a range of scholarly viewpoints empathetically that exhibits the emergence of independent thinking and research skills required at early postgraduate level.

## ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

### **Requirement 1: Forum Posts (Sections A, B & C of the Syllabus)**

Throughout the unit, a range of understandings of and approaches to Christian apologetics have been considered. In this requirement, you will interact with others through the Moodle Forum, with encouragement to re-post on the Australian Apologetics Facebook forum at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1585432295093793/> or your own social media site. For each post, imagine you were explaining your answer to either a secular or “spiritual but not religious” twenty-something Australian who is post-Christian in attitude but pre-Christian in understanding.

You must formulate your own apologetic approach by responding to 10 of the following 12 weekly questions. That is, you must choose and respond to 5 of the 6 questions in weeks 1-6 (collectively due via Moodle on Tuesday March 26, 2019), and a further 5 of the 6 questions in weeks 7-12 (collectively due on Tuesday May 21, 2019), allowing roughly 300 words per response. (See the following page for questions, repeated from the lecture schedule above.)

Frame these posts as a first-person response. You must meaningfully draw upon at least two pre-readings per forum—giving priority to the recommended reading(s)—and interact with one other person (not included in the word count), in directly answering the question. Across the 10 posts, utilise a variety of apologetic approaches that give primacy to demonstrating the plausibility, credibility and relevance of Christian belief. *When options are available, indicate to which of the statements you are responding.*

You are expected to post your response within the week of the next class, even as all contributions should be gathered together in one document and submitted via the Moodle assessment tab.

The **key assessment criteria** for this requirement are as follows:

1. A sound grasp of underlying course content, demonstrated through the accurate and informed defence and commendation of Christian belief.
2. Winsome communication of your response, targeted to a twenty-something Australian who is post-Christian in attitude but pre-Christian in understanding.
3. Insightful engagement with other contributors that adds to the discussion.
4. You have meaningfully engaged at least two pre-readings per entry.

**Length: 3000 words**

**References: at least two per forum post**

**Due: First set of five posts for weeks 1-6 (1500 words) due March 26, 2019 (week 7) = 20%**

**Second set of five posts for weeks 7-12 (1500 words) due May 21, 2019 (week 13) = 20%**

**Mark allocation: 40%; Outcomes addressed: a1-6, b1-6, c1-3**

## FORUM QUESTIONS:

- Week 1. Respond to one of the following questions: (a) What is apologetics, and why bother with it? or (b) How does the role of apologetics relate to *theology, evangelism* and *mission*?
- Week 2. With which apologist do you most identify? What is your primary strategy in defending and commending the Christian faith, and what is its greatest strength and its fundamental weakness?
- Week 3. On what basis do you argue that Christianity is “the truth”? And how strong—or certain—a claim do you hope to support?
- Week 4. Respond to one of the following statements: (a) “Modern science has buried belief in God. So how can you seriously argue for supernatural events like creation and miracles in the Twenty-First Century?”; or (b) “The only things worth believing in are physical, as discerned through the five senses and tested by logic. Christian theism fails this test, so it must be dismissed”
- Week 5. Respond to one of the following statements: (a) “All your religious ‘truth’ claims are simply a ploy to control my life; why submit to Jesus when I’m free right now?”; or (b) “Look how bad the world is; either God doesn’t exist, or isn’t worth trusting”; or (c) “I refuse to trust a being who damns people to suffer in hell for eternity simply because they haven’t heard the ‘good news’ or won’t do what the bully demands”
- Week 6. Respond to one of the following statements: (a) “Why should I take seriously your claim that the Bible—an ancient book of oral legends finally penned by goat herders and uneducated fishermen—is not only true, but also relevant in the modern world?”; or (b) “It’s stupid, dangerous and violent to literally apply the Bible in a modern pluralistic democracy”
- Week 7. Respond to one of the following statements: (a) “Dead people don’t come back to life. Jesus’ resurrection may have been convincing to ignorant ancients, but it’s impossible for people today to believe”; or (b) “Jesus is a poignant myth, a model of love’s power in the face of oppression, but nothing more”
- Week 8. Respond to one of the following statements: (a) “Christian belief is pure projection—wish fulfilment to avoid facing one’s fears of futility and death. It’s time we grew up”; or (b) “Belief in an imaginary friend like God may have been a survival-enhancing belief propagated in the past, but now this brain-washing meme is counterproductive to the progress of humanity. We need facts, not faith, as we move into the future”
- Week 9. Respond to one of the following statements: (a) “How ignorant and intolerant to believe that Jesus is the only way to God in a religiously plural world”; or (b) “The Church is repressive of women and predatory upon children, which isn’t surprising given that its framing myth is an all-powerful Father abusing his child, then saving the world through this male scape-goat”
- Week 10. Respond to one of the following statements: (a) “The public square, including neutral institutions like secular education, is no place for the imposition of some people’s religious perspectives upon all”; or (b) “Christianity has been unjustly privileged in the west for far too long. Equality demands affirmative action, silencing this powerful voice to let minority perspectives be truly heard”
- Week 11. Respond to one of the following statements: (a) “Who are you to say what is morally right and wrong? How intolerant!”; or (b) “Anyone who judges homosexuality on religious grounds is a bigot; provided people give their full consent, and no harm is done, everything is permissible and your opposition is oppression”; or (c) “You don’t need to be religious to be good, nor believe in God to objectively discern the difference between right and wrong”
- Week 12. Respond to one of the following statements: (a) “We are responsible for everything in our lives; my life is as it is because I created it myself. That’s karma. Christian appeals to forgiveness and ‘grace’ are infantilising, a move away from maturity”; or (b) “Meditation is the key to modern happiness. Once you let go of your desire to distinguish right from wrong, truth from lies, and proving that Jesus is the only way, you will discover the unity of all things and the true joy for which you strive”

## **Requirement 2: Research Assignment (Sections B & C of Syllabus)**

Students are to respond to one pressing critique—embedded within a larger worldview, as an alternative to Christian belief—that presently undermines the Christian faith (see section B and C of the Outline and Contents) and present an essay that addresses the following:

1. Setting the scene; the societal and church context within which this critique and alternative worldview is meaningful (~500 words)
2. Underlying concerns; both hopes and fears of the antagonist (~250 words)
3. Clarification of key terms and issues foundational to a productive dialogue (~300 words)
4. Admission of Christian fault where appropriate, whether intellectually or morally (~300 words)
5. Key points *questioning* the presuppositions of the antagonist to open their ears (~600 words)
6. Key points *defending* Christian belief or behaviour, why it is plausible and credible (~1000 words)
7. Key points *commending* Christian belief or behaviour, why it is attractive (~800 words)
8. Additional actions to support this apologetic (~250 words)

The majority of the words should be focused on questioning, defending and commending Christian belief (parts 5-7). If the student wishes, they may write in the first person to address a hypothetical interlocutor; nevertheless, this is a research assignment and full referencing is expected.

The **key assessment criteria** for this requirement are as follows:

1. A sympathetic and accurate understanding and portrayal of the person's context, beliefs and critique of Christianity.
2. Reasonable and strategic use of logic and questioning to expose faulty presuppositions.
3. Clear evidence of independent thinking in the timely deployment of relevant evidence defending and commending Christianity.
4. The appropriate appeal to experience in demonstrating the existential relevance of Christianity.
5. Coherent application and winsome communication of a variety of apologetic types in an integrated argument.
6. In-depth interaction with relevant research and contemporary leading voices in the field.

**Length: 4000 words**

**References: At least 10 meaningful references**

**Due: Wednesday June 5, 2019 (Exam Week)**

**Mark allocation: 60%; Outcomes addressed: a1, a3-5, b2-5, c1-3**



## UNIT CONTRIBUTION TO GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

### *“More than knowledge”*

To form faithful image-bearers of Christ, who love God, listen to His Word, serve the church, engage their culture, and are committed to the mission of God in this world.

	1.	2.	3.	4.
<b>Graduate Attribute 1: Personal Formation – ‘Shepherds with God’s heart’</b>				
a. Is secure in God, living in the truth and freedom of the gospel	✓			
b. Pursues intimacy with God and Christ-likeness, particularly through spiritual disciplines			✓	
c. Intentionally plans for growth, being aware of personal strengths and weaknesses			✓	
d. Grows spiritual, personal and relational health, especially through accountability			✓	
e. Is committed to influencing and serving others in the church and the world	✓			
<b>Graduate Attribute 2: Theological Formation – ‘Knowledge and understanding of God’s heart’</b>				
a. Understands the ‘big story’ of the Bible and the gospel	✓			
b. Is personally able to interpret and apply the Bible		✓		
c. Is formulating a biblical, historical and contemporary theology		✓		
d. Reflects biblically and theologically on life and practice		✓		
d. Is committed to communicating and demonstrating the gospel	✓			
<b>Graduate Attribute 3: Ministry Formation – ‘Knowledgeable and wise shepherds’</b>				
a. Has a godly influence on others	✓			
b. Possesses the knowledge and skills needed for chosen ministry path		✓		
c. Ministers and communicates the gospel with clarity in a range of contexts	✓			
d. Works well in a team and intentionally does so		✓		
e. Is committed to servant leadership and the mentoring of others			✓	
1. A major thrust of this unit	2. A contribution that this unit should make			
3. A possible function of this unit, but not targeted	4. An unlikely product of this unit			

**Note:** Graduates who have not completed the curricular and non-curricular ministry aspects of Malyon’s courses will tend to be most developed in Graduate Attribute 2.

## RECOMMENDED READINGS

The list below provides the learner with references that relate to the unit material and topics under consideration.

### Core Texts

- Boa, Kenneth, and Robert M. Bowman. [\*Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to Defending the Christian Faith\*](#), 2d. ed. Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2005.
- Chan, Sam. [\*Evangelism in a Skeptical World: How to Make the Unbelievable News About Jesus More Believable\*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018.
- Chatraw, Josh, and Mark D. Allen. [\*Apologetics at the Cross: An Introduction for Christian Witness in Late Modernism\*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018.
- Craig, William Lane. [\*Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008.
- Graham, Elaine L. [\*Apologetics Without Apology: Speaking of God in a World Troubled by Religion\*](#). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017.
- Graham, Elaine. [\*Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Public Theology in a Post-Secular Age\*](#). London: SCM, 2013.
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- McGrath, Alister E. [\*Bridge-Building: Effective Christian Apologetics\*](#). Leicester: IVP, 1992.
- McGrath, Alister E. [\*Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith\*](#). Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012.
- Sire, James W. [\*The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog\*](#), 5th ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009.
- Stackhouse, John G., Jr. [\*Humble Apologetics: Defending the Faith Today\*](#). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

### Additional Reading<sup>1</sup>

#### Section A: Introduction to Apologetics

- Alexander, D., ed. *Can We be Sure about Anything?: Science, Faith and Postmodernism*. Leicester: Apollos, 2005.
- Barnett, P. W. *Jesus and the Logic of History*. Leicester: Apollos, 1997.
- Boa, Kenneth, and Bowman, Robert M. *Faith Has Its Reasons, An Integrative Approach to Defending Christianity: An Apologetics Handbook*, 2d ed. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, Paternoster Press, 2006.
- Boa, Kenneth, and Larry Moody. *I'm Glad You Asked*. Colorado Springs, CO: Victor Books, 2005.
- Campbell-Jack, C., G. J. McGrath, C. S. Evans and S. Carter, eds. *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*. Leicester, Downers Grove: IVP, 2006.

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<sup>1</sup> See Module notes for more specific readings relating to set topics.

- Cawley, Luke. *The Myth of the Non-Christian: Engaging Atheists, Nominal Christians and the Spiritual but Not Religious*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016.
- Chan, Sam. *Evangelism in a Skeptical World: How to Make the Unbelievable News About Jesus More Believable*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018.
- Chang, C. *Engaging Unbelief: A Captivating Strategy from Augustine and Aquinas*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000.
- Chatraw, Josh, and Mark D. Allen. *Apologetics at the Cross: An Introduction for Christian Witness in Late Modernism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018.
- Choung, James. *True Story: A Christianity Worth Believing In*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008.
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- Coppenger, Mark. *Moral Apologetics for Contemporary Christians: Pushing Back Against Cultural and Religious Critics*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2011.
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- Craig, William L. *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*, 3d ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008.
- Davison, Andrew, ed. *Imaginative Apologetics: Theology, Philosophy and the Catholic Tradition*. London: SCM Press, 2011.
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- Graham, Elaine. *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Public Theology in a Post-Secular Age*. London: SCM, 2013.
- Graham, Elaine L. *Apologetics Without Apology: Speaking of God in a World Troubled by Religion*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017.
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- McGrath, Alister E. *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012.
- McGrath, Alister E. *Scientific Theology Vol. II; Reality*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Mayers, R. B. *Balanced Apologetics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1996.
- McDowell, Sean. *Apologetics for a New Generation*. Eugene, Or: Harvest House Publishers, 2009.
- McDowell, Sean, ed. *A New Kind of Apologist: Adopting Fresh Strategies; Addressing the Latest Issues; Engaging the Culture*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2016.
- Moreland, J P. *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1987.
- Moreland, James Porter, and William Lane Craig, eds. *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, 2d ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017.
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- Penner, Myron B. *The End of Apologetics: Christian Witness in a Postmodern Context*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.
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- Plantinga, Alvin. *Warranted Christian Belief*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Schaeffer, Francis A. *The God Who Is There: Speaking Historic Christianity into the Twentieth Century*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1998.
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- Sire, James W. *Apologetics Beyond Reason: Why Seeing Really Is Believing*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014.
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- Smart, Simon, John Lennox, Os Guinness, Melinda Tankard-Reist, Ron Sider, John Dickson, and Stanley Hauerwas. *Public Christianity: Talking About Faith in a Post-Christian World*. North Sydney, Australia: Centre for Public Christianity, 2011.
- Stackhouse, John G. *Humble Apologetics: Defending the Faith Today*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Stackhouse, John G., Jr. *Need to Know: Vocation as the Heart of Christian Epistemology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
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- Wilkinson, John. *No Argument for God: Going Beyond Reason in Conversations About Faith*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2011.
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## **Section B: Critiques of the Christian Faith**

- Anderson, Ryan T. *Truth Overruled: The Future of Marriage and Religious Freedom*. Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2015.
- Astley, J., and others. *Problems in Theology: Science and Religion*. London: T&T Clark, 2004.
- Baggini, J. *Atheism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Barnett, P. *Finding the Historical Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009.
- Bauckham, Richard. *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006.
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- Boa, Ken, and Larry Moody. *I'm Glad You Asked: In-depth Answers to Difficult Questions about Christianity*. Colorado Springs, CO: Victor, 1994.
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- Copan, Paul. *Is God a Moral Monster?: Making Sense of the Old Testament God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011.
- Copan, P., and William Lane Craig, eds. *Contending with Christianity's Critics: Answering New Atheists & Other Objectors*. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Academic, 2009.
- Craig, William Lane, and Chad V. Meister, eds. *God Is Great, God Is Good: Why Believing in God Is Reasonable and Responsible*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009.
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- Falk, D. R. *Coming to Peace with Science: Bridging the Worlds Between Faith and Biology*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004.
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- Habermas, Gary R., and Mike Licona. *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2004.
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- Hunter, C M. *Darwin's God: Evolution and the Problem of Evil*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2001.
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- Kaiser, Walter C. *The Old Testament Documents*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001.
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- McGrew, Lydia. *Hidden in Plain View: Undesigned Coincidence in the Gospels and Acts*. Chillicothe, OH: DeWard Publishing, 2017.
- Moreland, J. P., and J. M. Reynolds, eds. *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999.
- Nicholi, Armand M., Jr. *The Question of God: C. S. Lewis and Sigmund Freud Debate God, Love, Sex, and the Meaning of Life*. New York: Free Press, 2002.
- Pearcey, Nancy. *Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions About Life and Sexuality*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018.
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- Zacharias, Ravi, ed. *Beyond Opinion: Living the Faith We Defend*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007.

### **Section C: Alternatives to Christian Belief**

- Baggett, David, and Marybeth Baggett. *The Morals of the Story: Good News About a Good God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018.
- Baggini, J., *Atheism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: OUP, 2003.
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## Online Resources

Following are some of the more helpful apologetics web-sites:

- [Malyon Traverse](#) – centre for bridging church and culture
  - Previous version of this apologetics course [here](#)
  - [Facebook](#) and [Blog](#) posts
  - Logos Apologetics talks [here](#) (e.g. [Caught Out](#): Quick Answers to Tough Qns)
- [Wondering Fair.com](#) - unveiling the unknown God
- [Centre for Public Christianity](#) (Australian based content)
- [Australian Apologetics Facebook Group](#) (please join)
- [CASE](#): The Centre for Apologetics, Scholarship & Education: CASE (Aus. Based)
- [Ethos](#) Centre for Christianity & Society, & Zadok magazine/journal publication
- [McCrinkle](#) Australian Social Science and Church–Culture research
- “[Unbelievable](#)” Podcast with Justin Brierley and [Facebook Group](#)
- [The Philosophical Apologist](#) blog with Bruce Blackshaw
- [One Minute Apologist](#)
- [Veritas Forum](#) - excellent university content
- [Stand To Reason](#) (STR - Greg Koukl - clear thinking)
- [Reasonable Faith](#) (William Lane Craig) + [Lee Strobel](#) apologetics videos
- [Biologos](#), [Discovery Institute](#) and [Centre for Science and Culture](#) and [Creation Ministries International](#)
- [RZIM](#) - Ravi Zacharias International Ministries + Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics ([OCCA](#))
- Karl Faase, “[Towards Belief](#)” and “[Jesus: The Game Changer](#)” DVD ([Olive Tree Media](#))
- [Tim Keller’s “Reason for God”](#) DVD series (interview [here](#) and [here](#))
- Timothy McGrew’s “[Library of Historical Apologetics](#)”

## **ACT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Key Policies**

Students should take note of the following ACT policies:

1. Unit Moderation Policy.
2. Academic Misconduct Policy.
3. Academic Appeals Policy.

### **Accessing Documents**

These and other policy documents are publicly available in the following handbooks, through links on ACT's home page ([www.actheology.edu.au](http://www.actheology.edu.au)):

1. Undergraduate Handbook.
2. Postgraduate Handbook.
3. Student Policy Handbook.
4. International Student Handbook.
5. Distance Education Handbook.

*These should be read in conjunction with the 'Recent Updates' link found on the ACT website.*