



**Dealing with Doubt APOL/PHIL6321**  
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary  
Theological and Historical Division  
Professor: Dr. Gary Habermas  
**2024 Defend Apologetics Conference**

ANSWERING GOD'S CALL

### **SEMINARY MISSION STATEMENT**

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course pursues a practical application of apologetics to the assorted varieties of religious uncertainty. Emphasis is placed on understanding the nature of doubt and lessening its effect on suffering individuals.

### **RATIONALE**

Arguably, no troublesome issue in the Christian life is more common than religious doubt, since perhaps all believers ask tough faith questions from time to time. Religious doubt is reportedly the cause of widespread pain, unrest, and lack of peace, as well as keeping Christians from being more effective. Sometimes sufferers report a loss of faith due to such issues. Hence, religious doubt is a good target for the application of apologetic and pastoral tools.

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Through this course, the student should be able to:

- Identify and interact with the general subject of religious doubt, including key definitions, numerous examples, faulty views, and three major species.
- Investigate in an introductory manner a theoretical characteristic of this topic, as developed from recent insights in philosophy of religion, pastoral theology, or exegetical research.
- Gain an initial understanding of how to pastorally and/or peer-advise (as opposed to counseling) by interacting with a doubting individual, including identifying the species of doubt, and providing direction concerning how to grow personally past a particular painful issue.

### **TEXTBOOKS**

#### **REQUIRED:**

Habermas, Gary. *Dealing with Doubt*. Chicago: Moody, 1990. Out of print, available free on website, [www.garyhabermas.com](http://www.garyhabermas.com))

———. *The Thomas Factor: Using Your Doubts to Draw Closer to God*. Nashville: B & H Academic, 1998. (Out of print, available free on website, [www.garyhabermas.com](http://www.garyhabermas.com))

Guinness, Os. *God in the Dark: The Assurance of Faith Beyond a Shadow of a Doubt*. Wheaton: Crossway, 1996.

Moser, Paul. *Why Isn't God More Obvious?* RZIM Critical Questions. Atlanta: Ravi Zacharias Ministries, 2000.

## Course Requirements

**1. Lecture Attendance.** Students are required to attend all sessions of the *Defend 2024* Christian Apologetics Conference.

**2. Required Reading.** Students are required to read all the required textbooks. Students are not required to review these two books, nor may they review either of the required books in lieu of one of the books listed for book reviews.

**3. Book Reviews.** Each student is required to review 2 of the following books. **Students may not duplicate book reviews from any other course for this course.** If a student wishes to substitute another book in place of one of the books on the list below, he or she must get the professor's permission in an email to do so.

Clark, Kelly James. *When Faith is Not Enough*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

Greig, Pete. *God on Mute: Engaging the Silence of Unanswered Prayer*. Raleigh, NC: Regal, 2001.

Guest, John. *In Search of Certainty: Answers to Doubt When Values Are Eroding and Unbelief is Fashionable*. Raleigh, NC: Regal, 1983.

Habermas, Gary R. *Why is God Ignoring Me?: What to Do When It Feels Like He's Giving You the Silent Treatment*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2010.

McGrath, Alister. *Doubting: Growing Through the Uncertainties of Faith*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006.

Moreland, J.P. and Klaus Issler. *In Search of a Confident Faith: Overcoming Barriers to Trusting in God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008.

Moser, Paul. *The Elusive God: Reorienting Religious Epistemology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Parker, Gary E. *The Gift of Doubt: From Crisis to Authentic Faith*. New York: Harper & Row, 1990.

Sproul, R.C. Editor, *Doubt and Assurance: Looking for Certainty When the Heart Doubts*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993.

Yancey, Philip. *Disappointment with God: Three Questions No One Asks Out Loud*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988.

———. *Reaching for the Invisible God: What Can We Expect to Find?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.

White, James Emery. *Embracing the Mysterious God: Loving the God We Don't Understand*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003.

Reviews should include: (1) some professional biographical data concerning the author; (2) a summary of the book; (3) an assessment of the author's aim or purpose and of the degree of its fulfillment; and (4) a critical evaluation of the book. All grammar and citations in the reviews should follow Turabian form. Reviews should be 4-6 double-spaced pages (which won't be difficult if students include all the above criteria). **Book Reviews are due 7 weeks after the final day of the *Defend 2024 Apologetics Conference* (February 23, 2024).**

#### **4. Session Summaries.**

Write one-page, single-spaced summaries of 10 different breakout sessions from the *Defend 2024* Christian Apologetics Conference. Students taking more than one *Defend 2024* course for NOBTS credit may not use any session summaries that they use for another course. Summaries should be submitted via Canvas. **Summaries are due 15 weeks after the conclusion of the *Defend 2024 Apologetics Conference* (April 19, 2024).**

**5. Research Paper.** Each student is required to submit a research paper on a topic related to doubt, e.g., the hiddenness of God, emotional doubt, etc. The paper should be not less than 2,500 words nor more than 4,000 words in length (double spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font). Papers must adhere to the Turabian style guide. **Students may NOT submit the same paper for this course and another NOBTS course.** **Research papers are due 13 weeks after the final day of the *Defend 2024 Apologetics Conference* (April 5, 2024).**

**Grades** will be assigned on the basis of the NOBTS grading scale: 93-100, A; 85-92, B; 77-84, C; 70-76, D; 0-69, F.

The final grade will be determined accordingly:

Conference Attendance	10%
Required Reading	10%
Book Reviews	20%
Research Paper	30%
<u>Session Summaries</u>	<u>30%</u>
Final Grade	100%

**No late work is accepted without the penalty of five (5) points per office day.** The penalty begins from the due date unless the professor has granted prior permission for late submissions.

All required class assignments must be completed satisfactorily in order for the student to pass the course.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY.** Class attendance is required at each session unless prior permission has been given. Attendance is part of the 15% oral participation, attendance, and reading portion of the final grade.

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Clark, Kelly James. *When Faith is Not Enough*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

- Greig, Pete. *God on Mute: Engaging the Silence of Unanswered Prayer*. Raleigh, NC: Regal, 2001.
- Guinness, Os. *God in the Dark: The Assurance of Faith Beyond a Shadow of a Doubt*. Wheaton: Crossway, 1996.
- Guest, John. *In Search of Certainty: Answers to Doubt When Values Are Eroding and Unbelief is Fashionable*. Raleigh, NC: Regal, 1983.
- Habermas, Gary. *Dealing with Doubt*. Chicago: Moody, 1990. Out of print, available freely on website, [www.garyhabermas.com](http://www.garyhabermas.com))
- . *The Thomas Factor: Using Your Doubts to Draw Closer to God*. Nashville: B & H Academic, 1998. (Out of print, available freely on website, [www.garyhabermas.com](http://www.garyhabermas.com))
- . *Why is God Ignoring Me?: What to Do When It Feels Like He's Giving You the Silent Treatment*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2010.
- Howard-Snyder, Daniel and Paul Moser, Editors. *Divine Hiddenness: New Essays* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- McGrath, Alister. *Doubting: Growing Through the Uncertainties of Faith*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006.
- Moreland, J.P. and Klaus Issler. *In Search of a Confident Faith: Overcoming Barriers to Trusting in God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008.
- Moser, Paul. *The Elusive God: Reorienting Religious Epistemology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- . *Why Isn't God More Obvious?* RZIM Critical Questions. Atlanta: Ravi Zacharias Ministries, 2000.
- Parker, Gary E. *The Gift of Doubt: From Crisis to Authentic Faith*. New York: Harper & Row, 1990.
- Sproul, R.C. Editor, *Doubt and Assurance: Looking for Certainty When the Heart Doubts*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993.
- Yancey, Philip. *Disappointment with God: Three Questions No One Asks Out Loud*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988.
- . *Reaching for the Invisible God: What Can We Expect to Find?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
- White, James Emery. *Embracing the Mysterious God: Loving the God We Don't Understand*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003.