

**Associated Canadian Theological Schools
of Trinity Western University
(One-week modular course)
CAP 603 A: Reliability of Scripture**

Instructor: Paul Chamberlain, Ph.D. Fall, 2017 3 credit hours	E-mail: paul.chamberlain@twu.ca Phone: 604-513-2044 Course Dates: Sept. 6 – Dec 5, 2017 Class Days: October 23 – 27, 2017 Class Times: 8:30 am - 12:30 pm
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Biographical:

Paul Chamberlain holds a Ph.D. in philosophy from Marquette University (1990) and an M.Div. from Trinity International university (1981). He has taught at Trinity Western University since 1990. During part of that time he has also been involved with Ravi Zacharias International Ministries. His primary areas of teaching have been Christian Apologetics, Ethics, Philosophy of Religion and Political Philosophy. He is the author of four books and a number of articles on social and apologetic issues. He currently serves as professor of Apologetics, Ethics, and Philosophy of Religion at ACTS and is Director of the Institute for Christian Apologetics at ACTS.

I. Course Description

Christians have been defined for centuries as people of the book. Much of who we are is inexorably bound up with our scriptures. We see the Bible as canon, a measuring stick by which we evaluate our doctrines and behavior. We hold that the Bible was preserved throughout history by the providential hand of God and remains a faithful witness to the life of Christ and the character of God, infallible in all matters of faith and practice. But on what basis do we hold this confidence? How can we be sure that the Bible is reliable? In this course we will examine the foundation for the reliability of Scripture and also interact with critics of biblical reliability both within and without the church. Our constant goal will be to establish confidence in the scriptures as reliable, true, and trustworthy for all time.

II. Objectives

The purpose of this course is to:

1. introduce students to a number of key authors on the topic of scriptural reliability, including both those who hold a high view of scripture and those who do not,
2. enable students to examine the foundation for the truth and coherence of scripture,
3. provide students with a deep understanding of many challenges to biblical reliability,
4. begin the process of finding and communicating responses to these challenges,
5. develop and deepen a respect for the Bible within students.

III. Course Textbooks

Blomberg, Craig L. *Can We Still Believe The Bible: An Evangelical Engagement With Contemporary Questions*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2014.

Blomberg, Craig L. *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity press, 1987.

Bock, Darrell L. *Can I Trust the Bible? Defending the Bible's Reliability*. Atlanta: RZIM Critical Concerns Series, 2001.

Bock, Darrell L. *The Missing Gospels: Unearthing the Truth Behind Alternative Christianities*, Nashville: Nashville, 2006.

Jones, Timothy Paul. *Misquoting Truth: A Guide to the Fallacies of Bart Ehrman's 'Misquoting Jesus'*, Downers Grove: Intervarsity press, 2007,

Swinburne, Richard, *The Resurrection of God Incarnate*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003.

Recommended for Further Reading:

Beckwith, Francis J., William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland, eds. *To Everyone an Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview*: Downers Grove: Intervarsity press, 2004.

Blomberg, Craig. *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity press, 2002.

Blomberg, Craig. *Can We Still Believe The Bible?: An Evangelical Engagement with Contemporary Questions*.

Bruce, F.F., *New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

Bush, L. Russ. *Classical Readings in Christian Apologetics: A.D. 100-1800*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Academie, 1983.

Chamberlain, Paul. *Why People Don't Believe: Confronting Seven Challenges to Christian Faith*. Grand Rapids: Baker books, 2011.

Chamberlain, Paul. *Can We Be Good Without God: A Conversation About Truth, Morality, Culture and a Few Other Things That Matter*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity press, 1996.

Clark, David K. *Dialogical Apologetics: A Person-Centered Approach to Christian Defense*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993.

Craig, William Lane. *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*. Third ed. Wheaton: Crossway, 2008.

Edgar, William. *Reasons of the Heart: Recovering Christian Persuasion*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.

Evans, C. Stephen. *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics and Philosophy of Religion*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2002.

Kreeft, Peter. *The Best Things in Life: A Twentieth-Century Socrates Looks at Power, Pleasure, Truth, and the Good Life*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1984.

Kreeft, Peter. *Between Heaven and Hell: A Dialogue Somewhere Beyond Death with John F. Kennedy, C. S. Lewis and Aldous Huxley*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1982.

Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. New York: Macmillan, 1952.

Lewis, C. S. *Miracles*. New York: Macmillan, 1947.

Lewis, C. S. *The Problem of Pain*. New York: Macmillan, 1940.

Licona, Michael R. *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity press, 2011.

Moreland, J. P. *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987.

Moreland, J.P. and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian*

Worldview. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2003.

Pascal, Blaise. *Pensees*. Trans. A. J. Krailsheimer. Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1966.

Stackhouse, John G., Jr. *Humble Apologetics: Defending the Faith Today*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

IV. Course Schedule

Oct 23: Contemporary attitudes toward the Bible & Principles for weighing the evidence for scriptural reliability; Read Bock (*Can I Trust The Bible*), entire book & Swinburne, chpt 1.

Oct 24: Historical attitudes toward the Bible & Foundations for Biblical Reliability,

Read Blomberg, (*Reliability of The Gospels*), chpts. 1-5

Pres (Blomberg, p. 24-37)_____

Pres (Blomberg, p. 48-62)_____

Pres (Blomberg, p. 67-75)_____

Thorny questions regarding biblical reliability II, Read Blomberg, (*Reliability of the Gospels*), chapter 6.

Pres (Blomberg, p. 241-256)_____

Pres (Blomberg, p. 256-272)_____

Oct 25: Why New Testament texts can be trusted; Blomberg (*Can We Still Believe the Bible?*) Entire book.

Challenges concerning canonicity: Present on p. 43-82 _____

Is the bible infallible: Present on p. 119-146 _____

Aren't some biblical genres unhistorical: Present on p. 147-178 _____

Oct. 26: How the New Testament came to be; Read Jones, entire book.

Pres (Jones, ch. 1-2, p. 29-50) _____

Pres (Jones, ch. 3-4, p. 51-77) _____

Pres (Jones, ch. 5-6, p. 79-106) _____

Pres (Jones, ch. 7-8, p. 107-137) _____

Oct 27: Implications of Jesus’ recorded life, teachings, and the post-crucifixion appearance passages for scriptural reliability, Read Swinburne, chapter 9

Pres (Swinburne p. 145-153) _____

Pres (Swinburne p. 153-159) _____

V. Assignments and Grading Procedures

- 1. Careful reading of all assigned readings
- 2. One in-class seminar presentation.....40%
- 3. One research essay.....60%

Research Essay

This essay will be a dialogue between two fictional characters. Using this dialogue format, you will respond to one major challenge of your choice to biblical reliability. You are encouraged to choose a challenge that is important to you and that you sense a need to be better prepared for. One character in the dialogue will represent and argue convincingly for the objection you wish to address. His job is to make the **strongest case possible** for this objection. The other character will represent your position and will respond to this challenge with the best responses available to you.

It is essential to do quality research for sources that are sympathetic to both sides of the argument. This will provide first-hand knowledge of opposing positions and the rationale given for them. It will also be indispensable in refining your own views and arguments. In your research into unsympathetic perspectives, be sure to include Internet sources along with other more traditional ways of research. The web sites of skeptics societies, atheistic associations, humanist groups, etc., are especially helpful in this regard. These should be documented appropriately.

Make the dialogue as realistic as possible in order to avoid a sense of artificiality or a straw man in the conversation. Researching both sides of your question is key here. Also, one suggestion is to put yourself in the shoes of the objector and ask how you would respond to Christian arguments. This is a chance for you to develop your own creative writing abilities as you wrestle with an important challenge to Christian faith.

The following elements must be included:

1. a title page,
2. page numbers,
3. **a clear statement of the objection you wish to address** at the beginning of your paper. (e.g. “Claim to be disputed: Science gives us a good reason to reject theism.”) You may also include a thesis statement if you like, but your thesis statement should be, essentially, the negation of the objection (e.g. “Science *does not* give us a good reason to reject theism.”)
4. **an outline** of your paper, with corresponding section headings throughout your dialogue.
5. **definitions of key terms** and concepts relevant to your issue,
6. the best **reasons** you know of **for the objection**,
7. main steps in your **argument** as you respond to the objection.
8. **a conclusion** (still in dialogue form) that summarizes and recaps the logic of the entire argument.
9. **a bibliography** of your sources.

Essay length: 16-20 pages (4,000 – 5,000 words)

Due: November 27, 2017

Worth 60%

In-class seminars

These are not intended to be prepared, or even begun, before the course begins. They will be prepared during the course and due at various times as agreed upon in the first class session.

Each student will lead the class in one seminar covering one of the assigned readings for the day. The assignment will consist of the following two parts:

- 1) A basic summary of the author’s most important ideas,
- 2) Your assessment of and response to them. Interact deeply with the author. For example, highlight points of agreement and disagreement with specific ideas and tell why, draw out assumptions you find the author making and give apologetic responses to them. Then respond to questions from your colleagues and professor.

Your presentation should be approximately half summary and half assessment. You will prepare a 5-6 page written document, in polished form, which you will read from and distribute to the class at the beginning of your presentation.

Worth 40%

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A+	97-100	4.30
A	93-96	4.00
A-	90-92	3.70
B+	87-89	3.30
B	83-86	3.00
B-	80-82	2.70
C+	77-79	2.30
C	73-76	2.00
C-	70-72	1.70
F	Below 70	0.00

Supplement: Important Academic Notes from ACTS

Web Support – Student Portal <https://students.twu.ca>

All students at TWU have a TWUPass username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application or can be managed through the computing services help desk or the link on the student portal. Your student email account is also available through this student portal and is vital for communication about grades, account statements, lost passwords, sign-up instructions, etc. If you do not know your account or password, there is a link at the login area called “I forgot my password.” When you click on that link, you will be walked through the process of retrieving your account information.

Campus Closure

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to the following radio stations CKNW (980 AM), CKWX (1130 AM), STAR FM (107.1 FM), PRAISE (106.5 FM) and KARI (550 AM). As well, an announcement will be placed on the University's campus closure notification message box (604.513.2147) and on the front page of the University's website (<http://www.twu.ca> – also see <http://www.twu.ca/conditions> for more details).

An initial announcement regarding the status of the campus and cancellation of classes is made at 6:00 AM and covers all classes beginning before 1:00PM. A second announcement is made at 11:00AM that covers all classes which begin between 1:00PM and 5:00PM. A third announcement is made at 3:00PM and covers those classes which begin after 5:00PM.

Paper Formatting

Students need to adhere to Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format except for in counselling courses, for which APA format is used and for CanIL courses.

Students are strongly encouraged to use EndNote Basic/Web (available through the library home page www.twu.ca/library - lower left) as their bibliographical manager and as a tool for formatting bibliographies. It is free. The link to EndNote from the library home page provides detailed instructions. Students will need to be aware of the need to “clean up” most bibliographies generated by this program. Students are encouraged to view the documents on the following websites for format samples:

http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html or www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/. Note that in EndNote Basic/Web the available formatting styles are those of Turabian Bibliography, and APA 6th. For Turabian, note that there are two formats – Notes (or Bibliography Style) and Reference List (a short format citation style). ACTS uses the Notes (Bibliography) format, not Reference List.

Counselling students are expected to purchase the APA Publications Manual. More information found at the following website. <http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html>.

For free online programs that will enable you to create properly formatted bibliography citations, go to <http://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/> ("Chicago stands for "Turabian") or <http://www.sourceaid.com/citationbuilder/>

CANIL students can locate this on the CANIL intranet, under the “student” side. CanIL students can locate this on the CanIL intranet, under the “student” side.

Please check with your professor to see which one he/she recommends you use!!

Course Evaluations

Course evaluations are an important aspect of improving teaching outcomes and for students and faculty professional development. Therefore, completion of course evaluations are considered a course expectation. Professors will schedule time to fill out the online course evaluation (20-30 minutes) during their last scheduled class of the semester, for students to complete on their personal laptop or a collegium computer. Students who are absent or otherwise unable to complete the online course evaluation in the last class, will be expected to make every effort to do so by the last day of exams. Information about how to access online evaluation forms will be provided to the faculty and students prior to the last week of classes by the ACTS Administration.

Research Ethics

Please note that all research projects involving human participants undertaken by members of the TWU university community (including projects done by ACTS students to satisfy course or degree requirements) **MUST** be approved by the Trinity Western University Research Ethics Board. Information and forms may be found at <http://www.twu.ca/research/research/research-ethics/default.html>

Those needing additional clarification may contact the ACTS Academic Dean's office. Please allow at least three (3) weeks from the date of submission for a review of the application.

Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism at TWU

As Christian scholars pursuing higher education, academic integrity is a core value of the entire TWU community. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship at TWU. This includes, but is not limited to, avoiding all forms of plagiarism and cheating in scholarly work. TWU has a strict policy on plagiarism (see academic calendar 2008-09, pp. 37-38). Further details on this subject are contained in the ACTS Student Handbook in section 4.12. The handbook is available online on the ACTS webpage (www.acts.twu.ca) at the following link: <http://acts.twu.ca/community/student-handbook-2011-12.pdf>.

Learning what constitutes plagiarism and avoiding it is the student's responsibility. An excellent resource describing plagiarism and how to avoid it has been prepared by TWU Librarian William Badke and is freely available for download (PPT file) or used as flash (self-running) tutorials of varying lengths from:

<http://acts.twu.ca/library/plagiarism.ppt>

<http://acts.twu.ca/library/Plagiarism.swf> (14 minute flash tutorial)

http://acts.twu.ca/library/Plagiarism_Short.swf (8 minute flash tutorial)

Equity of Access

Students with a disability who need assistance are encouraged to contact the Equity of Access Office upon admission to TWU to discuss their specific needs. All disabilities must be recently documented by an appropriately certified professional and include the educational impact of the disability along with recommended accommodations. Within the first two weeks of the semester, students must meet with their professors to agree on accommodations appropriate to each class. Students should follow the steps detailed by the Equity of Access Office outlined on the TWU website at <http://twu.ca/life/wellness/learningresources/disabilities-and-equity-of-access/steps-to-attaining-disability-services.html>.