

**SYLLABUS**  
**Birmingham Theological Seminary**  
**2200 Briarwood Way**  
**Birmingham, AL 35242**  
**205-776-5650**

Winter 2012  
AP8532 Contemporary Cults  
Professor: Rev. Clete Hux  
Class Hours: 2  
Time: Thurs. 7:30-9:30 PM

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**Course Purpose**

A theological and apologetic critique of the major pseudo-Christian cults, including Latter Day Saints, Jehovah's Witnesses, the New Age Movement, the Word-Faith Movement, Christian Science, the Baha'I faith, Unitarian Universalism, Scientology, and the Unification church.

**Course Objectives**

1. To familiarize the student with the doctrines of the major pseudo-Christian cults.
2. To provide the student with an understanding of the biblical, theological, and philosophical weaknesses of the major pseudo-Christian cults.
3. To provide the student with biblical and logical tools for critically evaluating non-Christian religions.
4. To help students dialogue apologetically and evangelistically with proponents of contemporary cults in a winsome way.

**Course Texts**

**Required Texts:**

1. Martin, Walter. *The Kingdom of the Cults*. (Ravi Zacharias, general editor) Bethany House, 2003.
2. Rhodes, Ron. *The Challenge of Cults and New Religions*. Zondervan, 2001.

**Collateral Texts:**

1. Scotland, Nigel. *The Baker Pocket Guide to New Religions*. Baker Books, 2006.
2. McDowell, Josh, compiled by Bill Wilson. *A Ready Defense*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002.

## Course Requirements

1. **Exams.** There will be two exams during the course. Each exam will consist of essay questions designed to evaluate the student's understanding of the course material and his/her ability to critically evaluate that material. Each exam is worth 100 points.
2. **Apologetic Verbatims.** Each student will write two verbatim reports of apologetic conversations he/she has with followers of non-Christian religions. Further guidelines for this assignment will be provided by your instructor. Each verbatim is worth 50 points.
3. **Write a term paper.** This should be a 10-12 page research paper on the topic of special interest related to the course. At least 5-7 reference works other than your textbooks should be included. Paper should contain: title page, table of contents, introduction, research question, discussion, conclusion and bibliography.
4. The student's final grade will be based upon the average of the total points received on the exams and verbatims.

## Grading

1. Class attendance: more than two unexcused absences drops final grade one letter grade.
2. Completion of reading and ability to participate in discussion 10% of grade.
3. Two verbatims are worth 25% each for a total of 50% of grade.
4. Research paper 20% of grade.
5. Final grade 20% of grade.

## Course Outline

January		
1/26/2012	-	Course Introduction and Syllabus
February		
2/2/2012	-	Defining Cultism Socially, Psychologically and Theologically
2/9/2012	-	Mormonism, part 1
2/16/2012	-	Mormonism, part 2
2/23/2012	-	Jehovah's Witnesses, part 1
March		
3/1/2012	-	Jehovah's Witnesses, part 2
3/8/2012	-	Mind Science Religions (Mid-term Exam)
3/15/2012	-	Spring Break (Do Not Meet)
3/22/2012	-	The New Age Movement, part 1
3/29/2012	-	The New Age Movement part 2
April		
4/5/2012	-	The Word Faith Movement, part 1
4/12/2012	-	The Word Faith Movement, part 2
4/19/2012	-	A Look at Bahi's Faith, Unitarianism, & Scientology
4/26/2012	-	Final Exam /Paper/ Apologetic Verbatims

## **BTS Format and Style Standards**

**NOTE:** *All papers must be formatted in accordance with Turabian Chicago standards including the title page. Any paper not conforming to these standards will automatically be dropped one letter grade.*

## **COURSE WORK SUBMISSION STANDARDS**

All course materials must be submitted to the professor at the end of the semester (last day of class). Thereafter, course materials may be submitted for up to six weeks after the end of the semester directly to the office of the registrar with the permission of the professor. If a student submits course materials after the end of the semester but within the six week grace period, the student's grade will be lowered by one letter grade. The course materials will not be accepted after the six week grace period and a failing grade will be posted to the student's transcript.

## **Instructional Methods and Learning Experiences**

### **The student will:**

1. Read the assigned readings in the textbooks prior to each class period and answer study questions.
2. Participate in small group discussions.
3. Take notes on lecture material presented by the instructor.
4. Interview a follower of a different faith.

## **Bibliography**

Boa, Kenneth D., and Robert M. Bowman, Jr. *Faith Has Its Reasons*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2001.

Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Apologetics*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978.

Geisler, Norman L. and Ron Rhodes. *When Cultists Ask*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1997.

Abanes, Richard. *Defending the Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1997.

Ridenour, Fritz. *So What's the Difference?*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001.

Rhodes, Ron. and Marian Bodine. *Reasoning From the Scriptures with Mormons*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1995.

Rhodes, Ron. *Reasoning From the Scriptures with Jehovah's Witnesses*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1993.

McRoberts, Kerry D. *New Age or Old Lie?*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989.

Mangalwadi, Vishal. *When the New Age Gets Old*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1992.

Bowman, Robert M. Jr. *The Word-Faith Controversy*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001.

McKeever, Bill and Eric Johnson. *Mormonism 101*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000.