



WBUonline
School of Christian Studies

UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT

Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused and distinctively Christian environment for professional success and service to God and humankind.

COURSE NUMBER & NAME:

THST/PHIL 5331 Christian Faith in a Post-Christian World

TERM & DATES:

Fall 2 2025 Oct 13—Dec 13, 2025

INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. J. M. Givens Jr.

Professor of Theological Studies

Director of Online Christian Studies Programs

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Office phone: 806.291.1166 (assistant 806.291.1160)

WBU Email: jgivens@wbu.edu

Mobile phone: 806.292.3957 (please reserve for emergencies)

OFFICE HOURS, BUILDING & LOCATION:

Flores Bible Building office suite

Office Hours will be posted in the Instructor Info section of Blackboard

COURSE MEETING TIME & LOCATION:

Asynchronous interaction with specific deadlines managed through [Blackboard](#)

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

Critical analysis of contemporary intellectual challenges and concerns—such as the existence of God, the relation of faith and science, the problem of evil and suffering, miracles and the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus, and religious pluralism—and appropriate Christian responses that engage these issues in a biblically and theologically responsible manner.

PREREQUISITE:

None, though THST5302, THST5303, and/or THST5304 would be helpful.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND RESOURCE MATERIAL:

| Title | Editor/Author | Publisher | Year | ISBN |
|---|--------------------|-----------|------|---------------|
| <i>Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World's Largest Religion</i> | Rebecca McLaughlin | Crossway | 2019 | 9781433564239 |

| | | | | |
|---|--|-------|------|---------------|
| <i>Narrative Apologetics: Sharing the Relevance, Joy, and Wonder of the Christian Faith</i> | Alister E. McGrath | Baker | 2019 | 9780801075773 |
| Bible | Any modern translation recognized by mainstream Christianity | | | |

NOTE: There is an Automatic eBook already in the Blackboard classroom – click on the menu link for information. Should you wish to purchase a print copy remember to opt out by the date listed in Blackboard.

IN ADDITION, GRADUATE STUDENTS WILL DO A BOOK REVIEW. Texts are listed in the detailed course requirements in Blackboard under Course Info. Once selected, YOU EITHER NEED TO PURCHASE THE TEXT FROM YOUR BOOKSELLER OF CHOICE OR SECURE FROM WBU LIBRARY.

- **INTERNET EQUIPPED COMPUTER**

1. Must conform to [minimum recommended settings](#) identified by WBUonline
2. Should use compatible browser and have [correct settings](#) as recommended by Blackboard
3. Must utilize WBU [student email account](#) for official university communications

- **WBU BLACKBOARD COURSE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE**

1. All assignments and other class issues will be available through [Blackboard](#).
2. WBUonline technical support can assist you with log in issues, such as username and password.
3. Contact to technical support is available on the login page of Blackboard. Support is 24/7 support by phone and available also by chat or creating a case.

- **WBU MABEE LEARNING RESOURCES CENTER**

1. Use the [LRC website](#) to search for book (sent via priority mail), articles, online articles and e-books, and other resources.
2. The website also has tutorials for using their services.
3. [Email](#) the Distance Learning Librarian with questions on LRC and assistance identifying/securing resources for papers.

COURSE OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES:

Students will:

1. Demonstrate mastery of core contemporary intellectual challenges to Christianity and Christian responses.
2. Assess world views and their respective influences on culture.
3. Assess the Church's life in a variety of contemporary cultural settings.
4. Demonstrate graduate-level written and/or oral presentation/argumentation in the field of cultural apologetics.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:

- Attendance for online courses is defined fully in the [university catalog](#).
- Students are expected to participate in all required instructional activities in their courses.

- Student “attendance” in an online course is defined as active participation in the course as described in the course syllabus (completing weekly assignments).
- Students aware of necessary absences must inform the professor with as much advance notice as possible in order to make appropriate arrangements.
- Any student absent 25 percent or more of the online course, i.e., non-participatory during 2 or more weeks of an 8 week term, may receive an F for that course.
- Any student who has not actively participated in an online class prior to the census date for any given session is considered a “no-show” and will be administratively withdrawn from the class without record. To be counted as actively participating, it is not sufficient to log in and view the course. The student must be submitting work as described in the course syllabus.
- A student with excessive non-participation may also have a Predict Report filed with student’s WBU email and appropriate administrative personnel.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Read Wayland Baptist University’s [policy on academic integrity](#), as you will be held to it in this course. There is a no tolerance for plagiarism or academic dishonesty.

No use of any generative AI tools permitted.

1. Students are required to create and produce all work themselves or with assigned group members. Any work submitted that has used an AI generative tool like ChatGPT will be in immediate violation of the academic integrity policies for the course and WBU.
2. All assignments must be fully created, designed, and prepared by the student(s).
3. Any work that uses generative AI will be treated as plagiarism.

DISABILITY STATEMENT:

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. The Disability Services Coordinator and Academic Coach serves as the coordinator of students with disabilities and must be contacted concerning accommodation requests (office (806) 291-1057. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING CRITERIA:

1. *Blackboard Scavenger Hunt.* The hunt is designed to help familiarize you with the essential features of Blackboard. **Complete by Wednesday of Week 1 (3rd day of class). 1 point** will be deducted each day for **late submissions**.
2. *Weekly Discussion.* Student interaction through class discussion enhances learning and understanding. Discussion will be over assigned readings. Initial posts should be substantive, informative, and should enhance the learning experience for the student and colleagues, drawing on all assigned readings. Interaction is expected, so subsequent responses to student posts or to instructor inquiries, and questions to others about their

posts to gain clarity or deeper understanding will be part of the evaluation. See weekly grading rubric and the Course Info section of the course in Blackboard for detailed description of expectations.

3. *Case Study Leadership.* Each graduate student will create a case study based on a chapter in McLaughlin and lead classmates in a discussion of the case study. The chapter will be selected in consultation with the instructor during week 1. The case study should present a theoretical situation that requires other students to think about an appropriate Christian witness and should relate to the topic of the chapter. The case study leader will engage responses from the perspective of the theoretical person in the study. The intent of these studies is to allow students opportunities to think through critical yet hospitable engagement of post-Christian questions and challenges to Christian faith and to evaluate and encourage one another's responses. See weekly grading rubric and the Course Info section of the course in Blackboard for detailed description of expectations.
4. *Case Study Participation.* Students will discuss theoretical situations and the appropriate Christian witness in each situation. The intent of these studies is to allow students opportunities to think through critical yet hospitable engagement of post-Christian questions and challenges to Christian faith and to evaluate and encourage one another's responses. See weekly grading rubric and the Course Info section of the course in Blackboard for detailed description of expectations.
5. *Book Review.* Students will read a text on post-Christian (and/or post-modern) witness and/or ministry and write an 8-12 page critical review. The review should not primarily be a summary of the text but a critical evaluation of it. Some texts focus on apologetics and witness, while others focus on mission and ministry. The text must be selected in consultation with the instructor from the book review list in the required textbooks section above. Detailed instructions for the assignment will be available in the Course Info section of the course in Blackboard.
6. *Reflective Paper.* Students will write a 5-8 page reflection on the topic of Christian Faith in a Post-Christian World in place of a final examination. The goal of the assignment is to help students reflect on lessons learned throughout the course. Detailed instructions for the assignment will be available in the Course Info section of the course in Blackboard.

GRADING CRITERIA

University Grading Scale

| | |
|---|----------|
| A | 90-100 |
| B | 80-89 |
| C | 70-79 |
| D | 60-69 |
| F | below 60 |

Procedure Used for Computation of Final Grade

| | | |
|----|--------------------------------|-----|
| 1. | Scavenger Hunt..... | 5% |
| 2. | Weekly Discussion | 20% |
| 3. | Case Study Participation | 15% |
| 4. | Case Study Leadership | 25% |
| 5. | Book Review | 20% |
| 6. | Reflective Paper | 15% |

Grade Appeal Statement: “Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation. A student who believes that he or she has not been held to realistic academic standards, just evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course by using the student grade appeal process described in the Academic Catalog. Appeals may not be made for advanced placement examinations or course bypass examinations. Appeals are limited to the final course grade, which may be upheld, raised, or lowered at any stage of the appeal process. Any recommendation to lower a course grade must be submitted through the Vice President of Academic Affairs/Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee for review and approval. The Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee may instruct that the course grade be upheld, raised, or lowered to a more proper evaluation.”

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (McLaughlin readings to be determined based on case studies-week 1)

Week 1 – Introduction Narrative Apologetics

- McGrath ch 1

Week 2 – Theological Foundations of Narrative Apologetics

- McGrath ch 2
- (Possible graduate student case study from McLaughlin)

Week 3 – Practical Application of Narrative Apologetics

- McGrath ch 3
- (Possible graduate student case study from McLaughlin)

Week 4 – Biblical Narratives: Opening Windows of Perception

- McGrath ch 4
- (Possible graduate student case study from McLaughlin)

Week 5 – Strategies and Criteria for Narrative Apologetics

- McGrath, ch 5
- (Possible graduate student case study from McLaughlin)

Week 6 – The Christian Story and the Meaning of Life

- McGrath ch 6
- (Possible graduate student case study from McLaughlin)

Week 7 – Handing Over: Developing Narrative Approaches

- McGrath ch 7
- (Possible graduate student case study from McLaughlin)

Week 8 – Concluding Thoughts

- Debate Reviews due (undergraduates)
- Book Review due (graduates)
- Reflective Paper due

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

I'm a Chap who always liked to know the worst and then put the best face I can on it. So I won't deny any of what you said. But there's one thing more to be said, even so.

Suppose we have only dreamed, or made up, all those things – trees and grass and sun and moon and stars and Aslan himself. Suppose we have. Then all I can say is that, in that case, the made-up things seem a good deal more important than the real ones. Suppose this black pit of a kingdom of yours is the only world. Well, it strikes me as a pretty poor one. And that's a funny thing, when you come to think of it. We're just babies making up a game, if you're right. But four babies playing a game can make a play-world which licks your real world hollow. That's why I'm going to stand by the play-world. I'm on Aslan's side even if there isn't any Aslan to lead it. I'm going to live as like a Narnian as I can even if there isn't any Narnia. So, thanking you kindly for our supper, . . . we're leaving your court at once and setting out in the dark to spend our lives looking for the Overland. Not that our lives will be very long, I should think; but that's a small loss if the world's as dull a place as you say.

– Puddleglum to the Queen of Underland, *The Silver Chair* by C.S. Lewis

I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it but because by it, I see everything else.

– C.S. Lewis, “Is Theology Poetry?” in *The Weight of Glory*