

APOLOGETICS

CRITICAL THINKING, DEBATE, AND
EVIDENCE FOR GOD



HIGH SCHOOL COURSE

**MASTER CURRICULUM
HANDBOOK**

BOWER **BA** APOLOGETICS

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SECTION I: COURSE FRAMEWORK

1.1 Course Overview

This course provides teachers with guided instruction designed to equip students to think critically, reason logically, evaluate evidence, and communicate clearly about claims concerning God, morality, science, and history. Although the course addresses questions commonly associated with Christian apologetics, it is primarily a critical-thinking, logic, and reasoning course. Students will develop the skills to examine all claims through philosophical reasoning, historical analysis, source evaluation, and evidence-based inquiry.

The course takes a “ground-up” approach, meaning students are not required to assume a particular worldview before examining the evidence. Instead, they are encouraged to investigate competing claims, evaluate the foundations of different worldviews, and determine whether those beliefs are reasonable and logically coherent. This approach reflects the principle that no worldview should simply be assumed without first being carefully examined.

The course is designed so that students from both Christian and non-Christian backgrounds can participate meaningfully. Teachers should create an environment in which students feel comfortable asking honest questions, examining opposing viewpoints, and challenging claims respectfully. The teacher’s role is not simply to provide students with conclusions, but to guide them in identifying assumptions, evaluating sources, comparing explanations, and forming conclusions based on reason and evidence.

Through structured debates, Socratic discussions, case studies, philosophical thought experiments, and mock Q&A sessions, students practice applying these skills to complex questions. These activities help students learn how to construct logical arguments, recognize weaknesses in reasoning, respond thoughtfully to opposing perspectives, and communicate their conclusions with clarity, humility, and intellectual honesty.

1.2 What Is Apologetics and Why Teach it

The term apologetics comes from the Greek word apologia, meaning a reasoned defense or explanation. In Christian tradition, it is often connected to Peter’s instruction to be “always prepared to give a defense” for one’s hope while responding with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15). Apologetics is therefore not about hostility or proving others wrong, but about explaining beliefs clearly and responding thoughtfully to questions and objections.

Although apologetics has traditionally focused on defending Christianity, this course takes a broader, ground-up approach. Students are not required to assume Christianity—or any other worldview—is true before examining it. Instead, they learn to identify assumptions, evaluate evidence, and determine whether conclusions are logically supported. No worldview should be accepted simply because it is familiar or personally meaningful; its foundational claims should first be examined.

Paul models this approach in Acts 17. When speaking with the philosophers in Athens, he begins with their altar “to an unknown god” as a point of connection. Rather than dismissing their beliefs, he uses common ground to address deeper questions about the nature of God. His example shows the importance of understanding an audience and examining the assumptions behind a belief before presenting a conclusion.

Today, apologetics must address questions about whether God exists, whether morality is objective, whether science conflicts with faith, and whether historical and scriptural claims are credible. The goal is not to win arguments, but to pursue truth through clear thinking, evidence-based inquiry, humility, and respectful conversation.

1.3 Anchor Statement and Course Goals

Anchor Statement

Claims presented without adequate reasons or evidence do not automatically deserve acceptance. A belief worth holding should be honestly examined and able to withstand the strongest questions raised against it.

Course Goals

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Investigate major questions about God, morality, science, history, and human existence through reason and evidence.
2. Evaluate worldview assumptions, arguments, sources, and explanations using sound intellectual standards.
3. Engage differing perspectives through respectful, thoughtful, and charitable dialogue.
4. Form and communicate reasoned conclusions with clarity, humility, and intellectual honesty.

1.4 Course Philosophy & Theological Foundations

Course Philosophy

This course takes a ground-up approach to questions about God, morality, reality, the identity of Jesus, and the reliability of biblical and historical claims. Students are not required to begin with a particular worldview. Instead, they are guided to examine competing claims through reason, evidence, and critical inquiry.

No worldview should be accepted merely because it is familiar, inherited, or personally meaningful. Beliefs worth holding should be able to withstand honest questions and careful examination.

If God is the Creator and source of reality, then honest inquiry does not threaten belief in Him. Teachers should therefore encourage students to explore philosophical, scientific, and historical evidence with openness, humility, and intellectual integrity.

The classroom should provide a respectful environment in which students can ask difficult questions, express uncertainty, and consider opposing perspectives without fear of dismissal. The teacher's role is not simply to provide conclusions, but to guide students in identifying assumptions, evaluating sources, examining arguments, and explaining their reasoning clearly.

The course also examines the biblical claim that logos—reason, order, and intelligibility—is rooted in Christ:

“In the beginning was the Word (Logos).” —John 1:1

As students practice sound reasoning, they immerse themselves more deeply in the character of God as described in Scripture—the source of reason, order, and truth.

Theological Foundations

- 1. God is Truth:** In John 1:1, Christ is identified as the Word, or Logos, meaning that reason, order, intelligibility, and truth are ultimately grounded in Him. Because Christ is the foundation of truth, Christians do not need to fear honest intellectual inquiry. This does not mean that all religions lead to God, but it does support the idea that all truth ultimately leads back to God. When pursued wisely, humbly, and rationally, questions in science, history, philosophy, morality, and human purpose should not move students away from Christ, but should help them see more clearly why Christianity provides the best explanation for reality.
- 2. Humanity is Created in the Image of God:** Because people bear God's image, they are capable of reasoning, evaluating evidence, asking moral questions, and seeking truth. This ministry seeks to cultivate those God-given capacities by helping students think carefully, examine competing truth claims, and engage difficult questions with intellectual honesty and humility.
- 3. Discipleship Involves the Mind:** Scripture teaches that believers are to love God with all their heart, soul, and mind. Therefore, Christian formation is not limited to emotion, behavior, or spiritual practice alone, but also includes the way students think. This ministry supports intellectual discipleship by helping students understand what they believe, why they believe it, and how to communicate those beliefs with clarity, confidence, and grace.

1.5 Instructional Approach

This course uses inquiry, discussion, and debate to develop three core competencies: Reasoning, Investigation, and Conversation. Students learn to evaluate arguments, investigate evidence, and communicate conclusions clearly and respectfully.

Teachers guide students through Socratic questioning, collaborative discussion, structured debate, case studies, video analysis, and formative assessment. These methods encourage curiosity, intellectual honesty, confident participation, and thoughtful engagement with opposing perspectives.

The course is Innerconnected. Each unit builds upon earlier knowledge and returns to recurring questions about truth, morality, human value, evidence, and the nature of God. The Moral Argument is introduced early because questions of goodness, justice, and moral grounding shape many later discussions in philosophy, history, science, and theology.

1.6 Course Standards



Reasoning—How You Think: Students develop skills in logic, argument structure, and critical thinking. They evaluate claims, identify fallacies, and form sound conclusions.

Investigation—What You Examine: Students examine philosophical, historical, scientific, and worldview claims using consistent standards of evidence and reliability. Each unit builds on prior learning.

Conversation—How You Communicate: Students practice strategic questioning, respectful dialogue, and fair engagement with opposing views. Discussion and debate build clarity, confidence, and humility.

Reasoning (How You Think)

- 1.1 Analyze arguments and distinguish strong reasoning from weak reasoning.
- 1.2 Identify and avoid common logical fallacies in spoken and written claims.
- 1.3 Construct clear, coherent arguments using sound logic and relevant evidence.

- 1.4 Evaluate whether conclusions logically follow from the available evidence.
- 1.5 Analyze whether beliefs, arguments, and worldviews are internally consistent.
- 1.6 Accurately represent opposing viewpoints with fairness, charity, and intellectual honesty.

Investigation (What You Investigate)

- 2.1 Evaluate philosophical claims about God, truth, morality, evil, meaning, and human nature.
- 2.2 Evaluate historical claims about Jesus, the resurrection, Scripture, and the early Christian movement.
- 2.3 Evaluate scientific claims related to creation, design, miracles, human origins, and the relationship between science and faith.
- 2.4 Compare religious and worldview claims using consistent standards of evidence, logic, and intellectual honesty.
- 2.5 Assess the reliability, credibility, and relevance of sources, evidence, and testimony.

Conversation (How You Communicate)

- 3.1 Use strategic questions to clarify claims, uncover assumptions, and guide meaningful dialogue.
- 3.2 Present reasoned arguments using clear logic, relevant evidence, and effective communication.
- 3.3 Listen carefully and respond respectfully to differing viewpoints.
- 3.4 Adapt communication strategies appropriately for academic, conversational, and debate settings.

SECTION II:

COURSE STRUCTURE

2.1 Course Sequence Overview (Unit Map)

Week	Unit	Primary Standards	Primary Resources
1	Unit 1: Introduction to Apologetics and Debate	1.1 Analyze arguments and distinguish strong reasoning from weak reasoning.	Books Used For Unit: 1. Tactics - Gregory Koukl 2. I Don't have enough Faith to be an Atheist - Dr. Frank Turek Primary Instructional Materials: Course Standard - Standard PNG Unit 1 PowerPoint Slides Debate Video Time Stamps (from Youtube)
2		1.2 Identify and avoid common logical fallacies in spoken and written claims.	
3		3.1 Use strategic questions to clarify claims, uncover assumptions, and advance productive dialogue. 3.4 Adapt communication strategies appropriately for academic, conversational, and debate settings.	
4	Unit 2: The Moral Dilemma and the Problem of Evil	2.1 Evaluate philosophical claims about God, truth, morality, evil, meaning, and human nature.	Books Used For Unit: 1. Is God a Moral Monster: By Paul Copan • Book PDF 2. I Don't have enough Faith to be an Atheist: By Dr. Frank Turek 3. Mere Christianity: By C.S. Lewis 4. The Great Divorce: By C.S. Lewis Primary Instructional Materials: Course Standard - Standard PNG Unit 2 PowerPoint Slides
5		1.4 Evaluate whether conclusions logically follow from the available evidence.	
6		1.5 Analyze whether beliefs, arguments, and worldviews are internally consistent.	
7	Unit 3: Scientific Evidence for God's Existence	2.3 Evaluate scientific claims related to creation, design, miracles, human origins, and the relationship between science and faith.	Books Used For Unit: 1. I Don't have enough Faith to be an Atheist: By Dr. Frank Turek Primary Instructional Materials: Course Standard - Standard PNG Unit 3 PowerPoint Slides
8		2.5 Assess the reliability, credibility, and relevance of sources, evidence, and testimony.	
9		1.4 Evaluate whether conclusions logically	

		follow from the available evidence.	
10	<u>Unit 4:</u> The Reliability of the Bible and the Identity of Jesus Christ	2.2 Evaluate historical claims about Jesus, the resurrection, Scripture, and the early Christian movement.	Books Used For Unit: 1. I Don't have enough Faith to be an Atheist: By Dr. Frank Turek Primary Instructional Materials: Course Standard - Standard_PNG
11		2.5 Assess the reliability, credibility, and relevance of sources, evidence, and testimony.	
12		1.4 Evaluate whether conclusions logically follow from the available evidence.	
13	<u>Unit 5:</u> Worldview Analysis: Cultural Context, New Age Beliefs, and Cults	2.4 Compare religious and worldview claims using consistent standards of evidence, logic, and intellectual honesty.	Books Used For Unit: 1. I Don't have enough Faith to be an Atheist: By Dr. Frank Turek Primary Instructional Materials: Course Standard - Standard_PNG Unit 5 PowerPoint Slides Worldview Index
14		1.5 Analyze whether beliefs, arguments, and worldviews are internally consistent.	
15		1.6 Accurately represent opposing viewpoints with fairness, charity, and intellectual honesty.	
16	<u>Unit 6:</u> Debate Practice and Application	3.1 Use strategic questions to clarify claims, uncover assumptions, and guide meaningful dialogue.	Books Used For Unit: Primary Instructional Materials: Course Standard - Standard_PNG Debate Rubric
17		3.2 Present reasoned arguments using clear logic, relevant evidence, and effective	
18			

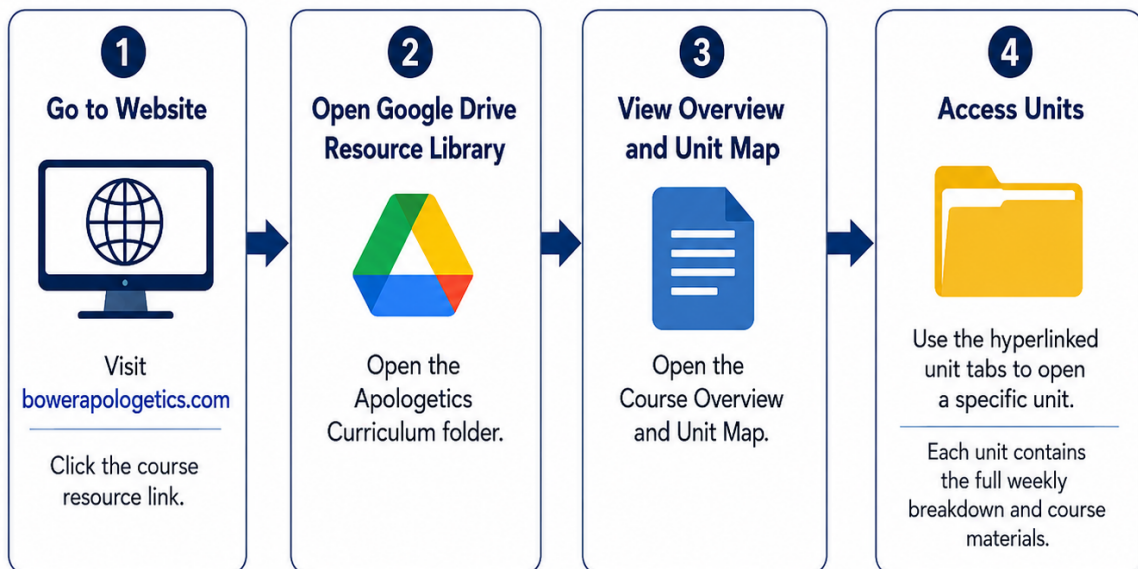
2.2 Weekly breakdown

Unit 1: Introduction to Apologetics and Debate	
Week 1	Apologetics & Meaningful Dialogue
Week 2	Critical Thinking, Logic, Arguments & Fallacies
Week 3	Apologetics in real-world conversations
Unit 2: The Moral Dilemma and the Problem of Evil	
Week 4	Examine how moral judgments are formed and whether morality is objective or relative.
Week 5	Explore the problem of evil through C. S. Lewis, including questions of heaven, hell, and salvation.
Week 6	Evaluate Old Testament moral objections and common responses.
Unit 3: Scientific Evidence for God's Existence	
Week 7	Define science and examine the relationship among cosmology, creation, and intelligent design.
Week 8	Evaluate biological complexity and naturalistic explanations for the origin of life.
Week 9	Examine the evidence, scope, and limitations of evolutionary explanations.
Unit 4: The Reliability of the Bible and the Identity of Jesus Christ	
Week 10	Examine the Bible's composition and genres, with a focus on Genesis 1–3, manuscript transmission, and historical reliability.
Week 11	Evaluate the historical evidence for the resurrection and the deity of Jesus
Week 12	Explore the formation of the biblical canon and evaluate competing canonical claims.
Unit 5: Worldview Analysis: Cultural Context, New Age Beliefs, and Cults	
Week 13	Analyze religious movements that appeal to biblical texts and terminology.
Week 14	Examine New Age beliefs and occult practices.

Week 15	Evaluate cultic claims using strategic questioning and sound reasoning.
Unit 6: Debate Practice and Application	
Week 16	Prepare arguments, evidence, and responses for teacher-selected debate topics.
Week 17	Practice rebuttal, cross-examination, and respectful engagement.
Week 18	Conduct final debates and complete reflection and self-assessment.

2.3 Accessing Course Resources (Google Drive + Handbook Integration)

Teachers can move from the handbook link to the Google Drive library, then use the Course Overview and Unit Map to access each unit's weekly materials.

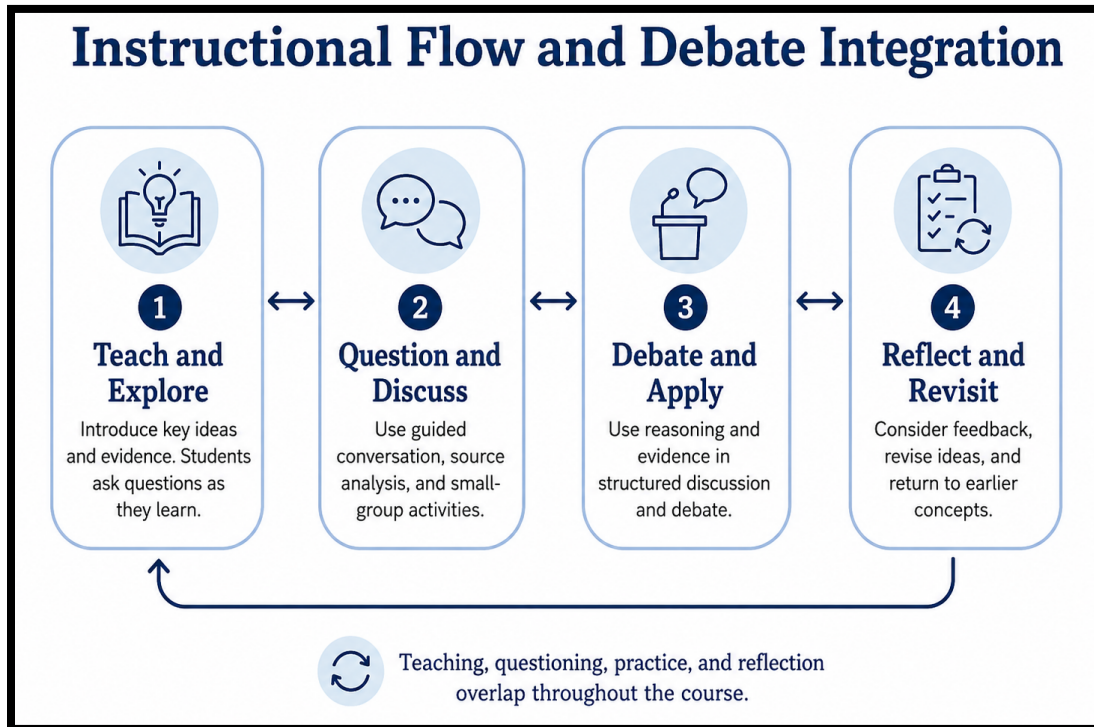


The Master Curriculum Guide serves as the instructional roadmap for the course, outlining its philosophy, standards, unit sequence, and teaching guidance. The companion Google Drive functions as the implementation library, providing editable slides, handouts, activities, assessments, rubrics, and teacher resources. Each unit in the guide corresponds to a clearly labeled Drive folder containing its weekly materials. Teachers may adapt pacing, depth, and delivery while maintaining alignment with the course goals and standards.

Some frequently used materials, such as the unit map, course standards, and debate rubrics, appear in multiple locations for convenient access. These copies remain consistent across the curriculum. Teachers should use the

guide as a reference for understanding the course framework, sequence, and expectations, while using the Google Drive to access and implement classroom materials.

2.4 Teaching Cycle and Debate Integration



This course follows a flexible, discussion-centered instructional cycle. Teaching, questioning, practice, and reflection overlap rather than occur as separate steps.

Teach and Explore: The teacher introduces key ideas, terms, arguments, and evidence through presentations, readings, examples, or videos. Students are encouraged to ask questions and discuss ideas throughout instruction.

Question and Discuss: Students practice applying what they are learning through guided conversation, source analysis, case studies, argument exercises, and small-group activities. Discussion helps students test their understanding and refine their reasoning.

Debate and Apply: Students use evidence and reasoning in Socratic seminars, philosophical chairs, fishbowl discussions, mock question-and-answer sessions, or formal debates.

Reflect and Revisit: Students consider feedback, revise their arguments, and return to earlier ideas when further instruction or discussion is needed

SECTION III: STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

3.1 How student Learning is Evaluated

Formative Assessment: Ongoing activities used during instruction to check student understanding, identify areas needing additional support, and provide feedback. Formative assessments may be graded or ungraded.

Summative Assessment: Assessments used at the end of a topic, unit, or major learning period to evaluate how independently and effectively students can apply the knowledge, skills, and course standards they have developed. (Some activities—particularly discussions, debates, and analytical exercises—may be used as either formative or summative assessments.)

Note: The following chart provides direct access to assessment activities, implementation resources, corresponding rubrics, assessment types, and participation formats.

Assessment	Implementation Support	Rubrics	Assessment Type	Participation Format
Classroom Debate/Dialogue/Discussion Debate Topics and Additional Class Discussion Strategies				
Debate Team Collaboration And Team Debate	Friday Team Debate Slides	Classroom Team Debate Rubric	Formative or Summative	Teams
Fish Bowl	Fish Bowl Discussion Teacher Guide	Classroom Dialogue and Discussion Rubric	Formative or Summative	Small Group/Whole Class
Socratic Seminar	Socratic Seminar Teaching Guide	Classroom Dialogue and Discussion Rubric	Formative or Summative	Whole Class
Philosophical Chairs	Philosophical Chairs Framework	Classroom Dialogue and Discussion Rubric	Formative or Summative	Whole Class
Mock Q & A		Classroom Dialogue and Discussion Rubric	Formative or Summative	Individual or Teams

One-Minute Response “Elevator Pitch”		Classroom Dialogue and Discussion Rubric	Formative or Summative	Individual
Barometer Activity	Barometer Video and Guide Debate Topics		Formative or Summative	Whole Class
Critical Thinking, Analysis & Reflection Activities				
Apologetics Case Study and Video Analysis	Video Analysis (Student Facing) Case Study Analysis (Student Facing)	Video/Case Study Analysis (Teacher Grading Rubric)	Formative	Individual or Teams
Theology and Culture Analysis	Theology and Cultural Analysis Guide		Summative	Individual or Teams
Journal Entries		Journal Entry Rubric	Formative	Individual
Logical Fallacy Identification	Logical Fallacy Analysis Worksheet		Formative	Individual/Teams/Classroom
Quick Rebuttal Challenge			Formative exit ticket	Individual

Think-Pair-Share			Formative and non-graded	Partners
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