CA201: 10 Reasons to Believe in the Christian Faith

An RBC Ministries Day of Discovery Study

Course Description

People have many reasons for rejecting the Christian faith. Some may admire Christ but dislike his followers. Others find it difficult to accept any faith that claims to be the only way to God. Why would anyone limit themselves to only one of the world’s great religions? If the Christian faith is the true path to God, what is the evidence for this? This course will examine the credibility of its founder, the reliability of its book, its explanation for life, its impact on society, its offer of salvation, and other topics to discover 10 Reasons to Believe in the Christian Faith.

Course Objectives

- To introduce students to the basic fundamentals of the Christian faith
- To provide scholarly and historical evidence for the validity of Christianity
- To encourage logical thinking in evaluating the authenticity of the teachings of Jesus and of the Bible

Accessibility

If you have particular accessibility needs, please contact the CUGN Registrar at the beginning of the course. This will allow us to work directly with you to make efforts to accommodate your situation and ensure as full as possible accessibility to the course.

Academic Honesty

At CUGN, we believe all we do is “as unto the Lord” and we thus hold to a high academic standard of honesty; we do not tolerate plagiarism and cheating. Students found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty face consequences ranging from interaction with the Academic Dean to expulsion from CUGN.

Quizzes and Exams: Any student found guilty of cheating on a quiz or exam will automatically receive a score of zero for that quiz or exam. A second offense will result in automatic course failure and possible disciplinary action and/or expulsion from CUGN. Please view the CUGN Academic Catalog for a full definition and examples of cheating.

Plagiarism: If a student’s work is found to be plagiarized, consequences will vary depending on the nature of the plagiarism.

View CUGN Academic Policies
www.cugn.org
If an offense is deemed unintentional, the student will have an opportunity to resubmit the work. A second offense will result in an automatic score of zero for that assignment, which may also result in failure of that course.

More serious plagiarism offenses could result in automatic course failure, disciplinary action, or expulsion from CUGN. Please view the CUGN Academic Catalog for a full definition and examples of plagiarism. If you have questions about plagiarism, or would like to request resources for learning how to avoid plagiarism, please contact our Registrar’s Office at registrar@cugn.org or toll free at (888) 487-5376 ext. 3.

Course Methods

Throughout this course, a number of methods will be used to engage the students in learning and processing information, interacting with other students, and applying the learning to their lives. These methods include the following:

Media/Materials

The course will include media presentations of lectures and supplementary materials to be viewed, listened to, and/or read throughout the ten lessons of the course. Details on these materials will follow in the Course Requirements section.

- **Video-based teaching**
  
The primary teaching session in each lesson is provided in streaming video in the Flash video format (FLV). For international or domestic students who do not have the bandwidth required to view the video (384 Kbps DSL minimum), we provide the option of listening to the teaching via audio files or reading the lesson from a transcript of the teaching video.

- **Multisensory learning**
  
  Because the primary teaching information is provided in video, audio and PDF text documents, students can choose the medium (or combination of media) that most closely aligns with their individual learning styles. Multiple options are also provided for students with auditory and visual learning challenges.

- **Readings and other media**
  
  Students should have a copy of the Bible available in order to read the Bible passages assigned in each lesson. In addition, Scripture passages are linked to online Bible tools for convenience. These online resources also provide an opportunity for students for whom English is a second language to read the Bible passages in one of numerous international translations available.

  For all other required reading assignments, CUGN provides the texts for this course in a downloadable Adobe® PDF format.

Interaction

Whether sitting in a traditional classroom or studying from a distance, students benefit from interaction and collaboration with other students. In order to meet this need in distance theological education, CUGN offers structures and resources to encourage effective community interaction in this course.
“Thinking Through” Discussion Forum

This forum fosters peer-to-peer interaction in a global, threaded discussion. Students are required to respond to relevant questions posted by the instructors; students are also encouraged to read and respond to the posts of fellow students.

Reflection

Through journaling and the use of interactive exercises, CUGN provides many opportunities for students to reflect on what they have learned, what they believe, and where they are challenged. The goal of these reflections is personal spiritual growth and transformation.

Blog

Many of the assignments ask students to record their thoughts in a course blog. Students may use a paper notebook for this, or, as an alternative, they may use the blog to record thoughts and reflections as they go through the course. Blog entries can be viewed only by the student and by the site administrator, and are not graded.

Lesson Objectives

At the end of each lesson, students should be able to accomplish the objectives listed below.

Lesson 1: The Credibility of Its Founder

- Articulate reasons for the credibility of Christ being crucial to the truth claims of the Christian faith
- Build a biblical case for Christ being the only way to God
- Explain the relationship between Christ’s claims to deity and His miraculous works

Lesson 2: The Reliability of Its Book, the Bible

- Recall how the origin and timeless relevance of the Bible support its claim to be the Word of God
- Cite key Bible texts that explain the doctrine of inspiration
- Learn key concepts of Bible content

Lesson 3: Its Explanation for Life

- Explain from the life of Solomon the concept of activity apart from a relationship with God leading to futility
- Show from David’s life how Bible and prayer orientations are necessary for a growing relationship with God
- Identify the basic questions of life and cite key Bible verses that provide answers to those questions
- Provide key biblical arguments for the existence of God

Lesson 4: Its Continuity with the Past

- Explain the importance of historic continuity in the person and work of Jesus Christ
• Summarize Stephen’s review of Jewish history as it related to Christ
• Show how Jesus is illustrated in Jewish holidays

Lesson 5: Its Foundational Claim of Resurrection
• Articulate why the resurrection of Jesus Christ is foundational to Christianity
• Recall the context and content of Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost
• Understand the role of speaker, hearer, and God in responding to the gospel message
• Cite evidence in support of Christ’s resurrection

Lesson 6: Its Power to Change Lives
• List spiritual activities in the early church in Jerusalem and explain the vital witness of those activities to the community
• Cite key Bible verses on themes of evangelism, persecution, and the Holy Spirit
• Describe the various ministries of the Holy Spirit and provide Scriptural support for each

Lesson 7: Its Analysis of Human Nature
• Demonstrate ways in which the biblical doctrine of the image of God and human depravity is the most realistic view of human nature
• Cite key biblical texts that support the concept of both the image of God in man and the depravity of man
• Build a case for saving faith as the means by which God justifies a sinner before Him
• Explain key concepts of justification and support each concept with Scripture references

Lesson 8: Its View of Human Achievement
• Give historical evidence showing that advances in technology do not necessarily result in the human race progressing to a higher moral conduct
• Provide key biblical passages that show a moral decline amidst remarkable human achievements
• Explain ways in which end time prophecies are both pessimistic and optimistic concerning the future of the human race
• Exhibit a familiarity with end time chronology

Lesson 9: Its Impact on Society
• Recall various ways Christianity has had an impact on societies
• Cite key Scripture passages that describe the spiritual and moral influence of believers
• Discuss the apostles’ view of secular government
• Show why gospel proclamation and establishment of churches is a higher priority than social action
• Distinguish the differing roles of Christian community and secular government

Lesson 10: Its Offer of Salvation
• Distinguish saving faith in Christ from the label “Christian” as may be derived from nationality, baptism,
or church attendance

• Illustrate ways in which Bible study can assist in bringing someone to faith in Christ
• Cite key Bible references concerning the spiritual security of the believer
• Explain the biblical doctrine of justification by faith and use Scripture references to support the answer

Course Requirements

In order to receive a certificate of completion and/or credit for the course, the student must complete the course requirements within a 90-day period. Those requirements include:

• Listening to (or reading) the lectures for each lesson
• Reading Bible passages as assigned for each lesson
• Completing the Bible studies as assigned for each lesson
• Completing additional topical reading assignments for each lesson
• Participating in and meeting all requirements of the discussion forum (see details below)
• Keeping a blog in response to reflection questions and Bible studies
• Taking each lesson quiz and a final examination, scoring a 70% or higher average

Additional information about these requirements is provided below.

Teaching Videos

Each of the lessons in this course contains a teaching video of approximately four to ten minutes in length. These instructional videos are required viewing, and can be watched as many times as needed. The same content is available in an audio file and a text file (PDF) for students who can benefit from these alternative media. This course includes the following teaching videos:

• The Credibility of Its Founder
• The Reliability of Its Book, the Bible
• Its Explanation for Life
• Its Continuity with the Past
• Its Foundational Claim of Resurrection
• Its Power to Change Lives
• Its Analysis of Human Nature
• Its View of Human Achievement
• Its Impact on Society
• Its Offer of Salvation

Bible Reading/Study

The Bible reading or study assignments covered in this course (found in the “Warming Up”, “Digging In”, “Going Further”, and “Final Thoughts” sections of the course) should be read completely at least once and journal responses to questions are to be recorded in the students’ blogs. Each assignment should be read in the context of the lesson that covers that particular passage or topic.
“THINKING THROUGH” DISCUSSION FORUM

Participants will interact with other students worldwide in an ongoing asynchronous threaded forum of several course topics in each lesson.

In order to get the fullest benefit from the discussion forums, students should complete the “Thinking Through” discussion forum assignments after they have completed the Teaching Video. Then they should return to the discussion forum after finishing the lesson to see how others respond. The following steps are instructions for completing the assignment:

- Enter “Thinking Through.”
- Read the instructions and click the Discussion Question.
- Share your thoughts with others.
- If there are multiple Discussion Questions, return and answer the remaining question(s).
- Take the time to read other students’ postings.

CUGN requires that students’ discussion forum posts consist of at least 2 to 3 well-developed paragraphs. Think of posts as mini-essays, where you present an idea and support that idea with details, examples, personal experiences, etc. Students are required to complete answers to all Discussion Questions in each lesson.

Objective: to develop critical thinking skills through personal interaction with the content of the course and the responses of others within a diverse community of learners.

ADDITIONAL READING

Students will be required to read supplementary materials for many of the lessons. Those materials are listed below and are provided in downloadable format in the Additional Reading section of each lesson:

- The Miracles of Jesus
- Knowing God Through the Whole Bible
- How Can I Know If There Is a God?
- The Holidays of God: Spring Feasts
- Did Christ Really Rise from the Dead?
- The Promise of the Spirit
- Accepted by God
- What Can We Know About the Endtimes?
- Church and State
- Safe and Secure

Additional study on this topic can be found in many publications including the following recommended books:

- Letters from a Skeptic, Gregory Boyd
- The Pocket Handbook of Christian Apologetics, Peter Kreeft
- Mere Christianity, C. S. Lewis
- The Helper, Catherine Marshall
- Evidence for Faith, John Warwick Montgomery
- Evidence that Demands a Verdict, Josh McDowell
• *Reason for the Hope Within*, Michael Murray, ed
• *Faith and Reason*, Ronald Nash
• *Protestant Christian Evidences*, Bernard Ramm
• *Basic Christianity*, John R. W. Stott
• *The Case for Faith*, Lee Strobel
• *Can Man Live Without God?*, Ravi Zacharias

**Glossary**
Throughout the course, students will find glossary terms highlighted with hyperlink connections to explanations and definitions. Students should become familiar with these words and their meanings as a requirement of this coursework.

**Quizzes and Exams**
The quizzes and exams will cover the material from the recorded lectures, Bible reading, other reading, and the presentations. The Bible reading and textbooks should be read in accordance with the schedule of lectures as outlined in this syllabus (i.e., assigned chapters and pages should be read along with listening to each lecture).

**Course Grading and Requirements**

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<tr>
<th>Quizzes</th>
<th>40% of Course Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>60% of Course Grade</td>
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**Other Course Requirements**
Course requirements noted in this syllabus will be validated before credit is awarded to any student.

**ACSI/Single Course Requirements**
If you are taking this course for Continuing Education Units (CEUs), or as a single course and would like a Certificate of Completion, course requirements noted in this syllabus will be validated before a Certificate of Completion is awarded.

**Notes Regarding This Syllabus**
This syllabus is designed to provide learners with an overview of the course. Specific assignments are contained in each lesson.

Individuals taking the class for academic credit are responsible for the syllabus requirements of the specific institution through which the course is offered. Each individual institution has reserved the right to add additional reading requirements and to alter the syllabus to meet their accreditation requirements. Students seeking academic credit should check with their academic institution for details.