

Apologetics in A Secular World

Preview Sheet and Homework

Apologetics is not about winning arguments or being right. Apologetics is about evangelization- the engaging and accompanying people through faith and reason to a deeper intimacy and friendship with Jesus Christ.

In our class we will identify and critique frequently encountered objections and challenges, both historical and contemporary, that have been brought against the Catholic Christian faith. Basic skills will be employed to communicate the faith in a respectful, persuasive, intellectually responsible, and culturally relevant way.

This course surveys basic issues in apologetics (brought forth by students) relationship between faith and reason. The student will be exposed to major worldviews today and will consider responses to modern apologetic challenges to Christianity, such as postmodernism, and religious pluralism. Cutting edge research will be introduced to explain and describe our current secular world.

Apologetics focuses on engaging culture using eternal truths. Students will learn why it is important to engage with the culture and how we can do so in a Christ-like manner. Students by the end of the class will be more at ease to engage people who believe differently and still show the love of God.

Homework: due one month after the class-

Elevator Speech Exercise

In business and human resources, an elevator speech is a clear, brief message or “commercial” about you. It communicates who you are, what you are looking for and how you can benefit a company or organization. It is typically about 30 seconds, the time it takes people to ride from the top to the bottom of a building in an elevator. (The idea behind having an elevator speech is that you are prepared to share this information with anyone, at any time, even in an elevator.) The important thing is to practice it out loud. You want it to sound natural. Get comfortable with what you have to say so you can breeze through it when the time comes. This elevator speech is approximately 80 to 90 words or 8 to 10 sentences.

Let us translate this into an apologetics format: Pick any topic you wish (EXCEPT THE “GO TO MASS” ARGUMENT) that is commonly misunderstood by Catholics and the culture at large. Write 8-10 sentences of your elevator speech. Focus on the “why” you believe, not the “what” you believe. People will always be sold on your why, not your what!

About your facilitator: email: mattschwartz3178@gmail.com

Matt Schwartz is a consultant and coach for Parish Success Group. In over 20 years of ministry Matt has served in locally and nationally in secondary and higher education, diocesan religious education and youth ministry, parish pastoral ministry and high school athletics. He also teaches in Diaconate Formation classes.

Matt and his wife Julie have been married for 22 years and have three teenagers- Lucy, Michael and Dominic. They are parishioners at Holy Family Catholic Church in Rockford, IL.