

# *THINK THEISM*

Welcome to Ratio Christi



at Texas A&M

# Welcome!

Ratio Christi, meaning “reason for Christ” in Latin, serves to defend the Christian faith in honest dialogue with both our skeptical & believing friends.

**Weekly Meetings: Thursday @ 7:30pm**

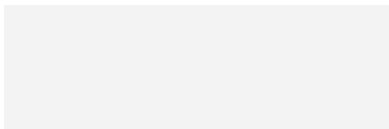
**in person + via ZOOM**

RC-TAMU.org



RATIO CHRISTI

Last Semester....



## Fall 2020: Confronting Old Testament Controversy

### How well do you know your Old Testament?

This fall Ratio Christi at Texas A&M is *Confronting Old Testament Controversy*.

Despite being the majority of the Bible, the Old Testament remains a difficult and sometime perplexing group of writings. With ancient laws, long histories, and confusing prophecies, we are often left wondering... *what do we do with the Old Testament?* Each week we will look at the toughest questions surrounding the Hebrew Bible:

- Is the God of the Old Testament evil?
- Did the Exodus really happen? If so, when?
- Were the Israelites polytheists?
- Did Moses write the Torah?

Join us each **Thursday at 7:30pm** to learn a little bit more about the old testament.



The image features a dark, starry background. A large, glowing yellow arc, resembling a rising sun or moon, spans across the upper half of the frame. At the bottom, there is a jagged, wireframe landscape rendered in a vibrant purple color. The text is centered within the yellow arc.

# SPRING 2021

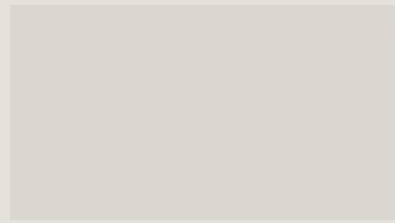
NATURAL THEOLOGY AND THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY



THINK  
THEISM

# Brought to you by RC-TAMU

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Think Theism lectures are supported by Ratio Christi @ Texas A&M, but the opinions represented herein do not necessarily reflect the beliefs or values of Ratio Christi. This content is presented to encourage discussion and critical thought about challenging questions.



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CHRISTI

# Communication Breakdown

You're just a Christian because  
of where you were born

You're just an atheist  
because you want to sin

Alvin the Atheist

Carol the Christian

**Commentary:** Alvin and Carol are psychoanalyzing each other instead of having a good-faith discussion about their respective (dis)beliefs.

# Communication Breakdown

Why should I think any of what you're saying is true?

Alvin the Atheist



When I was 18 years old, I had made a mess of my life. I had nowhere to turn but to Jesus. I gave my life to Christ...

Carol the Christian



**Commentary:** Alvin and Carol are not having the same conversation. Alvin is asking about the propositional claims of Christianity and why he should be a Christian. By giving her personal testimony, Carol isn't engaging in that discussion, making Alvin feel disrespected and possibly thinking ill of Carol. "Why should I believe Christianity?" and "Why do you believe Christianity?" are not the same question.



# Communication Breakdown

Why should I think any of what you're saying is true?

If the sun was closer to earth, we'd burn up and Josephus proves Jesus.

Alvin the Atheist

Carol the Christian

**Commentary:** Alvin and Carol are having the same conversation now, but Carol has only half-remembered arguments.

# Communication Breakdown

Darwin proved Genesis is fake. Therefore, no Jesus.

Why do you think Christianity is false?

Alvin the Atheist

Carol the Christian

**Commentary:** Alvin and Carol are having the same conversation now, but now Alvin has only half-remembered arguments.



**How can we have a better  
conversation?**

# Goals of this Semester

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## 1. Good Faith

- a. Seriously engage with each other in good faith conversation with each other, irrespective of background or belief.

## 2. Good Content

- a. Seriously engage with the better arguments on all sides of the debate.



# Methodology: How Should Carol Respond?

Why should I think any of what you're saying is true?

Alvin the Atheist



Carol the Christian



"In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always **being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you**; yet do it with gentleness and respect" - 1 Pt. 3:15

# How to Approach the Defense of the Faith

## Presuppositional

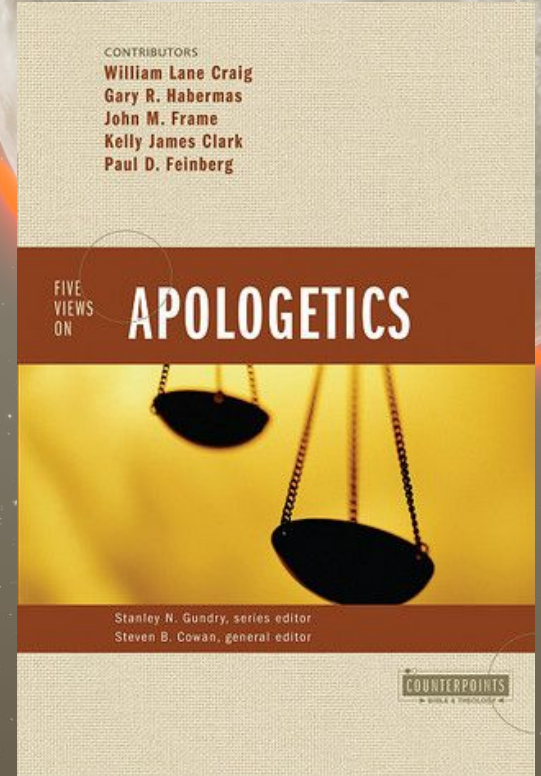
Presuppositionalism asserts that reasoning does not take place in a vacuum; rather, a person's reasoning is colored by their presuppositions or assumptions—the lenses through which they see the world.

## Reformed Epistemology

Christian Belief can be warranted independent of evidence but not in contradiction to evidence. (We will return to this topic at the end of the semester).

## Evidential

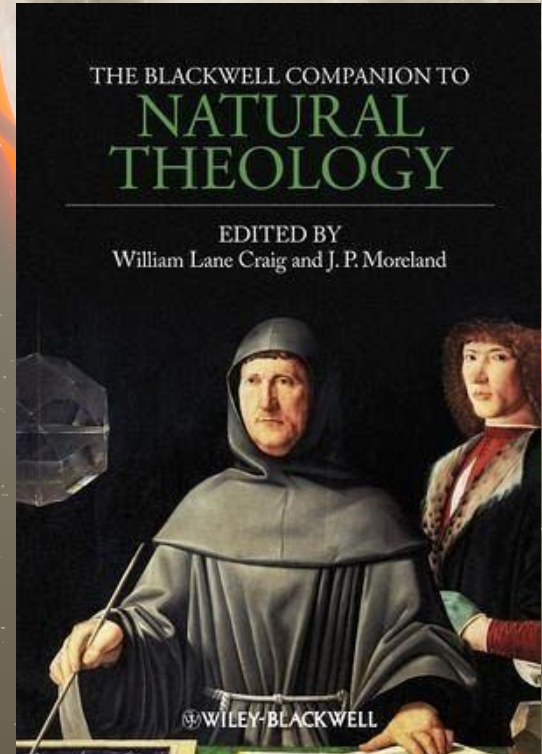
"One-step" argument that establishes the existence of God and truth of Christianity.



# Natural Theology

Natural theology is the practice of philosophically reflecting on the existence and nature of God independent of real or apparent divine revelation or scripture. Traditionally, natural theology involves weighing arguments for and against God's existence, and it is contrasted with revealed theology, which may be carried out within the context of ostensible revelation or scripture. For example, revealed theology may take as authoritative certain New Testament claims about Jesus and then construct a philosophical or theological model for understanding how Jesus may be human and divine. Natural theology, on the other hand, develops arguments about God based on the existence of the cosmos, the very concept of God, and different views of the nature of the cosmos, such as its ostensible order and value.

- Charles Taliaferro, *Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*



# Our Approach

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**Classical Apologetics:** Using the arguments of Natural Theology to establish the truth of general theism, then supplementing with evidential arguments to identify the God of Christianity.

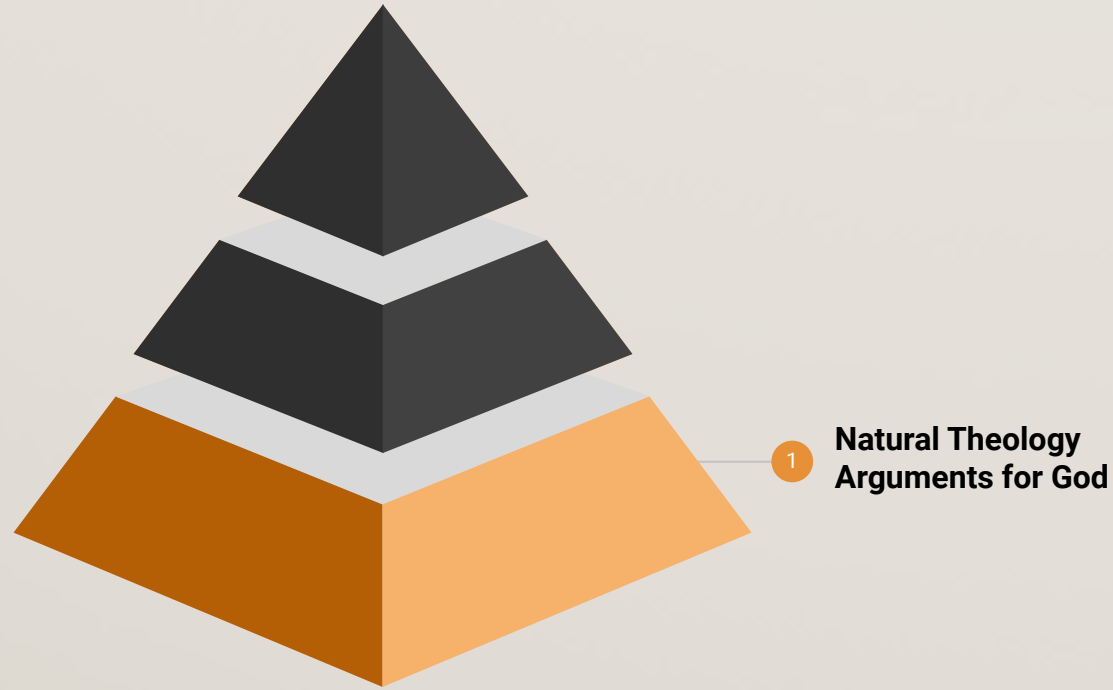
(At the end of the semester, we will discuss Reformed Epistemology).





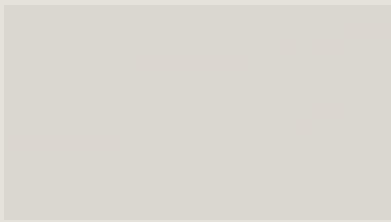
# The Structure of Classical Apologetics

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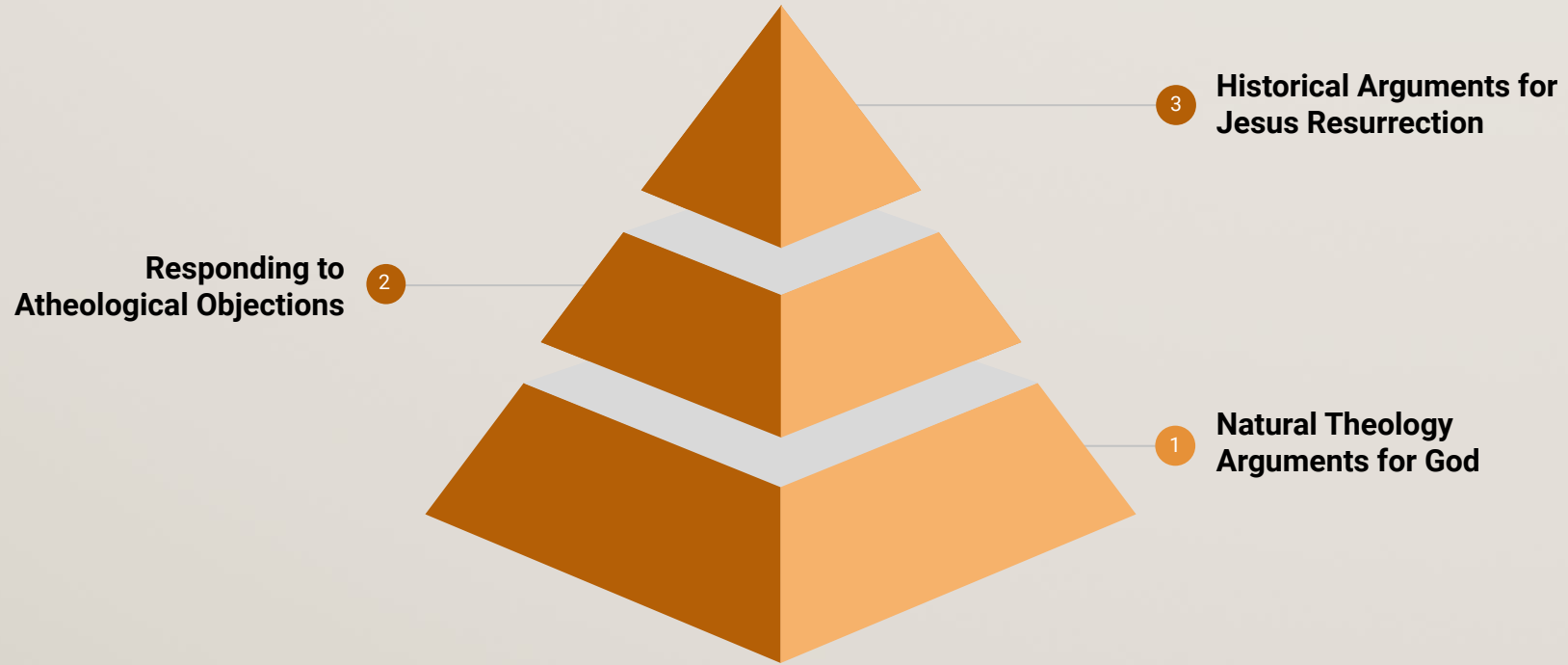
# The Structure of Classical Apologetics

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# The Structure of Classical Apologetics

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# Spring 2021: Cosmic Questions

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**The Cosmological Arguments:** Does the Big Bang prove a First Cause? (Feb 4)

**The Design Arguments:** Does cosmic fine-tuning provide evidence of a Designer? (Feb 11)

**The Moral Arguments:** Does the moral law require a moral Lawgiver? (Feb 25)

**The Problems of Evil:** Does evil prove there is no God? (Mar 4, Mar 11)

**The Historical Arguments for Christianity:** Did Jesus exist and rise from the dead? (Mar 25, Apr 1, Apr 8)



# Connect

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