

Christianity and the Sciences THEO6309/PHIL6311

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Defend Christian Apologetics Conference

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Seminary Mission Statement

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Core Values Focus

The course will address primarily the core value of *Doctrinal Integrity*. Reflection on the philosophical issues is intimately related to reflection on the nature of God, Scripture, Christian faith, evangelism, and the doctrine of Creation. For the Christian, philosophy is ultimately a matter of loving God with the mind (Matthew 22:37-40).

Course Description

This course is a study of the relationship between Christianity and the natural, social, and mathematical sciences. It will survey the history of the relationship between Christianity and the sciences, with a critique of the “warfare metaphor.” Special attention will be given to the creation/evolution debate and the age of the earth debate. The question of the possibility of a natural theology will be addressed, with an assessment of the various approaches.

Objectives

1. Students will read broadly on the relationship between Christianity and the Sciences as understood and studied in contemporary theology and philosophy of religion.
2. Students will become familiar with issues related to the relationship between Christianity and the Sciences.
3. Students will demonstrate basic understanding of an issue related to the relationship between Christianity and the Sciences.
4. Students will research, summarize, and critique a contemporary philosopher or theologian related to his or her views concerning the relationship between Christianity and the Sciences.

Required Texts

Students are required to read the following books:

Richard F. Carlson, *Science and Christianity: Four Views*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000.

Ken Keathley, J. B. Stump, and Joe Aguirre, with *Old Earth or Evolutionary Creation? Discussing Origins with Reasons to Believe and Biologos*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2017.

Pearcey, Nancy R. and Charles B. Thaxton. *The Soul of Science: Christian Faith and Natural Philosophy*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1994.

Course Requirements

All assignments may be submitted via by email. A Blackboard course shell is going to be utilized for class communications, so please sign up for it. A copy of Dr. Lemke's notebook *A Christian Philosophy of Science* is available in the Blackboard shell, which may be helpful in note taking or for reference.

1. Lecture Attendance, 50 points. Students are required to attend all plenary sessions of the Defend Christian Apologetics conference, as well as one breakout presentation for each breakout session, and listen to audio recordings of all breakout sessions they cannot physically attend. Students must affirm that they have completed this. As evidence of this, students should write up **one page summaries** of the five sessions they found most helpful. Summaries may be submitted via email. **Summaries are due 2 weeks after the conclusion of the Defend Conference (Friday, January 25th, February 8th, 2019).**

2. Assessment of the Texts, 150 points (50 points each). If possible, it would be helpful if the students could read at least some of the texts before the Defend Conference, but if not they all should be completed within the first month after the Defend Conference. Students should submit a **4 page, double spaced** review of each book, assessing its strengths and weaknesses. **The assessments are due 4 weeks after the conclusion of the Defend Conference (Friday, February 8th, 2019).**

3. Book Reviews, 100 points (50 points each). Each student is required to review **2** of the following books:

Stephen M. Barr, *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith*. Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 2003.

- Michael J. Behe, *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*. New York: The Free Press, 1996.
- _____, *The Edge of Evolution: The Search for the Limits of Darwinism*. New York: Free Press, 2007.
- Colin Brown, *Miracles and the Critical Mind*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984.
- Philip Clayton, *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*. New York: Free Press, 2006.
- Paul Copan and William Lane Craig, *Creation Out of Nothing: A Biblical, Philosophical, and Scientific Exploration*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.
- William A. Dembski, *The Design Revolution: Answering the Toughest Questions about Intelligent Design*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2004.
- Daniel C. Dennett and Alvin Plantinga, *Science and Religion: Are They Compatible?* New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say about Human Origins*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2012.
- Darrel R. Falk, *Coming to Peace with Science: Bridging the Worlds between Faith and Biology*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004.
- Gary B. Ferngren, *Science and Religion: A Historical Introduction*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.
- Karl W. Giberson and Francis S. Collins, *The Language of Science and Faith: Straight Answers to Genuine Questions*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011.
- Deborah B. Haarsma and Loren D. Haarsma, *Origins: Christian Perspectives on Creation, Evolution, and Intelligent Design*. Grand Rapids: Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2001.
- Ken Ham, Hugh Ross, Deborah B. Haarsma, and Stephen C. Meyer. Four Views of Creation, Evolution, and Intelligent Design. Counterpoints: The Bible and Theology series, ed. Stanley N. Gundry and J. B. Stump. Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2017.
- Ken Keathley, and Mark Rooker, *40 Questions about Creation and Evolution*. Nashville: Kregel, 2014.
- John C. Lennox, *God and Stephen Hawking: Whose Design Is It Anyway?*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011. Oxford: Lion, 2011.
- _____, *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* Oxford: Lion, 2009.

_____, *Seven Days That Divide the World: The Beginning According to Genesis and Science*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.

Henry M. Morris, *Scientific Creationism*. Green Forest, AR: Master, 1974.

_____, *The Genesis Flood: The Genesis Flood and Its Scientific Implications*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2011.

Ronald Numbers, *The Creationists: From Scientific Creationism to Intelligent Design, Expanded Edition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Jay Wesley Richards, *God and Evolution*. Seattle: Discovery Institute, 2010.

Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos: How the Greatest Scientific Discoveries of the Century Reveal God*. Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1993.

_____, *Creation and Time: A Biblical and Scientific Perspective on the Creation-Date Controversy*. Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1994.

_____, *Beyond The Cosmos: What Recent Discoveries in Astrophysics Reveal about the Glory and Love of God*. Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1996.

_____, *A Matter of Days: Resolving a Creation Controversy*. Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2004.

Robert J. Spitzer, *New Proofs for the Existence of God: Contributions of Contemporary Physics and Philosophy*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.

Robert B. Stewart, ed., *Intelligent Design: William A. Dembski and Michael Ruse in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007.

Charles M. Wynn, *The Five Biggest Ideas in Science*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 1994.

Reviews should include: (1) some professional biographical data concerning the author; (2) an identification of the major elements of content; (3) an assessment of the author's aim or purpose and of the degree of its fulfillment; and (4) a critical evaluation of the book. The reviews should follow Turabian form. Book Reviews should be 5-7 double-spaced pages in length. **The first book review is due 6 weeks after the final day of the Defend Apologetics Conference (Friday, February 22, 2019), and the second book review is due 8 weeks after the Defend Conference (Friday, March 8th, 2019).**

4. Apologetics Research Paper, 100 points. Each student is required to submit a research paper on a topic related to Christian and the Sciences. A list of possible topics is included in this syllabus. Topics on the list do not need to be approved by the professor. Topics not on the list do need to be approved by the professor. The paper should be not less than 5,000 words nor more than 7,000 words in length (double spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font). Papers must adhere to the Turabian style guide. **Research papers are due 10 weeks after the final day of the Defend the Faith Apologetics Conference (Friday, March 22, 2019).**

Grading

Grades will be assigned on the basis of the NOBTS grading scale: 93-100, A; 85-92, B; 77-84, C; 70-76, D; 0-69, F.

The required texts are available for purchase through the LifeWay Seminary bookstore. All texts are presently available online as well.

Possible Christianity and the Sciences Paper Topics

Individuals

Charles Darwin

Albert Einstein

Daniel Dennett

Richard Dawkins

Alvin Plantinga

Stephen Hawking

Ian Barbour

Robert John Russell

Ted Peters

William Dembski

Michael Behe

Francis Collins

Henry Morris

Isaac Newton

Nicholas Copernicus

Galileo Galilei

Alister McGrath

Michael Ruse

E. O. Wilson

Stephen Jay Gould

J. P. Moreland

Thomas Kuhn

Karl Popper

Nancey Murphy

Ken Ham

Owen Gingerich

Alfred North Whitehead

John Polkinghorne

Barbara Forrest

Hugh Ross

John Lennox

Frank Tipler

John Leslie

Robin Collins

Keith Ward

Paul Davies

William Lane Craig

Duane Gish

Stanley Jaki

Robert Jastrow

Philip Johnson

Paul Kurtz

Del Ratzsch

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Kurt Wise

J. Wentzel van Huyssteen

Topics

The Age of the Earth

Theistic Evolution
Progressive Creationism
Animal Death and an Old Earth
The Historical Adam
Monogenesis: Its Difficulties and Theological Significance
Intelligent Design
Anthropic Cosmological Fine Tuning
The Fossil Record: Evidence For or Against Evolution?
The Multiverse: Explanation or Desperation?
The Genesis Flood: Local or Universal?
Genesis and Genealogies
The Relationship of Genesis 1 to Genesis 2
The Days of Genesis 1
Was There a Historical Adam?
Who Was Adam?
Stem Cell Research
Christianity and Genetics
The Problem of Naïve Realism and Subjectivity in Science
Critical Realism
Instrumentalism and the Postmodern Approach to Science
Miracles and Science

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