

Name: _____
Course: 28960 Christian Doctrine and the Natural Sciences
Instructor: William A. Dembski

Date & Time: 10/5/05, 2:30-1:20pm
Room: Norton 11

MIDTERM EXAM

Please answer the following questions in the space allotted—do not write outside the given borders. Answer all the parts of each question. Be concise. Write legibly. Good luck.

**Identify the person who matches the description;
give first name where applicable [1 point each]:**

The author of <i>On the Origin of Species</i> .
The philosopher to whom Ben Wiker attributes the rise of materialism.
The most famous scientist currently living (hint: uses a voice synthesizer).
A Nobel laureate physicist at the University of Texas who sees science's most important task as the eradication of religion.
The biologist who originated the phrase "the blind watchmaker."
The greatest scientist of all time.
Author of <i>The Prince</i> .
The Roman poet who made Epicurus come alive.
The scholastic philosopher/theologian who championed nominalism.
The philosopher who wanted to rationalize religion, dividing the world into the moronic masses who believed things like miracles and other superstitious aspects of religion and, on the other hand, the smart people, like himself, who dispensed with superstitious nonsense.

Define the following terms and briefly note their significance [3 points each]:

naturalism

theistic realism

nominalism

common descent

natural selection

Big Bang

intelligent design

natural law

blind watchmaker thesis

Epicureanism

Answer the following questions [10 points each]:

Briefly outline Darwin's theory of evolution? What are some of the scientific problems with this theory? Is this theory reconcilable with Christian theism?

Describe the significance of Isaac Newton in the rise of modern materialism? How did his mechanistic conception of the universe still allow for God to be a creator, designer, and mechanic? How did these roles eventually get displaced, so that modern scientists now regard God as irrelevant to scientific inquiry?

How did Epicurus arrive at his materialist philosophy? In particular, what two concerns/worries caused him to dispense with the gods? Was Epicurus a hedonist? Explain. Why has Epicurus's materialism led to hedonism?

Why do you think that most of the contemporary Christian scientists whom Henry Schaefer mentions in his book *Science and Christianity* are theistic evolutionists and resist intelligent design? How do they make their peace with evolution and their Christian faith?

Answer the following question [20 points]:

Alvin Plantinga once remarked that if naturalism/materialism is true, then Darwinian evolution is “the only game in town.” Evaluate the truth of and underlying reasons for this claim in light of Epicurus’s and Lucretius’s views on evolution.

Extra credit question [10 points]:

Phillip Johnson uses “modernism” as a shorthand for scientific and liberal naturalism. What are the five reasons that, according to Johnson, advocates of modernist naturalism can (and do) give to justify their right to rule?