

# SOUTHWESTERN

BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*What you believe to be true will control you whether it's true or not.*  
—Jeremy LaBorde

**Course Title:** PHILO 4483; Christian Faith and Science

**Class Dates, Time, and Term:** Monday mornings, 8:00-10:45am, Spring 2010

**Room:** F-17

**Professor:** William A. Dembski (F-215D, 817-923-1921 x4435)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION** A study of the relationship between faith and science, with special attention to issues relevant to Christian truth claims (e.g., the creation/evolution debate, the fine-tuning of the universe for human life). Prerequisite: PHILO 4313 or 4373. Three hours.

**COURSE GOALS** This course will help students to reflect with theological accuracy, philosophical precision, and cultural sensitivity on the relation between science and Christian faith.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES** In this course the student will:

- Understand the main strategies for relating science and the Christian faith.
- Be able to summarize the main scientific challenges to the Christian faith.
- Learn to write critical reviews appropriate to the debate between science and religion.

## COURSE TEXTS

### Required

- [F-V] Antony Flew and Roy Varghese, *There Is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind* (New York: HarperOne, 2007).
- [BW] Benjamin Wiker, *Moral Darwinism: How We Became Hedonists* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2002).
- [JL] John C. Lennox, *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2007).
- [FC] Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (New York: Free Press, 2006).
- [WmD] William A. Dembski, *The End of Christianity: Finding a Good God in an Evil World* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2009).
- [B-O] Mario Beauregard and Denyse O'Leary, *The Spiritual Brain: A Neuroscientist's Case of the Existence of the Soul* (New York: HarperOne, 2007).

### Recommended

Richard F. Carlson, ed., *Science & Christianity: Four Views* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2000).

Stephen Jay Gould, *Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life* (New York: Ballantine, 1999).

Phillip E. Johnson, *Reason in the Balance: The Case Against Naturalism in Science, Law, and Education* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1995).

Henry F. Schaefer III, *Science and Christianity: Conflict or Coherence?* (Watkinsville, Georgia: Apollos Trust, 2003).

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

*this is a paperless course – all assignments are to be emailed to dembski.grading.1@gmail.com*

- (1) Daily précis statements — 30 percent positive. Due before each class. Précis statements include (1) single sentences summarizing each 10-page (or fewer) block from the reading, with pages summarized being clearly noted; (2) a sentence describing the most important insight you gained from the reading; (3) a sentence describing the biggest question the reading raised for you; (4) total time you spent reading the assignment.
- (2) Final exam — 30 percent positive. Due a stated number of hours after the exam is posted online. It will be posted online at <http://www.designinference.com> (under “teaching”) at the time that the final for this course is scheduled. It will appear as both a pdf and an rtf file.
- (3) 4,000-word critical review of FC — 30 percent positive. Due by last class meeting. Critical reviews, rather than merely summarize a book, analyze it critically, evaluating its arguments, assessing the degree to which it succeeds and/or fails in meeting its objectives, and exploring how it could have been made better.
- (4) 3,000-word record of interactions with contrary websites, totaling at least 10 posts and giving URLs for posts — 10 percent positive. Due by last class meeting. This is where you get to mix it up with people on the other side of the debate over faith and science. It will open your eyes.
- (5) Active class participation — up to 10 percent negative.
- (6) 200- to 300-word single-page one-sided executive summary of YOU (with clearly recognizable picture of yourself) — up to 5 percent negative if not handed in or carelessly done. Due by second class meeting.

## **WRITTEN WORK**

To improve the quality of your written work, you may wish to take advantage of Southwestern’s Writing Center — <http://www.swbts.edu/writingcenter>. Also, the critical review must follow Southwestern’s Style Manual — <http://www.swbts.edu/swstyle>.

## **GRADES**

Grades will be determined by the following scale: 100-98 (A+); 97-93 = A; 92-90 (A-); 89-88 (B+); 87-83 (B); 82-80 (B-); 79-78 (C+); 77-73 (C); 72-70 (C-); 69-68 (D+); 67-63 (D); 62-60 (D-); Below 60 = F.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Plagiarism is the misrepresentation of another's work as one's own. When the professor concludes that a student has plagiarized an assignment, the student will receive the grade of zero for the assignment, and the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs will be notified about the incident. The same actions apply to other acts of academic dishonesty such as cheating on examinations (see Ethical Conduct section in SWBTS catalog).

## **SPECIAL NEEDS**

Individuals with documented impairments who may need special circumstances for exams, classroom participation, or assignments should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester in order for special arrangements to be considered.

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

- (1) F-V, chs. 1-5
- (2) F-V, chs. 6-end
- (3) BW, chs. 1-4
- (4) BW, chs. 5-7
- (5) BW, chs. 8-end
- (6) JL, chs. 1-5
- (7) JL, chs. 6-end
- (8) FC, chs. 1-4
- (9) FC, chs. 5-end
- (10) WmD, intro., chs. 1-12
- (11) WmD, chs. 13-end
- (12) B-O, chs. 1-5
- (13) B-O, chs. 6-10

## **COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Philip Clayton, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Martin Curd & J.A. Cover, eds., *Philosophy of Science: The Central Issues* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998).

Karel Lambert, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Atascadero, Calif.: Ridgeview, 1992):

Peter Machamer and Michael Silberstein, eds., *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Science* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2003).

W. H. Newton-Smith, ed., *A Companion to the Philosophy of Science* (Oxford: Blackwell 2001):

Samir Okasha, *Philosophy of Science: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Alex Rosenberg, *Philosophy of Science: A Contemporary Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2005):

William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*, 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1979 or later).