

# 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 2012

**Room:** S-118

**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**

- (1) Daily quizzes — 30 percent positive. A two-question quiz on this week's reading will be given at the start of class and collected immediately. It is not possible to make these quizzes up. The lowest quiz for the term will be dropped.
- (2) In-class comprehensive final exam — 30 percent positive.
- (3) 3,000-word (10-page) 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. Must be submitted to Turnitin as well as to the following email address: dembski.grading.1{AT}gmail.com.
- (4) 2,000-word record of interactions with contrary websites, totaling at least 10 posts and giving URLs for posts — 10 percent positive. Due by date of final exam. This is where you get to mix it up with people on the other side over matters central to Christian faith. It will open your eyes. Email assignment to dembski.grading.1{AT}gmail.com.
- (5) Class participation, attendance, and punctuality — up to 10 percent negative. Class begins with prayer; if you are not here at the start of the prayer, you are late. Late students must provide a written statement explaining why they are late and place it on the professor's desk BEFORE taking their seat. Active class participation is expected.
- (6) 200- to 300-word single-page one-sided executive summary of YOU (with clearly recognizable picture of yourself) — up to 5 percent negative. This must be handed in to me at the second class meeting.

## **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).