

# SOUTHWESTERN

BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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

**Course Title:** PHILO 7534; Christian Faith, Knowledge, and Science  
**Class Dates and Time:** WF, 2:15 PM – 4:15 PM  
**Room:** TBA  
**Professor:** William A. Dembski

**COURSE DESCRIPTION** An examination of the key approaches to epistemology, with special reference to the knowledge of God. Modern scientific method and theory will be examined, with attention to issues which impact the Christian faith (such as cosmology, creation, and miracles). Four hours.

**COURSE GOALS** This seminar attempts to make sense of the scientific enterprise in light of the Christian Faith. Of special interest here is the use to which science has been put in undermining the Christian faith by furthering a materialistic worldview.

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

- Achieve proficiency in thinking, speaking, and writing effectively and professionally within a Christian worldview on the role of science in relation to Christian faith.
- Be able to summarize the main scientific challenges to the Christian faith.
- Achieve a basic understanding of the history and philosophy of science.

## COURSE TEXTS

### Required

- [JW] John G. West, *Darwin Day in America: How Our Politics and Culture Have Been Dehumanized in the Name of Science* (Wilmington, Del.: ISI Books, 2007).
- [GF] Gary Ferngren, *Science and Religion: A Historical Introduction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).
- [TK] Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
- [SB] Stephen M. Barr, *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003).
- [DR] Dean Radin, *The Conscious Universe* (San Francisco: Harper, 1997).
- [B-O] Mario Beauregard and Denyse O'Leary, *The Spiritual Brain: A Neuroscientist's Case for the Existence of the Soul* (New York: HarperOne, 2007).

### Recommended

William A. Dembski and Michael Ruse, *Debating Design: From Darwin to DNA* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Jeffrey M. Schwartz and Sharon Begley, *The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002).

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- (1) Active participation in class discussions — 20 percent.
- (2) 1,500- to 2,000-word critical review along with leading a class discussion based on it — 30 percent. Due at time of presentation.
- (3) 6,000- to 8,000-word research paper — 50 percent. The paper can be on a topic of your choice, but it must be relevant to this course and argue a thesis. The word count excludes notes and bibliography. The paper needs to follow a consistent style and provide full references. Due last day of class.
- (4) Single-page executive summary of YOU (with embedded picture) — minus 5 percent if not handed in. Due second week of class.

### **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) JW, chs. 1-9

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**NOTE: (1) needs to be read before the first class meeting.**

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- (2) JW, chs. 10-end
- (3) GF, chs. 1-15
- (4) GF, chs. 16-30
- (5) TK, chs. 1-8
- (6) TK, chs. 9-13 plus postscript
- (7) SB, pts 1 & 2
- (8) SB, pts. 3 & 4
- (9) SB, pt. 5 & appendices
- (10) DR, chs. 1-9
- (11) DR, chs. 10-end
- (12) B-O, chs. 1-4
- (13) B-O, chs. 5-7
- (14) B-O, chs. 8-10

## COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Hans Christian von Baeyer, *Information: The New Language of Science* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003)
- Richard F. Carlson, ed., *Science & Christianity: Four Views* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2000).
- Philip Clayton, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (New York: Free Press, 2006).
- Martin Curd & J.A. Cover, eds., *Philosophy of Science: The Central Issues* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998).
- Antony Flew and Roy Varghese, *There Is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind* (New York: HarperOne, 2007)
- Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay W. Richards, *The Privileged Planet: How Our Place in the Cosmos Is Designed for Discovery* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2004).
- 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).
- Karel Lambert, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Atascadero, Calif.: Ridgeview, 1992):
- John C. Lennox, *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2007).
- 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):
- Henry F. Schaefer III, *Science and Christianity: Conflict or Coherence?* (Watkinsville, Georgia: Apollos Trust, 2003).
- 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).
- Benjamin Wiker, *Moral Darwinism: How We Became Hedonists* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2002).
- A. N. Wilson, *God's Funeral: A Biography of Faith and Doubt in Western Civilization* (New York: Ballantine, 1999).
- Pamela R. Winnick, *A Jealous God: Science's Crusade Against Religion* (Nashville: Nelson Current, 2005).