

SOUTHWESTERN

BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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

Course Title: PHILO 7544; Intelligent Design
Class Dates, Time, and Term: Monday afternoons, 2:00-4:00pm, Spring 2011
Room: TBD
Professor: William A. Dembski (F-215D, 817-923-1921 x4435)

COURSE DESCRIPTION This seminar seeks to make sense of intelligent design in light of the Christian faith. Of special interest here are attempts to undermine the philosophical and scientific validity of intelligent design, especially as it challenges materialistic conceptions of evolution. Four hours.

COURSE GOALS This seminar helps students understand key challenges to the Christian faith posed by evolutionary theory and the scientific materialism that tends to undergird it; moreover, it explores how the intelligent design effectively counters such challenges.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES In this course the student will:

- Achieve proficiency in thinking, speaking, and writing effectively and professionally on the relation of intelligent design to the Christian faith.
- Know the main evolutionary challenges to the Christian faith as well as the most effective design-theoretic responses.
- Understand the historical backdrop for intelligent design, how materialist ideology resists its scientific acceptance, and how a richer theology of nature can incorporate it.

COURSE TEXTS

Required

- [UNCOMDISS] William A. Dembski, ed., *Uncommon Dissent: Intellectuals Who Find Darwinism Unconvincing* (Wilmington, Del.: ISI Books, 2004).
- [DESLIFE] William A. Dembski, *The Design of Life: Discovering Signs of Intelligence in Biological Systems* (Dallas: Foundation for Thought and Ethics, 2008).
- [GOD&DES] Neil A. Manson, ed., *God and Design: The Teleological Argument and Modern Science* (London: Routledge, 2003).
- [SIGCELL] Stephen C. Meyer, *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design* (New York: HarperOne, 2009).
- [GODINSCI] Bradley Monton, *Seeking God in Science: An Atheist Defends Intelligent Design* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002).
- [EVIDPOW] Thomas Dubay, *The Evidential Power of Beauty: Science and Theology Meet* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999).
- [DARWDAY] John G. West, *Darwin Day in America* (Wilmington, Del.: ISI Books, 2007).

Recommended

Michael Behe, *Darwin's Black Box* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

William A. Dembski, *The End of Christianity: Finding a Good God in an Evil World* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2009).

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

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

this is a paperless course – all assignments are to be emailed to dembski.grading.2+@gmail.com

- (1) Active participation in class discussions — 20 percent.
- (2) 2,000- to 2,500-word critical review along with leading a class discussion based on it — 30 percent. Due at time of presentation. 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
- (3) 6,000- to 8,000-word research paper — 50 percent. Due last day of class. 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.
- (4) 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 turned in. Due by 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) UNCOMDISS, all of it

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

- (2) DESLIFE, read first half
- (3) DESLIFE, read second half

- (4) GOD&DES, intro, pt. 1
- (5) GOD&DES, pts. 2, 3
- (6) GOD&DES, pt. 4
- (7) SIGCELL, prologue, chs. 1-7
- (8) SIGCELL, chs. 8-14
- (9) SIGCELL, chs. 15-20, epilogue, appendices
- (10) GODINSCI, all of it
- (11) EVIDPOW, chs. 1-9
- (12) EVIDPOW, chs. 10-16
- (13) DARWDAY, chs. 1-9
- (14) DARWDAY, chs. 10-end

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Michael Behe, *The Edge of Evolution* (New York: Free Press, 2007).

Gaymon Bennett, Martinez J. Hewlett, Ted Peters, and Robert John Russell, eds., *The Evolution of Evil* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008).

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

Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* (Bethesda, Maryland: Adler & Adler, 1985).

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* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2004).

Phillip E. Johnson, *Darwin on Trial*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1993).

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

John C. Lennox, *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2007).

Angus Menuge, *Agents Under Fire: Materialism and the Rationality of Science* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004).

Del Ratzsch, *Nature, Design, and Science: The Status of Design in Natural Science* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 2001).

Jonathan Wells, *Icons of Evolution* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2000).

Benjamin Wiker, *Moral Darwinism: How We Became Hedonists* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2002).

Thomas Woodward, *Doubts about Darwin: A History of Intelligent Design* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2003).

Matt Young and Taner Edis, eds., *Why Intelligent Design Fails: A Scientific Critique of the New Creationism* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2004).