

# Science and Religion

Spring 2018

Mondays & Thursdays, 8:50-10:20

Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts

**Instructor:** Andrej Zeman

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**Office Hours:** Monday 10:30-12:00 and Wednesdays 14:30-15:00

## Course Description:

The “Science and Religion” course will deal with the various interactions of these two areas. The material will be predominantly focused on the Western (Christian) civilization, but Eastern traditions will be considered during one week. The course will begin by introducing the so-called “conflict thesis” and will talk about the terms “science” and “religion” within their historical perspectives and contemporary research. In the following sessions, the course will start to move chronologically, with every week devoted to one common theme. Some of these will include: Christianity and science; natural theology, Copernican cosmology and Galileo, Darwin and evolution, creationism, as well as historical and contemporary atheism. The course will investigate also some current debates involving gender, environmentalism, and bioethics, and will be regularly touching on the philosophical issues involved in the debates.

It will be structured into three blocks of four weeks each. After the first and second block, a special, “experiential”, week will follow. In each of these two “experiential” weeks, there will be an excursion (on the first class in the week), followed by a special discussion with the students (on the second class in the week; see the Lesson topics below). In each block, there will be a special session: one would discuss Dan Brown’s books, one would involve a guest lecturer, and another one will discuss the TV show *Cosmos*, perhaps the best rated show on Netflix. The students might expect three things from the course: (1) to learn a lot about the interplay and influence of science and religion both in the past and present; (2) to be led not to seek easy and simple answers to the complex issues in the science-and-religion interaction; and (3) to have perhaps many of the myths and misconceptions about science and religion dispelled.

**Assessment:**

The course will have 14 weeks in 3 blocks (see Course Schedule below). The final grade will be composed of 10 short writing tasks, a presentation, and your class activity. The short tasks will ask reflective questions about the material covered on the given week, and each one will be worth up to 5%, for a total maximum of 50%. During the course of the semester, each student will be required to have two 10-minute presentations on two of the topics discussed. Thus, you will get two grades from your presentations, but only the better score will be considered towards the final grade, earning a maximum of 20%. The readings will not tend to be longer than 10-15 pages, and every other lesson material will involve watching a topical video instead.

**Grading breakdown:**

- 10 short writing tasks: 10 x 5% = up to 50%
- Grade from the better presentation: up to 25%
- Class activity: up to 25%
- Total: up to 100%

**Note:** Note well in the course schedule below the “task” column. This tells you the week by the end of which you need to submit the task. To make everything clear, the deadline is indicated in the brackets.

**Course Schedule:**

DATE	TOPIC	READ / WATCH	TASK
<b>BLOCK 1</b>			
19/2	1a: Introduction	Intro to the course	
22/2	1b: The “conflict thesis”	<b>Watch:</b> <a href="#">Brooke, Science vs Religion? The Origins of the Conflict Thesis</a>	
26/2	2a. Christianity and science in Antiquity	<b>Read:</b> Numbers, ed., <i>Galileo Goes to Jail and Other Myths about Science and Religion</i> , ch. 1. (Lindberg) <b>Optional:</b> Lindberg, Numbers,	

		eds., <i>God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter between Christianity and Science</i> , ch. 1.	
1/3	2b: Science and Religion in the Middle Ages	<b>Watch:</b> <a href="#">Hannam, Science and the Church in the Middle Ages</a> (Youtube) <b>Optional:</b> Numbers, ed., <i>Galileo Goes to Jail and Other Myths about Science and Religion</i> , ch. 2 (Shank); Grant, <i>God and Reason in the Middle Ages</i> .	<b>YES</b> (4/3)
5/3	3a: Special session 1: Dan Brown's works	<b>Watch:</b> <a href="#">Dan Brown, Will Science Kill God?</a> (Youtube) <b>Optional:</b> read his <i>The Davinci Code</i> , or <i>Origin</i> ; and/or watch the film adaptations	
8/3	3b. Alchemy, magic, and religion	<b>Watch:</b> <a href="#">Science, Magic, and Religion, Lecture 4: The Witch Craze</a> (Youtube)	<b>YES</b> (11/3)
12/3	4a. Natural Theology before Darwin	<b>Read:</b> Harrison, <i>The Cambridge Companion to Science and Religion</i> , ch. 3. <b>Optional:</b> Thompson, <i>Before Darwin: Reconciling God and Nature</i> .	
15/3	4b. Natural Theology after Darwin	<b>Watch:</b> <a href="#">Arguing God from Natural Theology?</a> and <a href="#">McGrath, Re-Imagining Nature</a> (both Youtube) <b>Optional:</b> Stump, Padgett, eds., <i>The Blackwell Companion to Science and Christianity</i> , ch. 11-15.	<b>YES</b> (18/3)
<b>5: EXPERIENTIAL WEEK (19 and 22/3)</b>			
<b>BLOCK 2</b>			
26/3 (cancel. ?)	6a: Cosmology and Copernicus	<b>Read:</b> Gingerich, <i>God's Planet</i> , ch. 1.	
29/3	6b: Galileo: Myths and history	<b>Watch:</b> <a href="#">Gingerich, The Greatest Myth in the History of Astronomy</a>	<b>YES</b>

		(Youtube) <b>Optional:</b> Numbers, ed., <i>Galileo Goes to Jail and Other Myths about Science and Religion</i> , ch. 8.	
<b>READING WEEK (2-6/4)</b>			
9/4	7a. Evolution before and after Darwin	<b>Read:</b> Scott, <i>Evolution vs. Creation</i> , ch. 4.	
12/4	7b. Creation science	<b>Watch:</b> <a href="#">Scott, Evolution vs. Creationism 101</a> <b>Optional:</b> Scott, <i>Evolution vs. Creation</i> , ch. 5.	<b>YES</b> (15/4)
16/4	8a: Special session 2: Guest		
19/4	8b: Intelligent Design	<b>Watch:</b> <a href="#">Judgment Day: Intelligent Design On Trial</a> (Youtube).	<b>YES</b> (22/4)
23/4	9a: Deism, agnosticism, and atheism	<b>Read:</b> Ferguson, <i>Faith and Its Critics</i> , ch 1.	
26/4	9b: New Atheism and Its Reactions	<b>Watch:</b> <a href="#">McGrath, New Atheism, New Apologetics</a> (Youtube) <b>Optional:</b> McGrath, <i>The Dawkins Delusion?</i> , ch. 1.; Stenger, <i>The New Atheism</i> , ch.1.	<b>YES</b> (29/4)
<b>10: EXPERIENTIAL WEEK (30/4 and 3/5)</b>			
<b>BLOCK 3</b>			
7/5	11a. Islam and science	<b>Watch:</b> <a href="#">BBC Science and Islam 1: The Language of Science</a> (Youtube) <b>Optional:</b> <a href="#">BBC Science and Islam 2: The Empire of Reason</a> and <a href="#">BBC Science and Islam 3: The Power Of Doubt</a> (both Youtube); Southgate, ed., <i>God, Cosmos, and Humanity</i> , ch. 13.	
10/5	11b. Eastern religions and science	(to be determined)	<b>YES</b> (13/5)
14/5	12a. Gender through history	<b>Read:</b> Miles, Henry, "Gender", in	

		Ferngren, (ed.), <i>Science and Religion</i> , ch. 28.	
17/5	12b. Environmentalism and religion	Livingstone, "Ecology and the Environment", in Ferngren (ed.), <i>Science and Religion</i> , ch. 27.	<b>YES</b> (20/5)
21/5	13a. Special session 3: Discussing Cosmos	<b>Watch:</b> Cosmos, episode 1 (Netflix)	
24/5	13b. Scientists and religion	<b>Watch:</b> <a href="#">Ecklund, What Scientists Think About Faith</a> (Youtube)	<b>YES</b> (27/5)
28/5	14a. Science and religion in contemporary debates	(to be determined)	
31/5	14b: Concluding reflections	<b>Optional:</b> Brooke, "Learning from the Past", in Southgate (ed.), <i>God Cosmos and Humanity</i> , ch. 3.	

## Bibliography

### Essential Reading:

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Dixon, Thomas. *Science and Religion: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Ferngren, Gary B. ed. *Science and Religion: A Historical Introduction*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.

Lindberg, David C., and Ronald L. Numbers, eds. *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter between Christianity and Science*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986.

Southgate, Christopher, ed.. *God, Humanity and the Cosmos*, 3rd edition. London: T&T Clark, 2011.

Stump, J. B., and Alan G. Padgett. *The Blackwell Companion to Science and Christianity*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2012.

### Suggested Reading:

St. Augustine, *Confessions*. R. S. Pine-Coffin, trans. New York: Penguin Books, 1961. (Or use any other good version.)

Brooke, John Hedley. *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Brooke, John Hedley, and Ronald L. Numbers. *Science and Religion Around the World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Browne, Janet. *Charles Darwin: Voyaging*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.

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John Paul II. *Fides et ratio*. Available at: [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_14091998\\_fides-et-ratio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio_en.html).

Numbers, Ronald L. *The Creationists*. New York: Knopf, 1992.

Olson, Richard G. *Science and Religion, 1450 - 1900: From Copernicus to Darwin*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2004.

Osler, Margaret. "Science and Religion in Early Modern Europe." *History of Science* 36 (1998): 91–113.

Scott, Eugenie C. *Creationism vs. Evolution: An Introduction*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004.

van Huyssteen, Wentzel, ed. *Encyclopedia of Science and Religion*. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2003.

*The Cambridge History of Science*, 7 volumes.