HSCI 3443: Science in a Religious World  
Fall 2007

Class meetings: MWF 1:30-2:20 in Physical Sciences 212

Professor: Stephen P. Weldon

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Office hours: Physical Sciences 618, Monday and Wednesday 10:00-11:00, or by appt.

Course outline:

Unit 1—Introduction: Thinking about the Main Themes (4 days): How do people commonly think about the relationship between science and religion? How have historians come to understand these relationships? In this unit, we will develop vocabulary and conceptual tools that will aid us in thinking historically about these issues.

Unit 2—God and the Natural World in Early Modern Europe (8 days): What was the dispute between Galileo and the Roman Catholic Church? Are the popular conceptions really true? How different was Protestant Europe? How did the rise of scientific thinking affect the way that people understood their relationship to the Divine? How did religious belief influence the rise of science?

Unit 3—Natural Theology, Darwinism, and Anti-Clericalism in the 19th Century (6 days): Why was Darwinism so controversial? How did the British social structure affect the reception of theories about the age of the earth and the evolution of living beings?

Unit 4—Darwin in America: Creationism, Intelligent Design, and Secular Humanism (7 days): What was the Scopes Trial all about? What is creationism and why should we consider this a modern 20th-century American phenomenon? What is secularism, and how can people consider science to be the basis for religious views?

Unit 5—Christianity and the Environment (5 days): In this section we will read two books, one by an evangelical Christian and one by a proclaimed secular humanist. Both are making an argument that ties their religious views to environmental protection and stewardship.

Unit 6—Buddhism and Modern Science in Japan, Tibet, and America (6 days): How have non-Western philosophical and religious world views encountered Western science? This unit will focus on Buddhism and Asian religious/philosophical thinking. We will look both at how Eastern religionists have met modern science and how Asian religious views have filtered into the Western religion-science dialogue.

Unit 7—Psychology and Modern Religion (6 days): How has modern psychology been connected to religion? But what theories of psychology are we talking about, and what religions? In this final unit we’ll look at several relationships involving different psychologies and Western and non-Western spiritual traditions.
Required books:


Additional readings are on the course D2L website as noted in the detailed syllabus below.

Grading:

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<tr>
<th>Individual activities</th>
<th>10 %</th>
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<tr>
<td>Daily preparedness assessment quizzes (individual score)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 instructor-graded essays, ~ 750 words each</td>
<td>20 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 student-graded essays, ~ 750 words each, S/U</td>
<td>15 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper, 1500-2000 words</td>
<td>15 %</td>
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<td>Quality of responses to peers on student-graded work</td>
<td>10 %</td>
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| Group activities (to be multiplied by group’s peer evaluation) | 10 % |
| Daily preparedness assessment quizzes (group score)          |      |
| Group projects                                              | 20 % |

Missed Classes and Assignments:

*Attendance:* If you cannot make a class, it is up to you to get notes from a fellow student in the class and talk with the me or the TA about what you missed. Attendance by itself is not graded, but failure to attend will be reflected by zeros on in-class work and poor group evaluations.

*Individual assignments:* Written assignments are expected at the beginning of class on the due date stated. If you need an extension, you must request one before the assignment is due. Late work is penalized by one grade point (i.e., from an A to a B). Work more than one week late will not be accepted.

*Reading assessment quizzes and group projects:* Missed quizzes and group projects are not made up except in specific circumstances (serious personal conflict, religious holiday, or university approved absence) and only when you've made previous arrangements with me.

Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism and cheating will be dealt with according to published university procedures. For further explanation see the page "Student Academic Integrity" on the Provost's web site, http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity/ and the discussion of the Student Code and Academic Misconduct Code on the following web page: http://www.ou.edu/studentcode/.

Students with Disabilities and Religious Holidays:

The university has specific policies regarding accommodations made for students with disabilities and students who have conflicts between course work and religious holidays. Please contact the instructor if you need such accommodations.
Finally, if you find you are having problems in the course, please let me know.