

Religion 290

Materialism: The Disenchantment of Nature

Spring 2006

Dr. Gordy

202 Comenius Hall

(610-)861-1314

mesrg01@moravian.edu

Office Hours: MTWRF 9:00-10:00 (or by appointment)

Class will convene at 10:20 each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. You should be seated and ready to begin our work together promptly at the beginning of the period. **As I am never late for class, there is no good reason for you to be late either.** Please plan accordingly. **Turn your cell phone off or, better yet, don't bring it into the classroom. There will be zero tolerance for a cell phone blowing up in the middle of class.**

GENERAL EDUCATION STATEMENT

“Courses in this category (U1) will examine the impact of selected areas of science and/or technology on contemporary society. These courses give students a chance to understand relevant scientific principle and/or technological innovations and their impact on contemporary society. Possible areas of focus include nuclear power, science and religion, evolution and creationism, the choices and trade-offs of energy production, the problems of toxic waste disposal, the economic costs of modern health care, or the impact of the Internet on journalism. Through taking courses in this category, students acquire an informed perspective on the role of science and/or technology in their lives and in society.”

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the long history of “materialism” as a philosophical, scientific, and practical/technological orientation toward “the world.” We will examine the thesis that the history of materialism as a philosophical and scientific orientation among Western societies is identical with the gradual secularization of these societies. In particular, we will attend to the irony that materialism’s roots are deep in the soil of Western religions, the very religions that are now made so anxious in the face of the sciences, technocracy, and secularized social orders.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*
Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*
Tyson and Goldsmith, *Origins: Fourteen Billion Years of Cosmic Evolution*
Renee Descartes, *Discourse On Method* and *The Meditations*
Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*
Van Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer*
Hesiod, *Theogony* and *Works and Days*
Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion*
Ernst Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress*

In addition to the books to be purchased, students will also receive handouts that are required reading for the course:

Genesis 1-11
Gospel of Mary
Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth"
Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History"

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

25 % Class presentations
25% Class participation
25% Writing assignments (in-class, and in advance of particular class meetings)
25% Final examination

COURSE OUTLINE

Jan. 16	Introduction to the course
Jan. 18	Berger 1.1
Jan. 20	Berger 1.2
Jan. 23	Berger 1.3
Jan. 25	Berger 1.4
Jan. 27	Berger 2.5
Jan. 30	Berger 2.6
Feb. 1	Berger 2.7
Feb. 3	Genesis 1-11 and Gospel of Mary (handouts)
Feb. 6	Hesiod, <i>Theogony</i>
Feb. 8	Hesiod, <i>Works and Days</i>
Feb. 10	Lecture on Augustine

Feb. 13	Boethius I-III
Feb. 15	Boethius IV-V
Feb. 17	Lecture on Anselm and Thomas
Feb. 20	Lecture on William of Ockham
Feb. 22	Descartes, <i>Discourse on Method</i> 1-3
Feb. 24	Descartes, <i>Discourse</i> 4-6
Feb. 27	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i>
Mar. 1	Lecture on Immanuel Kant
Mar. 3	Schleiermacher, 1 st Speech
Mar. 6-10	SPRING BREAK
Mar. 13	Schleiermacher, 2 nd Speech
Mar. 15	Schleiermacher, 3 rd Speech
Mar. 17	Schleiermacher, 4 th Speech
Mar. 20	Schleiermacher, 5 th Speech
Mar. 22	Lecture on Troeltsch
Mar. 24	Troeltsch, <i>Protestantism and Progress</i>
Mar. 27	Freud, I-III
Mar. 29	Freud, IV-VIII
Mar. 31	Lecture on Heidegger
Apr. 3	Heidegger, "Truth essay" (handout)
Apr. 5	Harvey, I
Apr. 7	Harvey, II-III
Apr. 10	Harvey, IV-V.1-4
Apr. 12	Tyson and Goldsmith, Part One
Apr. 14	EASTER BREAK
Apr. 17	EASTER BREAK
Apr. 19	Tyson and Goldsmith, Part Two
Apr. 21	Tyson and Goldsmith, Part Three
Apr. 24	Tyson and Goldsmith, Part Four
Apr. 26	Tyson and Goldsmith, Part Five
Apr. 28	Fukuyama, essay on "the end of history" (handout)

_____ Final examination (date and time to be determined by the Registrar)

