

Moravian College
Rel. 264: Science and Theology
Fall 2014
Dr. Falla

Class Period: MWF: 7:50-8:40 AM

Office Hours: Comenius 205, MWF 9:30-11:00; R 2:00-3:00 and by appt.

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Course Description:

This course will examine the interface between science and theology with special emphasis on the role of science within theology. This relationship will be examined from a historical as well as a contemporary perspective in an attempt to develop a model that is, in the words of Ted Peters, “healthy and life-giving” for both parties.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To understand the history of the interaction of science and theology with special emphasis on points of intersection and dissimilarity. While this discussion will involve several traditions it will focus mainly on the Judeo-Christian tradition.
- 2) To become more conversant with these disciplines and their vocabularies.
- 3) To be able to critically analyze the positions being taken and the arguments made in this debate.
- 4) To understand the ways in which this interaction has helped to shape each discipline’s content and methodology.
- 5) To understand the ramifications of this debate in the 21st Century for ourselves as individuals and as a society.
- 6) To be able to express in both written and verbal form the above enumerated objectives.

Required Texts:

Barbour, Ian, *Religion and Science*, Harper Collins, San Francisco, 1997

Gimbel Steven, *Einstein’s Jewish Science*, Johns Hopkins Univ., Baltimore, 2012

Additional Readings & Movies:

They will be available on reserve in hard copy or electronically from Reeves Library.

Evaluations

The following tools will be used for evaluation in this course:

Papers (50%): There will be four (4) 3-5 page reflection papers on questions raised by the materials under study and due on the dates indicated. All these papers will be evaluated on the basis of your understanding and analysis of the course materials and the quality of your argumentation and presentation. These will also serve as a basis for class discussion.

Credo (25%): The word “credo” means “I believe”. You will be asked to write a paper on how you reconcile your religious beliefs with your lives in the scientific-technological world in which you live. You will do so by writing four (4) 2-3 page chapters on specific content areas that are found in traditional credos. Two of these chapters will be assigned for the whole class by the instructor and the other two will be chosen by you from a list that will be provided. A schedule will also be provided with target due dates for specific tasks. Your credo will be evaluated on your understanding of the issues, the quality of your argumentation and presentation. It will not be based on the position that you take but rather how well you articulate that position.

Final Discussion (5%): Your Credo will serve as the basis for your scheduled discussion with me in which we will discuss its content. These fifteen minute discussions will be scheduled for slots during the last week of classes and exam week.

Class Participation (20%): The format for this class will be that of a seminar where both attendance and active participation form an important component of the class. Active participation means the voluntary asking of questions and involvement in class discussions.

Extra Credit: This area of study has a highly technical vocabulary. You may receive up to five (5) points added to your final grade by completing the vocabulary list consisting of words that will be given out during the class period (The word of the day).

Grading Scale:

A: 92.5 +

A-: 89.5 – 92.4

B+: 87.5 - 89.4

B: 82.5 - 87.4

B-: 79.5 – 82.4

Etc.

Honor Code and Attendance Policies

Students are expected to regularly attend class. Attendance contributes to your class participation grade and therefore is important. If you must miss class, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor and to insure that arrangements are made to make up all missed assignments or material. You are also expected to hand in all assignments on time. If you must be late with your work, you must make arrangements with the

Instructor prior to the due date. Failure to do so may result in the lowering of the grade for late submitted work.

Students have an obligation to exhibit honesty in all their work. You will be found to have violated this obligation if you plagiarize or cheat. Plagiarizing is presenting the work of others as one's own; cheating is taking, giving, or accepting illicit advantage for any course work inside or outside the classroom. Any violation will result in the lowering of your grade.

Additional Aid/Consideration

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Academic and Disability Support, Monocacy Hall, 1st floor, , or by calling 610-861-1401. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

Syllabus

Week of:

Aug. 25: Introduction and Relationship

Barbour: Chapt. 4

Sept. 1: Relationship and Method I

Barbour: Chapt.5

Reserve Reading: Hameed, Salman, "Walking the Tightrope of the Science-Religion Boundary", *Zygon*, v.47, #2, June 2012, pp. 337-42

Sept. 8: Relationship and Method II

Paper #1 Due 9/12

Barbour: Chapt. 6

Reserve Reading: "Reflections on the Distinctness of Judaism and the Sciences", *Zygon*, v.46, #2, June 2011, pp. 396-412

Sept. 15: Galileo and Theology

Barbour: pp. 4-16

Galileo's Battle for the Heavens, NOVA video

Sept. 22: Galileo and Theology **Paper #2 Due: 9/26**

Galileo: "Letter to Lady Christina", Fordham.edu/halsall/galileo-tuscany.asp

Sept. 29: Newton and Theology

Barbour: pp. 17-29

Newton's Dark Secrets, NOVA video

Oct. 6: Newton and Theology

Selected Writings (handout)

Oct. 13: Einstein and Theology **Paper #3 Due: 10/17**

Barbour: Chapt. 7

Einstein's Big Idea, NOVA video+

Oct. 20: Einstein and Theology

Gimbel: pp. 1-39

Oct. 27: Einstein and Theology

Gimbel: pp. 40- 111

Nov. 3: Einstein and Theology

Paper #4 Due: 11/5

Gimbel: pp. 112-156

Nov. 10: Philosophical and Theological Reflections

Barbour: Chapt. 8

Nov. 17: Philosophical and Theological Reflections **Credo Due: 11/21**

Barbour: Chapt. 9

Nov. 24: Philosophical and Theological Reflections

Barbour: Chapt. 10

Dec. 1: Wrap-up and Credo Discussions

Word List Due: 12/3