

## RELIGION & SCIENCE: BIOLOGY, MINDS, AND SOULS

Course Number: REL 129

Institution: Duke University, Department of Religion

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Objectives: Greetings. By way of welcome, here's a Miller Analogy to arouse your curiosity: The French, American, and Russian Revolutions are to society what those Revolutions plus the ongoing Scientific Revolution are to religion. By the end of this course, the analogy will seem less obscure. It will seem less obscure because you will have made friends with three questions: The first is philosophically descriptive. (1) How have religion and science gotten along with one another in modernity? The second is historical, critical, and analytic. (2) As constituent elements of society, how have the relations between religion and science changed over time? The third is personal, tentative, and exploratory. (3) Against the backdrop of Darwinian landscapes, how might we articulate the contemporary implications of animal science and consciousness studies for traditional theological beliefs regarding human identity and destiny? The first two questions are meant to provide the raw ingredients, both conceptual and informational, for concocting sophisticated answers to the third.

Requirements & Grading: Class-time will be devoted to a congenial blend of lecture and discussion based on the assigned readings. Active participation is encouraged. The less taciturn you are, the more lively we'll be. There are no quizzes, exams, tests, or term papers. Grades will be based on three written assignments. The first (749 words) is due on **Feb 15**, and is worth 25% of the final grade. The second (748 words) is due on **March 29**, and is worth 35% of the final grade. The third (799 words) is due on **May 3**, and is worth 40% of the final grade. Detailed instructions will be distributed well in advance of the deadlines. Indication of the topics is supplied below. You will be asked to submit the first two essays in triplicate, one for me and two for classmates who will read and offer critical comments. A brief outline of the third paper is due on April 24. Helpful feedback will be supplied. Alas, late papers will not be accepted.

### Topics, Reading Assignments, and Calendar

I. Introductions and Getting Started, Poetically: [Genesis, Shakespeare, Auden]

(Jan 11)

II. Four Case Studies

A. Sigmund Freud [*New Intro Lectures; Civ & Discontents*] (Jan 16)

- B. Ahad Ha'am ["Slavery in Freedom"] (Jan 18)
- C. Galileo ["Letter to Grand Duchess Christina"] (Jan 23)
- D. Steven J. Gould [*Rock of Ages*] (Jan 25-30)

### III. Revisiting the Case Studies, Conceptually

- A. Ian Barbour [*Religion & Science*, chp. 4] (Feb 1)

### **NO CLASS: Feb 6**

- B. Ninian Smart [*The Religious Experience*, 16pp] (Feb 8)
- C. John H. Randall [*Role of Knowledge in Western Religion*, 35pp] (Feb 13)

### **FIRST ESSAY DUE: FEB 15 [Brecht's *Galileo*]**

### IV. Historical Perspectives

- A. Barbour [*Religion & Science*, Part One] (Feb 15-20)
- B. C. S. Lewis [*The Discarded Image*] (Feb 22-27)
- C. S. Toulmin [*Cosmopolis: Hidden Agenda of Modernity*] (Feb 29-Mar 6)
- D. Hans Jonas ["Is God a Mathematician," 34 pp] and K. Thomas [*Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 48 pp] (March 8)

### **SPRING BREAK: MARCH 13-15**

### V. Three Historical Case Studies: Theism, Deism, Atheism, and Agnosticism

- A. B. Spinoza [*Theological-Political Treatise*, 3 chpts.] and A. Einstein [Selections from *Ideas and Opinions*] (Mar 20-22)
- B. Thomas Huxley [*Christianity and Agnosticism*, 85 pp] (Mar 27)

### **SECOND ESSAY DUE: MARCH 29 [Wilson's *Consilience* in Toulmin's Light]**

### VI. Contemporary Investigations: Brains, Minds, Souls

- A. Barbour [*Religion & Science*, chpts. 8-10] (March 29)

B. Premodern Traditions [selections from Joseph Albo, Moses Maimonides, Montaigne, Descartes, and William Paley (April 3-5)]

C. Gould & Gould [*Animal Minds*] (April 10)

D. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson [*When Elephants Weep*] (April 12)

E. J. Allan Hobson [*Consciousness*] (April 17)

F. Implications for Religion: Goulds, Masson, & Hobson (April 19)

VII. Further Implications, Outlines, and Farewells (April 24)

**THIRD ESSAY DUE: MAY 3 [Biology's Mind and Religion's Soul]**