

Birmingham Theological Seminary
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Spring 2009

AP 8711 CHRISTIANITY & SCIENCE

Professor: Dr. Steve Cowan

2 hours

SYLLABUS

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COURSE DESCRIPTION/PURPOSE

A study of the relationship between the Christian worldview and contemporary science. Special emphasis will be placed on constructing a sound model for relating science and theology, and on the creation-evolution debate. The purpose of the course is to provide the student with an understanding of the major philosophical issues in the philosophy of science, especially as they relate to Christian faith and doctrine. Additionally, the course will help the student develop guidelines and strategies for resolving conflicts between Christianity and Science.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. The student will be able to articulate the major issues in the philosophy of science and evaluate them from a Christian perspective.
2. The student will be able to articulate a biblically sound model for relating theology to contemporary science so as to adjudicate conflicts between them while maintaining the authority of each within its appropriate sphere.
3. The student will be able to articulate scientific evidence supportive of the Christian worldview.
4. The student will be able to understand and articulate a philosophical critique of the Darwinian theory of evolution.

COURSE TEXTS

Moreland, J.P. *Christianity and the Nature of Science* (Baker, 1989).

Carlson, Richard S., ed. *Science and Christianity: Four Views* (IVP, 2000).

Moreland, J.P., and John Mark Reynolds, eds. *Three Views on Creation and Evolution* (Zondervan, 1999).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Reading.** The reading load in this course is substantial. Therefore, in order to achieve the course objectives, it is imperative that the student keep up with the course reading assignments and come prepared each class period having read the assignment due that week.
2. **Papers.** Each student will be required to write two 10-page papers position papers. In the first position paper the student will state and defend one of the views in the Carlson text on the relationship between theology and science. In the second position paper the student will state

and defend one of the views in the Moreland/Reynolds text on the question of creation and evolution. Further instructions for these papers will be provided later by your instructor. Each paper is worth 100 points.

3. **Exam.** There will be one take-home exam in the course that covers the material in the Moreland text *Christianity and the Nature of Science*.

COURSE GRADE

The student's final grade will be based upon the average of the total points received on the two papers and the exam.

COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

Unit I: Options in Relating Christianity and Science

Date		Reading Assignment
1/25	Introduction to Course A Brief History of Science	
2/1	Scientism: Science Trumps Christianity Creationism: Theology Trumps Science Independence: Science and Theology Unrelated	SC 11-90
2/8	Independence (cont.) Qualified Agreement: Science and Theology Mutually Supportive	SC 90-169
2/15	Qualified Agreement (cont.) Partnership: Science and Theology Complementary	SC 169-274

Unit II: Philosophy of Science in Christian Perspective

2/22	What is Science? Is There a Scientific Method?	CNS 11-81
3/1	Is There a Scientific Method? (cont.) What Are the Limits of Science? FIRST POSITION PAPER DUE	CNS 81-138
3/8	Should We Be Scientific Realists?	CNS 139-194
3/22	Should We Be Scientific Realists? (cont.) Must Science Be Naturalistic?	CNS 194-250, Handout

Unit III: Creation Vs. Evolution

3/29	Video: <i>The Privileged Planet</i>	
4/5	Young Earth Creationism EXAM DUE	CE 7-102
4/12	Progressive Creationism	CE 105-158
4/19	Theistic Evolution	CE 161-247
4/26	Reflections on the Creation-Evolution Debate Some Problems with Evolution SECOND POSITION PAPER DUE 4/30	CE 251-278