



REL 4461

Topics in the Philosophy of Religion

Section: U01

In Person

Fall Term 2026

Course Meeting Information

The course meets MWF at from 11 until 11;50 a.m. in PC 449.

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description

In this course will explore the relationship between theology and science? In trying to answer this question we will explore what some theists claim is scientific evidence for the existence of God, such as intelligent design versus Darwinian evolution, cosmic fine-tuning, the Big Bang cosmology, and the evidence of Quantum Mechanics that can be interpreted as supporting an anti-materialist view of consciousness and the universe. In fairness to the truth, we will also consider counter-arguments to these arguments from both philosophers and scientists.

This course has no prerequisites.

Textbook and Course Materials

Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: Alvin Plantinga

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication Date: 2012

Copyright Date: 2012

ISBN 10: No paperback edition

ISBN 13: 9780199812097

Chapters/Pages: Required chapters appear on the syllabus below.

God in the Age of Science: A Critique of Religious Reason (Oxford university Press, 2014).

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: Herman Philipse

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication Date: 2012

Copyright Date: 2012

ISBN 10: No paperback edition

ISBN 13: 9780191505058

Chapters/Pages: Required Chapters appear on the course outline below

Panther Book Pack

Get all required course materials for \$22 per undergrad credit hour through Panther Book Pack. You'll be charged automatically unless you opt out within 3 days after the add/drop deadline.

For more details, to compare costs, and to learn how to access your course materials, visit the [Panther Book Pack information page on FIU OneStop](#).

Readings, Materials, and Open Educational Resources (OER)

Additional required readings posted on Canvas.

Course Goals

See student goals and objective below.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- 1. To enable students to engage modern science's impact on religious thought.
- 2. To acquaint students with the latest developments in science and the philosophy of science
- 3. To empower students to think critically about both science and religion.
- 4. To assess the implications of the most recent developments in science for religious thought.
- 5. To provide students with tools necessary for a critical evaluation of religious claims when confronted by the claims of science and the criticism of religion.

Expectations of the Course

1. Students will become familiar with the latest advances in science and their impact on religious thought.
2. Students will be able to critically analyze religious claims in the light of modern scientific developments.
3. Students will be able to discuss the most important issues and controversies in

the philosophy of science and religion.

4. Students will become conversant with the most important thinkers and their contribution to the philosophy of science and religion.

Assignments & Assessments

1. Class Presentation (2-page, 12 pt. font) delivered orally based on the assigned reading for the week (10% of grade).
2. Two short essays (3-4 pages) on topics distributed by the instructor, based on the assigned readings (50% of grade).
3. Four (4) Group Discussions on topics based on the readings (40% of grade).

Grading

95-100 A

91-94 A-

86-90 B+

80-85 B

75-79 C+

70-74 C

65-69 D

Schedule of Topics

WEEK 1

Syllabus and Introduction of the topics.

Thomas Aquinas's Cosmological Argument (on Canvas); William Lane Craig, "The Empirical Argument for the Caused Beginning of the Universe," 35-67, from William Lane Craig & Quentin Smith, *Theism, Atheism, and the Big Bang Cosmology* (on Canvas).

WEEK 2

Quentin Smith, "The Uncaused Beginning of the Universe," 108-140 (on Canvas).

WEEK 3

William Lane Craig, "Reply to Smith," 141-160 (on Canvas).

WEEK 4

Herman Philipse, *God in the Age of Science? A Critique of Religious Reason*, 221-255.

WEEK 5 The Fine-Tuning Argument

Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism*, 193-264; William Lane Craig & J. P. Moreland, *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*, 202-239 (on Canvas).

WEEK 6

The Teleological Argument continued: Craig & Moreland, 239-278 (on Canvas).

WEEK 7

The Design Argument, continued

Robin Collins, "The Teleological Argument: Fine-Tuning of the Universe" (on Canvas); Herman Philipse, 256-278.

WEEK 8 Darwinian Evolution

Alvin Plantinga, 3-63; Bruce Naylor & Paul Handford, "In Defense of Darwinian Evolution" (on Canvas); Michael Ruse, "Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution: An Analysis" (on Canvas).

WEEK 9 Quantum Mechanics

Plantinga, 64-125.

WEEK 10 The Problem of Evil: The Evidential Argument

Craig & Moreland, 468-494 (on Canvas); Paul Draper, "Pain and Pleasure: An Evidential Problem for Theists" (on Canvas).

WEEK 11

Paul Draper, "God and Evil: A Philosophical Inquiry" (on Canvas).

WEEK 12 Science and Morality: The Moral Argument

Hastings Rashdall, "God as necessary for an objective morality," 144-152 (on Canvas); Craig & Moreland, 391-446 (on Canvas).

WEEK 13

Craig & Moreland, 593-628 (on Canvas).

WEEK 14 Morality Without God

Michael Ruse, "Naturalist Moral Nonrealism" (Evolutionary Ethics Without God or Objectivity), in Loftin, *God & Morality*, 53-74 (on Canvas); Evan Fales, "Naturalist Moral Realism" [Moral Objectivity Without God], in Loftin, *God & Morality*, 13-34 (on Canvas).

WEEK 15 Argument from Miracle and the Resurrection

Craig & Moreland, 628-659 (on Canvas).

Course Communication

All communication between students and instructor will be through Canvas mail.

Policies & Resources

Before starting this course, please review the **Policies & Resources Page in Canvas**, which includes comprehensive information on various University and Course Level Policies such as:

- University Policies
- Accessibility and Accommodations
- Online Etiquette
- Technical Requirements and Skills
- Computer & Digital Literacy Skills
- Course Technology Accessibility Statements and Privacy Policies
- Academic Integrity
- Copyright Statement
- Nondiscrimination Statement
- Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Fair Use Policy

Nondiscrimination Statement

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