

# PHIL 446/546 PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTIONS ON CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE

Spring 2016      T Th 1:15–2:30 PM      Course site: <http://learn.gonzaga.edu>  
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Office: Campion 211      Office Hours: W 10:00 AM-12:00 noon, 1:30-3:30 PM, & by appointment

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Many people think that Christianity and science are at least in tension with another, and perhaps even are in outright contradiction. In particular, battles concerning evolution and creation (now additionally involving the Intelligent Design or ID movement) seem to show fundamental and intractable conflict between, on the one hand, established scientific claims about the emergence and governance of living things by mechanical natural processes and, on the other, deeply-held beliefs about God's action in the natural world. Similarly, some argue that purely mechanical cosmological processes such as the Big Bang leave no room for divine creative agency.

In this course we will examine the historical roots of the relationship between Christianity and science, with particular attention to the philosophical principles that animate both. We will focus on key events that shed light on the relationship between Christianity and science, such as the Galileo case and the emergence and scientific success of Darwinism in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Along the way, we will critically consider a variety of models that have been proposed to describe the Christianity-science relationship, from conflict to compatibility to integration. The course will emphasize two key projects: (1) showing that many ideas we have about Christianity and science are myths that distort historical facts or oversimplify philosophical and scientific issues, and (2) providing resources for richer and more nuanced thinking on Christianity-science issues.

Given the scope and complexity of the subject matter, this course is by design and necessity interdisciplinary in approach. We will explore the history and development of Christianity as a systematic view and the emergence of science from its roots in what the ancients and medieval thinkers called "philosophy of nature." We will use the tools of philosophy to explore what science and Christianity are, and to clarify key concepts essential to both. We will explore, at an introductory level, basic concepts in contemporary physical cosmology and evolutionary biology.

## COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

### Knowledge of Philosophy, Christianity, and Science

As a result of the work in this course, students will be able to

- articulate a sophisticated understanding of the nature of Christianity as a worldview, of science as a systematic human inquiry into the natural world, and of the complex relationship between the two
- describe a range of possible ways to characterize the religion-science relationship beyond standard dichotomies (religion vs. science, faith vs. reason, creation vs. evolution)
- articulate and defend a clear personal view of the relationship between Christianity and science
- outline and critically analyze the assumptions in play in public confrontations between religion and science

### Philosophical Development

This course begins with the assumption that every human being is a philosopher, a person who cares about what is true, valuable, and meaningful and who recognizes the need to work on his or her worldview; consequently, students completing the course will be able to

- recognize how worldview assumptions shape the Christianity-science debate
- develop and integrate their own philosophical beliefs, especially on religion-science issues.

### Academic and Intellectual Skills

As a result of the work in this course, students will

- read and analyze philosophical texts and philosophically oriented popular texts closely, carefully, and with greater comprehension
- express their positions more clearly both verbally and in writing

### **GRADING**

The grading system for the course is as follows:

1. course participation: class attendance, discussion	10%
2. reading quizzes (about 12 total, lowest 2 grades dropped)	12%
3. class secretary lecture / discussion report	3%
3. in-class disputations (2 total)	10%
4. argumentative paper	20%
5. midterm exam	20%
6. comprehensive final exam	25%
7. Extra credit event reports	up to 4 points

**All** required work must be completed successfully in order to pass the course. **Any written material submitted late may receive a grade penalty, and may receive limited or no feedback from the instructor.**

NOTE: Grading expectations will be different for students taking this course for graduate credit. Graduate students will be expected to read advanced materials beyond those assigned to undergraduates, show a more advanced level mastery of material, research secondary sources, include appropriate scholarly citations in their papers, and meet outside of class time to present work and discuss topics raised by the course.

### Course Participation

Course participation will be graded on the basis of evidence of preparation for class by completing the reading, willingness to take part in class discussion, and other broadly conceived contributions to the course.

*Attendance.* Regular attendance is a basic expectation for this course. According to the standards specified in the Gonzaga University Catalogue, for a course such as this one that meets twice per week, **no more than four absences will be permitted**. Absences exceeding this number will result in a "V," which is a failing grade. Because class attendance is a component of the course, any absences will affect the final grade.

*In-class Discussion.* I cannot overemphasize the value of discussion in class not only for my evaluation of your grasp of the material but also for your own processing of the readings and lectures. Philosophy is a written discipline, but it is also in significant ways a verbal discipline. The best way to develop and refine your understanding of the class material and to develop your own views is to discuss the issues in class (and outside of class). For this reason I will encourage and reward discussion. Ideally, discussion is conducted on a voluntary basis, but I value including all students enough to occasionally call on those students who do not volunteer to

comment. You may “pass” when I call on you, but repeated passes will adversely impact your participation grade.

### **Reading Quizzes**

Because the reading assignments are such an integral part of this course, there will be quizzes on the reading assignments periodically throughout the course. The quizzes will test basic comprehension of factual points about the readings rather than complex points of interpretation or analysis. They will be true-false, multiple-choice, or short-answer format, and will take place at the beginning of the class meeting. Reading quizzes will occur about once a week, so students should expect about 12 over the semester. No make-ups will be allowed for missed reading quizzes. However, the 2 lowest reading quiz grades will be dropped at the end of the semester. If you miss a quiz or two due to absence, or occasionally score poorly because you are not prepared, the dropped grades will protect your overall grade.

### **Class Secretary Lecture / Discussion Report**

On the first day of class a schedule of class meetings will circulate. Each student must sign up to serve as “Class Secretary” for one particular class meeting. For each class meeting, the Class Secretary will be expected to take detailed notes of class lecture, discussion, questions and then write a clear, comprehensive, one-page summary report. The Secretary will post this summary to the appropriate Blackboard Discussion Board forum before the next class meeting. At the beginning of the next class meeting the Secretary will (1) turn in a hard copy of the class report and (2) offer a brief oral summary (about 3 minutes) of the most important points of the prior class meeting.

### **In-Class Disputations**

Twice during the semester we will devote class to a disputation, conducted on a modified version of the medieval model, on specified theses regarding Christianity and science. Students will research arguments in groups and prepare to participate in the disputation in class. In order to prepare, each student will compose a position summary in a format supplied by the instructor; please bring two copies to class (one to turn in and one to refer to during the class discussion).

### **Argumentative Paper**

Students must write **one** argumentative paper for the course. Students may either select a topic related to our readings and class discussions or read and critically evaluate the argument of a recent book relevant to the subject of the course. In either case, students must submit a filled-out copy of the Essay Topic Approval Form (available on Blackboard) and must receive written approval from me for your topic **prior to** writing or submitting the paper. (The Topic Approval may be submitted in either hard copy or via email.)

Whatever topic you address, you should keep in mind that this is an **argumentative** paper: you must provide evidence to support your argumentative position. The paper will be graded according to the parameters established in the **Argumentative Paper Evaluation Rubric** (available on Blackboard).

Ideally, papers should be written and submitted as soon as possible after we have covered the relevant material in class discussion, while it is still fresh in your mind. Please note that this means that there is a “rolling deadline” for the paper depending on the topic you choose to address and the unit of the course into which that topic falls. Under no circumstances will papers be accepted after the due dates specified on the class schedule; all students must submit a paper (no matter what the topic) no later than the topic #3 deadline. Plan ahead to avoid trying to devise a topic and write your paper at the very end of the semester!

### **Midterm Exam**

The Midterm Exam will be distributed via email and will be due one week later during Midterm Week (see the schedule for details). The Exam will have multiple-choice questions and at least

one short essay question. Students will be allowed to consult notes and books and may discuss the exam questions with one another. However, all answers submitted must be the student's own answers, and the Midterm, like all other graded exercises for the course, is governed by the expectations set out in the Academic Honesty Policy.

### **Final Exam**

The final exam will be comprehensive in the sense that you will be asked to compare and contrast the main views of the thinkers we have studied in this course. In particular, I will expect you to have a clear idea of the nature of religion (Christianity especially), the nature of science, and the competing ways in which the relationship between the two is understood. To help you prepare for the exam, a "PHIL 446 Key Concepts and Principles" study guide will be available in the Course Documents area of the Blackboard course site. See the Schedule for date and time of the exam; rescheduling will be permitted only with written permission from the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

### **Extra Credit Event Reports**

There are a number of events on the Gonzaga campus and in the Spokane area during the semester on philosophical topics related to this course. I will try to draw your attention to such events throughout the semester, but if you are aware of an event that I do not mention, please check with me. Students can receive extra points for the course if they (1) attend the event and (2) post a response to the Blackboard Discussion Board summarizing and critically evaluating the event. Each event report is worth up to 1 final course grade point, up to a maximum of 4 points over the semester. To receive credit, the report must be posted to Blackboard within one week of the event.

## **CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS / DECORUM**

Philosophical inquiry is a dialogic enterprise, and a difficult one at that. If we care about exploring what is true, and critically examining our ideas and arguments, we must cultivate concentration, focus, and rigorous thinking, and must pay careful attention to one another in discussion. To achieve these objectives, I find it important to foster the most suitable possible classroom environment for philosophical inquiry. Given these objectives, electronic devices have only two legitimate functions in class: (1) displaying reading assignments or course materials in digital form, and (2) taking notes on the material for the course. Any other uses of electronic devices obviate the value of class attendance, and often distract other students. The instructor reserves the right to view the screen of any electronic device at any time. Students using electronic devices should also be prepared to contribute to class discussion, and may be called on by the instructor at any time. Students who use electronic devices for any purposes other than the specified legitimate purposes may be asked to leave the classroom.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Honesty is a key virtue in a community of scholars. The University has expressed its commitment to this value by adopting an "Academic Honesty Policy." It is your responsibility to be familiar with and abide by this policy. Students will be required to affirm their commitment to academic honesty by signing a pledge distributed via email at the beginning of the course.

The most troublesome area for students is **plagiarism**. To plagiarize is to take the ideas or words of another and to present them as one's own. To avoid plagiarizing, students must, at the least, acknowledge the sources of ideas or wordings used in written work. Moreover, students should seek to move beyond their sources and to do original work. In the case of Discussion Board posts and papers, students must give credit for ideas or specific wordings that are not their own by citing the source in a footnote or endnote. If you are unsure whether or not you need to give credit in a citation, cite! In the case of take-home exams, you need not cite

discussions you have had with other students or references to your texts or notes. However, you should ensure that every answer you submit is your own. It will constitute academic dishonesty to “divide up” exams and share answers with other students.

A grade of "0" (zero) will be the typical penalty for any assignment involving academic dishonesty. In some cases, a more severe penalty (as discussed in the University's "Academic Honesty Policy") may be imposed. The instructor reserves the right to submit copies of student written work to a plagiarism detection site such as TurnItIn.com.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Ronald L. Numbers, ed., *Galileo Goes to Jail and Other Myths about Science and Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2009); “Numbers” in course schedule

Stephen M. Barr, *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003); “Barr” in course schedule

Handout readings available on Blackboard

**NOTE:** in order to use the most relevant and timely available material, and to minimize course text costs, this course uses a significant number of handout readings. I strongly urge that you print out the handout readings and bring them to class for reference on the days that we discuss them *or* use a digital device to display the texts. (This is one of the two only appropriate uses for electronic devices during class meeting time.) You are responsible for reading and reflecting on the handouts no less than the purchased course texts.

## **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

Readings assignments are to be completed **prior to** class on the day assigned in the schedule.

### **INTRODUCTION**

- T 1/12 course introduction: What is this course about? What key questions will we address?  
What are the possible ways to think about the religion-science relationship?  
**review after class:** Ronald L. Numbers, Introduction (Numbers 1-7); briefly browse the influential works by Andrew Dickson White and John William Draper (links on Blackboard)

### **CHRISTIANITY, NATURAL PHILOSOPHY, AND THE RISE OF NATURAL SCIENCE**

- Th 1/14 “God and World in Ancient Greek Thought” (Blackboard)  
What conceptions of the relationship of God and world are advanced by the major ancient pagan Greeks? What are the key differences between their accounts?  
What seem to be strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches?
- T 1/19 “Bible Texts on God, Nature, and Creation” (Blackboard)  
David C. Lindberg, “Science and the Early Church” (Blackboard)  
David C. Lindberg, “Myth 1” (Numbers 8-18)  
What are the key concepts about God and the world that are emphasized in the Jewish and Christian scriptures? How did the early Christian church draw from both scripture and pagan philosophy in developing ideas about the nature of God and God’s relationship to the created universe? What key principles did early Christian thinkers devise for relating religion, philosophy, and science? Was the early Christian church responsible for the decline of science after the collapse of the Roman Empire?
- Th 1/21 Albertus Magnus (Albert the Great), excerpt from “On Animals” (Blackboard)  
Thomas Aquinas, “The Existence of God” (Blackboard)

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- Thomas Aquinas, excerpt from “Writings on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard” (Blackboard)
- As the works of Aristotle became available in Latin Europe after 1100, they were eagerly embraced by Christian thinkers. How did exposure to Aristotelian ideas affect Albertus Magnus’ approach to studying nature? How does St. Thomas Aquinas use the Aristotelian “first cause” approach to develop a Christian conception of God? What relationship does St. Thomas see between reason and religion? What is St. Thomas’ view of God’s creation of the world?
- T 1/26 Edward Grant, “Science and Theology in the Middle Ages” (Blackboard)  
Michael Shank, “Myth 2” (Numbers 19-27)  
Etienne Tempier, Bishop of Paris, “The Condemnation of 1277” (Blackboard)  
According to Grant, what were the effects of the introduction of Aristotelian works to Latin Christendom in Europe? What particular tensions between theology and scientific inquiry were caused by this event? What specific claims and methods promoted by Aristotelian thinking were at odds with settled theological claims? In the end, does it seem that theology and natural philosophy / science were in conflict in the late Medieval period?
- Th 1/28 Lesley B. Cormack, “Myth 3” (Numbers 28-34)  
Katharine Park, “Myth 5” (Numbers 43-49)  
Jole Shackelford, “Myth 7” (Numbers 59-67)  
What are the myths about the medieval Christian church’s attitude toward scientific inquiry concerning the shape of the earth and dissection of human bodies? Are the myths plausible? Why do Cormack and Park conclude that they are myths? Who was Giordano Bruno, and why he is often thought to be a martyr for science? Does this interpretation of his execution fit the evidence?
- T 2/2 Galileo, “Considerations on the Copernican Opinion” (Blackboard); “Inquisition Sentence and Abjuration” (Blackboard)  
Maurice A. Finocchiaro, “Myth 8” (Numbers 68-78)  
What was Galileo’s view about the relationship between science and Christianity? How did he think that the Copernican theory should be evaluated? What was the historical and cultural context for his conflict with the church? Does Finocchiaro’s analysis support the view that Galileo was a “martyr” for science?  
**optional:** Calhoun, “Examining the Myth: Galileo the Martyr” (Blackboard);  
William A. Wallace, “Galileo’s Science and the Trial of 1633” (Blackboard);  
William E. Carroll, “Galileo, Science and the Bible” (Blackboard)
- Th 2/4 DISPUTATION 1: On balance, did medieval Christianity impede the emergence of modern natural science?  
Rodney C. Stark, “God’s Handiwork: The Religious Origins of Science” 121-67 (Blackboard)  
Noah J. Ephron, “Myth 9” (Numbers 79-89)  
What is Stark’s view of the supposed “war” between Christianity and science in the late medieval and early modern period? To what extent was the Copernican / Galilean “revolution” truly revolutionary? What evidence does Ephron offer to critique Stark’s claims? How do some of the particular episodes and figures of this period and following support or fail to support the thesis that Christianity and science are opposed?  
**Note:** additional sources for the disputation can be found in Numbers (Myths 10 and 11) and in prior assigned course readings

- SCIENCE AND RELIGION: NATURES, METHODS, AND RELATIONSHIP**
- T 2/9 E. O. Wilson, "The Natural Sciences" (Blackboard)  
 Richard Dawkins, "Is Science a Religion?" (Blackboard)  
 Tenzin Gyatso (the Dalai Lama), "Our Faith in Science" (Blackboard)  
 What is the nature and character of science? What commitments does science have?  
 What is scientific theory, how does it function, and what is it intended to do?  
 What marks scientific and prescientific cultures according to Wilson? In what ways are science and religion similar and different human enterprises? What proposal does the Dalai Lama offer for relating religion to science?
- Th 2/11 Stephen Jay Gould, "Nonoverlapping Magisteria" (Blackboard)  
 Richard Dawkins, "When Religion Steps on Science's Turf" (Blackboard)  
 Michael W. Tkacz, "Faith, Reason, and Science" (Blackboard)  
 What "compromise" proposal regarding faith and reason is offered by Gould? Why is this solution particularly attractive to Gould as a scientist? Are the conceptions of science and of religion involved in his "non-overlapping magisteria" proposal adequate? What objections does Dawkins raise against NOMA from the side of science? What assessment of Gould's NOMA proposal is offered by Tkacz?  
 What is "fideism," why does Tkacz think Gould's view is a version of fideism, and why does Tkacz find fideism unsatisfactory? What alternative view of the relationship between faith and reason does he believe is provided by the Catholic tradition?
- T 2/16 Alvin Plantinga, "Methodological Naturalism?," esp. pp. 1-9, 12-15 of Part 1 and 7-17 of Part 2 (Blackboard)  
 Michael Ruse, "Methodological Naturalism under Attack" (Blackboard)  
 What is methodological naturalism? How does it differ from a metaphysical commitment to naturalism or materialism (the view that only natural or material things are real)? Is naturalism a reasonable methodological assumption of modern science? Why or why not?
- Topic #1—the historical relationship and development of Christianity and natural philosophy / science— papers due in class or by 5 pm**
- Th 2/18 Larry Laudan, "The Demise of the Demarcation Problem" (Blackboard)  
 What motivates the project of trying to demarcate or distinguish science from non-science? How successful have philosophers and scientists been in distinguishing the activity of science from other human activities? What is Laudan's view of the history of attempts to demarcate science from non-science?
- T 2/23 Barr 1-29  
 According to Barr, in what sense is modern physics materialist? What evidence does he give for his view? Does physical science provide evidence for materialism? Why does Barr think that the materialist commitments of science are metaphysical rather than methodological? Do you find Barr's account persuasive?

- CONTEMPORARY PHYSICS AND CHRISTIANITY**
- Th 2/25 Barr 33-46, 257-67

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- What was the classical or Newtonian view of the cosmos? What relationship did that view have toward the traditional Christian view? What is the evidence for the Big Bang? How does it comport with the Christian notion of creation? How does Christianity propose that we think of God as “cause”?
- F 2/26 **Topic #2 (the conceptual relationship of Christianity and science) papers due by 5 pm**
- M 2/29 **Midterm exam distributed (covers material through class on Th 2/27)**
- T 3/1 Barr 47-61, 268-78
- What scientific hypotheses complicate or undermine the notion that the Big Bang was the beginning of the universe? Are these hypotheses reasonable? Can the beginning of the universe be explained in scientific terms (that is, in the terms of law-governed mechanisms)?
- optional:** William E. Carroll, “Aquinas and the Big Bang” (Blackboard)
- Th 3/3 Barr 115-57
- How might contemporary physics be taken to provide evidence that the universe is designed? In what ways does it appear to be designed? Why are these conditions referred to as “Anthropic coincidences,” and what does Barr argue that they suggest about the cosmos? What objections and counter-explanations can be provided to give a non-designed account of Anthropic coincidences? Does Barr think that these objections and counter-explanations are compelling? Why or why not?
- F 3/4 **Midterm exam answers due at 5 pm via Email (calhoun@gem.gonzaga.edu)**
- 3/7-3/11 **Spring Break**
- T 3/15 Barr 138-64
- What objections and counter-explanations can be provided to give a non-designed account of Anthropic coincidences? Does Barr think that these objections and counter-explanations are compelling? Why or why not? How should we think about the place of human beings in the cosmos?

**BIOLOGY, DARWINISM, AND RELIGION**

- Th 3/17 Darwin, “Natural Selection” and “Recapitulation and Conclusion” (from *Origin of Species*) (Blackboard)
- What are the basic points of Darwin’s theory of evolution by natural selection? In what sense is it a theory of biological origins? What stance does Darwin seem to take on the question of divine agency in nature in the *Origin*?
- F 3/18 **Topic #3—physics, Big Bang cosmology, and Christianity—papers due**
- T 3/22 Darwin, excerpts from *Descent of Man* (Blackboard)
- ‘ Darwin, excerpts from *Autobiography* and *Life and Letters* (Blackboard)
- What are the implications of the theory for the relationship of human beings to other living things? What implications for religion and divine creation did Darwin see of the theory of evolution by natural selection? Why? What was Darwin’s attitude toward religion?
- optional:** James Moore, “Myth 16” (Numbers 142-51)
- Th 3/24 Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, “Review of *On the Origin of Species*” excerpts (Blackboard)
- Albert Mohler, “Why Does the Universe Look So Old?” (Blackboard)
- Wilberforce was a prominent Christian leader in England at the time Darwin’s *Origin* was published. What view does he have of Darwin’s theory? On what grounds



does he raise objections? What are Mohler's objections to evolution, and to the Old Earth view with which it is associated? (Mohler is a Young Earth Creationist, or YEC.) Are these criticisms sufficient to undermine the overall credibility of the theory of evolution? Do technical and / or theological criticisms of the theory of evolution offer any hope for defending religious beliefs against Darwinist challenges?

- optional:** Rodney C. Stark, "God's Handiwork" (176-97); David N. Livingstone, "Myth 17" (Numbers 152-60)
- T 3/29 John H. Roberts, "Myth 18" (Numbers 161-69)  
 William Provine, "Progress in Evolution and Meaning in Life" (Blackboard)  
 John Paul II, "Magisterium is Concerned with Question of Evolution" (Blackboard)  
 Is Darwinism compatible with belief in God and an active project of theological reflection? In particular, is Darwinism compatible with the idea of divinely directed natural processes? How do the historical accounts of Roberts and Provine contribute to this question? What historical account does Provine give for the reception and eventual systematization of Darwinism? Is the "Darwinian synthesis" (sometimes referred to as "neo-Darwinism") a view that implies that evolutionary change is progressive? Why or why not? What implications does Provine think follows from the "Darwinian synthesis"? What does John Paul II's tracing of recent history of Catholic thinking suggest about a "Catholic" view of evolution? Is the Catholic view of science and evolution identical to views of Christians like Wilberforce and Mohler? If not, how is it different?
- Th 3/31 Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* excerpts (Blackboard)  
 Daniel C. Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* excerpts (Blackboard)  
 What are the two possible ways of explaining the phenomenon of biological diversity? Why does Dawkins believe that Darwinism makes it possible to be an "intellectually fulfilled atheist"? What is Dawkins' conception of Darwinism, and why does he think it has no viable rivals? Why does Dawkins reject divine creation as an alternative to Darwinism (it is, as he says, a "doomed rival")? Does his argument against divine creation adequately engage the classical theist conception of God? Why or why not? What public policy toward religion does Dennett think that Darwinism implies?
- T 4/5 Michael Ruse, "Humans," from *Can a Darwinian Be a Christian?* (Blackboard)  
 What approach does Ruse take to the relation of Christianity and science, particularly as it relates to questions of biology and evolution? What are the salient issues in reconciling an evolutionary view of humans with a Christian one? In the end, does he think that a Darwinian *can* be a Christian? How and in what way?
- Th 4/7 Kenneth Miller, *Finding Darwin's God* excerpts (Blackboard)  
 How might sympathetic embrace of Darwinism coupled with commitment to Christianity lead to changes in our conception of God? What specific aspects of the traditional conception of God are vulnerable to challenge by robust Darwinism?
- T 4/12 John F. Haught, *God After Darwin: A Theology of Evolution* excerpts (Blackboard)  
 In what way does Haught think that Darwin is a "gift" to theology? What changes in theological thinking are required by the Darwinian revolution? What are the implications of changing these aspects of the traditional view of God? What assumptions does this approach make about the relationship between Christianity and science, or more broadly, between religion and science?

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- Th 4/14 William Dembski, "On the Very Possibility of Intelligent Design." esp. 116-129 (Blackboard)  
Stephen C. Meyer, "DNA and Other Designs" (Blackboard)  
Michael Ruse, "Myth 23" (Numbers 206-214)  
What is ID and how do its arguments proceed? Can any facts about the world ever, even in principle, give us knowledge about God? What is the point of Dembski's thought experiment of the talking pulsar? How does Meyer extend Dembski's general argument about the possibility of detecting design in the physical realm to the specific case of DNA? Is a material mechanist account sufficient to explain fundamental biochemical components? Why or why not? Why do mainstream Darwinists reject ID theory? Is it possible to detect design in the cosmos?  
**optional:** Stephen C. Meyer, "What is Intelligent Design?" (Blackboard); Daniel C. Dennett, "Show Me the Science" (Blackboard)
- T 4/19 William Carroll, "Creation, Evolution, and Thomas Aquinas" (Blackboard)  
Michael Tkacz, "Thomas Aquinas vs. The Intelligent Designers (and The Materialists)" (Blackboard)  
What response would a classical theist in the Thomistic tradition have to the theory of evolution and to responses such as ID? Is evolution incompatible with a classical conception of God and creation? Does the Catholic church have an official position on evolution, creation, and intelligent design?  
**optional:** there is an enormous body of recent literature on Catholic thinking about creation, evolution, and intelligent design. The following are representative:  
Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, "The Designs of Science" (Blackboard)  
Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, "Finding Design in Nature" (Blackboard)  
Stephen Barr, "The Design of Evolution" (Blackboard)  
Avery Cardinal Dulles, "God and Evolution" (Blackboard)
- Th 4/21 David H. Calhoun, "Prospects for Human Dignity after Darwin" (Blackboard)  
How did Darwin's ideas affect the notion of human dignity and value? In what ways did evolutionary biologists in Darwin's time and later extend and develop his ideas? What approaches are available for restoring a robust conception of human dignity in response to Darwinian evolutionary biology?
- F 4/22 **Topic #4—evolutionary biology and divine creation—papers due**
- T 4/26 **DISPUTATION 2:** Which model, if any, offers the most plausible integration of Darwinistic evolutionary theory and orthodox Christian belief?  
(no additional readings; use any prior readings for disputation)  
Are any of the proposed integrations of evolution and Christian thought viable? Is neo-Darwinistic evolutionary theory necessarily or essentially atheistic? If it is not, which particular view offers the most promising way of reconciling evolution with the notion of theistic creation?
- Th 4/28 course conclusion & review
- Th 5/5 **Final Exam: 3:30-5:30 pm in College Hall 425 (no exceptions or reschedules)**