

Philosophy 2061G
Science vs. Religion: the epistemological conflict
Winter 2018



January to April 2018
Room SSC 3026
Lectures: M 11.30-1.30 & W 11.30-12.30

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Stevenson Hall 4141
Office Hours: Mondays 1.30-3.30

Course Outline

Description

This course studies the epistemological clash between religion and science, looking especially at evolutionary theory, cosmology, miracles, the status of religious experience, and the possibility of afterlife. It also studies attempts to reconcile these two systems of knowledge. Finally, it examines the science *of* religion: anthropological theories of religion and the cognitive science of religion. Although it will occasionally venture into other traditions, its main focus will be on the "Abrahamic" religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Texts

All readings for this course will be available online.

Objectives

This elective course has two objectives. First, it seeks to give students a comprehensive overview of the lively field of current debate between science and religion; the vantage point of the course is epistemological, that is, the question of the grounding of competing knowledge claims. Second, the writing of two short essays will enhance students' ability to think, argue, and write clearly – skills that are of universal usefulness.

Method of Instruction

Lectures with class discussion.

Requirements

Two short essays (2000-2500 words), due February 14 & March 28, 50%

One final examination during the examination period in April, 40%

Class participation, 10%

Audit: Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://www.uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Students are directed to view the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness (<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>).

Policy on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.”

Statement on Use of Plagiarism Software

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).”

Additional Links

- Registrarial Services (<http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>)
- Student Support Services (<http://westernusc.ca/services/>)