

Syllabus - Science and Religion: Friends or Foes?

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Course #:	REL/AAEC/STS 2464 (16162/15731)	Semester:	Spring 2007
Day/Time:	MWF 11:15 am	Place:	331 Smyth or TBA
Prerequisites:	Sophomore status (or permission)	Credit:	3 undergraduate hours
Instructor:	Rev. Dr. Michael J. Ellerbrock (Mike) Professor, mebrook@vt.edu Dept of Agricultural & Applied Economics	Office:	218 Hutcheson (W) 540-231-7722 (H) 540-552-4009
Office Hours:	MW 3-5pm	Grad Asst:	Ms. Nilam Prasai
Secretary:	Ms. Jill Albert, 202 Hutcheson 231-7727 (call Mike first)	Help Sessions:	Before each exam and when requested

Description: An historical look at the relationship between science and religion, including culturally shaped ways of knowing; changing world views of God, humanity and nature; methods of analysis; sources of authority; moral values and ethics; and contemporary issues (astronomy, metaphysics, evolution, socioeconomic systems & world views, modernism, eschatology). Emphasis on critical thinking, writing, and small group discussion. Included in the VT Core Curriculum Area VII: Critical Issues in a Global Context. (3H, 3C, I).

Objectives:

- Identify basic commonalities and differences in science and religion in terms of domains, perspectives, data, paradigms, purposes, and goals;
- Explain key historic and dynamic forces and figures behind the development of scientific thought and religious traditions (Western & Eastern);
- Examine scientific and theological modes of inquiry & alternative social theories;
- Examine the organization of society: roles of individuals, institutions and cultural norms, patterns of social inclusion/exclusion;
- Integrate scientific and theological perspectives regarding contemporary issues;
- Investigate human developmental processes and utilize critical thinking skills.

Texts: Miller, K.R., *Finding Darwin's God* (NY: HarperCollins, 0-06-093049-7), 1999, required. Haught, J.F., *Science & Religion: From Conflict to Conversation* (NY: Paulist Press, 0-8091-3606-6), 1995, required.

Topics: Epistemology & Modernism 15%; *Natural Sciences*: Human vs Divine Natures 10%, Creation 10%, Evolution 10%, Chemical Life 10%, Complexity & Chaos 10%, Teleology 10%, Ecology 10%; *Social Sciences*: Roman Tradition & Protestant Tradition 15%.

Grading: 1) Mid-Term, Mar 2nd - 100pts 3) Two Short Topical Reflection Papers - 100pts
2) Final, May 2nd - 100pts 4) Class Participation - 50pts (please note baseline criteria: attending class, but saying nothing in full class discussion = 25/50 points). Based on final averages, appropriate ranges of grades will be set (incl + -).

Misc: Make-Up work given only to students with an approved (by me) absence from an assignment. Note: I expect to be notified ASAP whenever you know you must miss an exam. Students are expected to know and abide by the VT Honor Code. If you need accommodations for a disability, please let me know. Thank you.