



WINGATE UNIVERSITY

Preparing students for lives of significance in the global community

Partial Syllabus and Creative Assessment Qs

REL 362: Religion and Science: An Interdisciplinary Exploration

TR 9:30-10:45am (Cannon 2nd Floor)

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TEXTS:

1. Glover, *Beyond the Firmament*. Watertree Press, 2007.
2. Miller, *Finding Darwin's God*. Harper Perennial, 2007.
3. Johnson, *Ask the Beasts*. Bloomsbury, 2014
4. Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve IVP*, 2015
5. Addition Readings Posted on Moodle and/or Distributed in Class

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course seeks to provide an interdisciplinary survey of the interaction between science and religion with specific focus on creation and evolution. Team taught by professors from the departments of Chemistry and Religion, this course will be run as a seminar. Students are expected to critically reflect on the assigned readings and write responses prior to each class meeting. The course will begin with a comparison of the creation and evolution as defined by Darwin, modern scientists, atheists and various authors within the Christian tradition. This course asks students to consider the origin and extent of the apparently irreconcilable differences between scientific and Christian world views and actively participate in discussing critical issues that will be encountered throughout the semester.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Students taking this course will:

1. articulate an understanding of the nature of religion, the kinds of questions appropriate within religion, and the scope and limits of religious claims.
2. articulate an understanding of the nature of science, the kinds of questions appropriate within the sciences, and the scope and limits of scientific claims.
3. analyze significant historical interactions between religion and science.
4. discuss the Christian doctrine of creation, its biblical roots, the history of its development especially its articulation in the Nicene Creed, and current debates concerning this doctrine among contemporary scientific and Christian perspectives.
5. analyze the current cultural and scientific debates concerning matters in which religion and science intersect.
6. participate in interdisciplinary discussions and engage in thoughtful oral discourse with others from different academic backgrounds.

7. develop and practice analytical reading skills and apply them critically to a wide variety of primary and secondary sources.

HONOR CODE: This class will be conducted under the provisions of the Wingate University Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code violate the trust between teacher and student, and they dishonor the student. I reserve the right to fail for the course anyone who is caught violating the Honor Code.

GRADES: Your final grade will be based on the total points you accumulate during the semester. There will be one mid-term examination and a comprehensive final. You will also be expected to turn in comments on the reading. You will also receive a participation grade. These grades will be weighted in the following manner:

Mid-Term	25%.
Attendance and Participation	20%.
Engagement Papers	25% * <i>one paper will be substituted by a "Current Events Connections" presentation</i>
Comprehensive Final	30%
	100%

Each assignment will be graded on a 10-point scale ("A" is 90-100, etc.) "A" level work demonstrates complete knowledge of the material and ideas of the course and their relationships along with the ability to extend these ideas beyond the immediate work of the course. "B" level knowledge of the material shows evidence that the student demonstrates mastery of the basic course requirements including the major course topics and understands how the topics are related. "C" level work reflects knowledge of the major engagement areas of the course topics with some errors in non-essential details. "D" and "F" level work is either incomplete or fails to demonstrate basic knowledge of the essential course material and fails to articulate the basic course concepts.

Exemplar of Assessment Questions on Exams:

1. From what you know about Charles Darwin from both Glover and Johnson's texts, create a movie/reading/music list of at least 8 selections that he would bring if he was stranded on a deserted island. What would he choose? Why?

For each of your selections offer your reasoning as to why he would choose the song, movie, or book that he did. Also include a reference to each selection (movie trailer or website, youtube video; amazon book list). Be sure to include text references to substantiate your claims. Each song should reiterate 10 key or important ideas from Johnson and Glover's examination of Darwin's theories and his perspectives in *The Origin of Species*. Extra creativity alongside well substantiated explanations with text references, will be well rewarded.

2. You read in blog post that makes the claim that Darwin was a militant Atheist, that the "Origin of the Species" can be used to disprove Christian belief in God, and that the fossil record and age of the universe undermines the validity of Scripture. With the aid of the readings from Glover and Johnson, critically and constructively respond to this blog post.
3. You have been approached by a renowned publisher of Sunday school materials to create something that reflects the 'dialogue' model of interaction between science and religion. They give you a choice of what they want you to create (you may only choose one)

- a) They want you to provide them with materials to teach Genesis 1-3 for a modern children's Sunday school class (K-6 level). Create a 5-7 slide PowerPoint presentation (or equivalent visual program) with accompanying biblical commentary on Genesis 1-3. Use materials from Walton to offer a beautiful, accurate and faithful representation of the creation story in Genesis considering our evolutionary world. Your commentary must reflect the wisdom of Walton, the dialogical model (offered by Johnson), and must accommodate for the age of the participants. Bonus points if you can include teaching items (e.g., songs, visuals, TV show clips, etc...) that would make this more interactive and alive for your audience.
- b) They want you to provide them with materials to teach Genesis 1-3 for a modern high school/young adult's Sunday school class. Create a 5-7 slide PowerPoint presentation (or equivalent visual presentation) with accompanying biblical commentary on Genesis 1-3. Use materials from Walton to offer a beautiful, accurate and faithful representation of the creation story in Genesis considering our evolutionary world. Your commentary must reflect the wisdom of Walton, the dialogical model (offered by Johnson), and must accommodate for the age of the participants. Bonus points if you can include teaching items (e.g., songs, visuals, TV show clips, etc...) that would make this more interactive and alive for your audience.
4. One of your peers in a Zoom class discussion in a biology class indicated that to believe in evolution means that you are an atheist. How would you respond? Be sure to i) outline the main principles of atheism, ii) outline the concepts and principles of evolution that often cause the most problems for Christians (and why they may be problematic), and iii) your response – be sure to back up your response with materials from at least two of the texts in the class (i.e., Glover, Miller, Johnson, Walton).
5. You have been asked to give a short talk or sermon (10 min; max 4 double spaced pages) at a local Christian church. They give you a choice of two different topics: a) Understanding Suffering in an Evolutionary world or b) Freedom in an Evolutionary World Created by God who is Love

Develop a short sermon or talk that involves three aspects:

- a. Your understanding of our evolutionary world
- b. The character and activity of God considering modern scientific discoveries
- c. Text references from Johnson and Miller