**Course Outline: 2018-19**

**TS333F**

**Theology, Science and Society**

**Location: W104**

**Day(s): Monday and Wednesday**

**Time: 2:30-3:30 pm and 3:30-5:20 pm**

**Instructor(s): Darren Marks**

**Contact info:** [**dmarks@uwo.ca**](mailto:dmarks@uwo.ca) **or HUC X279 (office HUC theology 319B)**

**TA: none**

**Office hours: Wednesday 1-3:20 pm or by appointment**

**Prerequisites Required for this Course:**

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course, and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**Course Syllabus:**

The principal object of the course is to explore the richness and diversity of the relations between science and religion as they have been constructed in western cultures. Simplistic models of conflict and harmony, which have so often served ideological purposes, will be exposed through historical and critical analysis. The role of ideological belief in the rise of modern science will be examined, as will the challenge to religious orthodoxies from new forms of science. There will be an opportunity to study the religious beliefs of major scientists, such as Newton and Darwin, and the responses of theologians to major paradigm shifts within the sciences. The interplay between natural theology and the natural sciences will be explored together with the classic critiques of physico-theologies. Questions will also be raised concerning the most appropriate response theologians might make to contemporary neuroscience and genetic reductionism. Recurrent issues such as the presumed existence of extra-terrestrial life will be considered, as will the relations between scientific and religious eschatologies.

Aims and Objectives:

The course aims to encourage critical thinking on the ways in which scientific and religious beliefs might be judged to be independent or mutually relevant. Mythologies inherited from the past will be revisited and an emphasis placed on the importance of local contexts in shaping receptivity to new forms of science. Some famous controversies from the past will be used to lend perspective to current debates and there will be an opportunity to evaluate doctrinaire positions on such topical issues as genetic reductionism, the advance of neurosciences, the revitalisation of natural theology and the existence of extra-terrestrial intelligence.

Students should acquire a critical understanding of the different models routinely used to relate scientific knowledge and practice to religious understandings of the world. They should be able to discuss the rise of scientific naturalism/reductionism/consilience and offer a balanced account of the problems it has raised for religious belief. They should be able to illustrate the diversity of religious belief among scientists and give a critical account of the role of the sciences as agents of secularization and outline the issues in the dialogue between the two magisteriums.

**Course Materials:**

AE McGrath, *Science and Religion: A New Introduction (2nd Edition)*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Nancy Morvillo, *Science and Religion: Understanding the Issues*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Other materials will be placed on short term reserve at HUC library.

**Assignments & Method of Evaluation of Assignments:**

1. Four short papers, due at end of each unit (4 X 20%)
2. One major paper, due end of examination period (20%)

**Additional Statements:**

1. **Statement on Use of Electronic Devices during Tests and Exams**

***[***It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited, to laptops, PDAs, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

1. **Statement 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/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf.”
2. **Plagiarism-detecting Software/Computer Marking**
3. 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 ).

1. **Support Services:**

* UWO Registrar’s Office: http://www.registrar.uwo.ca
* Huron’s Faculty of Theology, Office of the Dean: http://www.huronuc.on.ca/faculty\_of\_theology/info\_for\_current\_students
* Faculty of Theology office: srice@uwo.ca, 519-438-7224, ext. 289
* Huron’s Writing Skills Centre: <http://www.huronuc.on.ca/student_life/writing_services>
* UWO’s Mental Health website: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to this website for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.
* UWO Student Support and Development Services: http://communications.uwo.ca/current\_students/student\_services.htm

1. **Accommodation for absences:**
2. **Non-medical absences:**

# For non-medical grounds, the student must submit a request to the instructor in writing prior to the due date of an assignment, and immediately in the case of a test. (Or as soon as possible following a non-medical emergency) Students are protected under the Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy and so written requests need only include a broad and general explanation of the situation, and the approximate length of time required. At the discretion of the instructor, the granting of extensions and re-scheduled tests may require the student to submit supporting documentation to the Academic Counsel Office or Dean of Theology who will then make the determination as to whether accommodation is warranted.

1. **Medical absences:** See also the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness

—Undergraduate Students, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf)

**For work representing 10% or more of the overall grade for the course**, a student must present documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities. Documentation must be submitted as soon as possible to your Faculty Dean’s office (Huron Arts & Social Science students should take their documentation to the Academic Counsellor, through the Academic Services Centre at Huron), together with a Request for Relief specifying the nature of the accommodation requested. The request and documentation will be assessed and appropriate accommodation will be determined by the Dean’s office in consultation with the instructor(s.) Academic accommodation will be granted ONLY where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete his/her academic responsibilities.

The UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) and Request for Relief are available at the Student Centre website (https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm), Huron University College Academic Counselling website (www.huronuc.on.ca) or from the Dean’s Office or Academic Services Centre at Huron.

**A. General issues in science and theology**

Week One: What is Science? What is Theology? What is Society?

Samir Okasha, *Philosophy of Science: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2002. Ppp1-58

Week Two: Science and Religion: General Themes

McGrath, pp 43-58

Week Three: How we know what we know I

McGrath, pp 59-143

Morvillo, pp 3-42

Week Four: How we know what we know II

Okasha pp 40-77

John Worrall, ‘Philosophy of Science: Classic Debates, Standard Problems, Future Prospects’, in Peter Machamer (ed), *Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Science*, (2007) pp 18-37.

**B. Historical development of the siblings**

Week Five: The Rise of Science

Peter Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism and the Rise of Natural Science*, Cambridge University Press, 1998 pp 161-205

Week Six: Cosmology: Copernicus, Galileo and Scripture

McGrath, 17-26

Morvillo, 49-120

Week Seven: Physics: Newton and Deism

McGrath 26-33

David Hume, *Dialogues on Natural Religion*

Week Eight: Darwin, Evolution and Ethics

McGrath, 33-43

Morvillo, 139-261

**C. Contemporary Issues and players in the social world**

Week Nine: Quantum Mechanics and Cosmology

McGrath, pp145-62

Paul Davies, *The Goldilocks Enigma*, Mariner Books, 2008, pp 190-221

John Pockinghorne, *Quantum Physics and Theology: An Unexpected Kinship,* Yale University Press, 2007, pp 1-46.

Week Ten: Psychology, Physico-Theology and Anthropology

McGrath, 163-75

Nancy Murphy and Christopher Knight, *Human Identity and the Intersection of Science, Technology and Religion*, Ashgate, 2010, pp 97-147 (articles by Brown, Herzfeld and Haag)

Week Eleven: Neuroscience, Biology and Consilience

Murphy and Knight, pp 79-97 (Murphy article)

John Castelian*, ‘Bless the Lord, O My Brain?! Has Neuroscience Eliminated the Soul?*’, Stone Campbell Journal 10 (2007) 37-61.

Week Twelve: Religion as Natural, Science as Theory

McGrath, pp 184-91

Okasha, pp 95-135

G R Ellis, ‘*Fundamentalism in Science, Theology and the Academy’,* in Murphy and Knight pp 57-79.

Week Thirteen: Scientism, Atheism and Politics

McGrath, pp 143-45

Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society,* Sage Publications, 2005. pp 1-91, 155-83

Peter Conrad, *The Medicalization of Society,* John Hopkins Press, 2007. Pp3-46