

Issues in Science and Religion

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Course Description

In our everyday lives we often confront challenging issues that lie in a domain resting between science and religion. These issues provoke questions whose answers have serious implications for our public and personal understanding of the universe and our place within it. The debate, for example, concerning the origins and development of human life, whether through evolution by natural selection or “intelligent design,” compel us to take a position in matters like our children’s schooling, public funding of stem-cell research, and determining the viability of an unborn human life. This course focuses on developing and practicing your abilities to delve into questions and issues such as these by viewing them through the lenses of science, religion, ethics, and history. Readings, discussions, journaling, short opinion papers, and case-study analyses will be the entry points to questions like: Are science and religion antagonistic or complementary? What are our roles in debates concerning science and religious education? Which policies should govern biotechnological research?

Course Learning Goals

This course intends to provide students opportunities to develop their enrolled competences as well as core competences emphasized across the SNL curriculum: skills in communication, inquiry, experiential learning, and decision-making. This course particularly emphasizes development of persuasive writing and critical thinking skills. Module-specific learning outcomes are specified further in the course guide.

Course Resources

The course is offered on Blackboard™ at DePaul’s Online Learning (OLL) site, <http://oll.depaul.edu>.

To buy your books, go to <http://www.mbsdirect.net>.

Hint: type “DePaul” for name of the school.

[Click here for help buying your books](#)

The required text is John A. Moore, *From Genesis to Genetics: The Case of Evolution and Creationism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), ISBN 0-520-24066-9. Additional required readings are available at the DePaul Libraries’ eReserves site at <http://eres.lib.depaul.edu>.

Writing resources are available from DePaul’s Writing Center’s on-site and online services. For locations, hours, and a description of services, call 312-362-6726, email wcenter@depaul.edu, or visit the Website at <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/>. SNL’s

Student Writing Guide is also available online at <http://snl.depaul.edu/writing/index.html>

Course Competences

In this course, you will develop the following competences:

Competence	Competence Statement and Criteria
S2X	<p>Can describe and analyze a theory that explains a natural pattern and its scientific basis.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can identify and describe a theory and the natural pattern that it explains. 2. Can identify and describe scientific methods. 3. Can analyze the basis of a theory and judge the extent to which it is scientific.
S3D	<p>Can use scientific knowledge to understand varying perspectives on a policy issue.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can identify and describe a public policy issue that has significant scientific and/or technological elements. 2. Can analyze the scientific theories, methods or standards taken by two perspectives on this issue.
H1F	<p>Can describe and explain the roles of individuals, groups, societies, or states in history.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can demonstrate an understanding of connections among selected events over time. 2. Can use an informed historical approach to interpret events or roles of individuals, groups or states.
A3X	<p>Can make an ethical judgment on a public policy issue based on scientific, religious and/or historical arguments.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can analyze the ethical dimensions of a public policy issue. 2. Can make an ethical decision based, in part, on valid scientific, religious and/or historical reasons.

Demonstration and Assessment of Competences

Students demonstrate competence through 4 types of evidence: discussion, journal entries, position papers, and case-study analyses. The instructor may elect to adopt group learning strategies in online discussion and the case studies. Students' submissions must demonstrate development of students' competences. Specific assessment criteria for each type of evidence are specified as follows.

Discussion. (20 points each week; 200 total.) Students' contributions to online discussion threads will be assessed based on how they demonstrate development of competence, substantively address posted questions and peers' responses, integrate prior experiences, reading, and reflection, and abide by DePaul's Code of Student Responsibility governing student behavior in online learning environments.

Journals. (30 points each entry; 300 total.) The style of journal writing is both personal and reflective. Weekly journal entries will be assessed based on the breadth, depth and relevance of students' reflections upon their learning experiences during the course, inclusive of their reading, class activities, and relevant outside experiences. Students should strive to make connections between their personal experiences and the criteria of their competences. To encourage honest and personal writing, only the instructor reads students' journal entries, and these are not assessed for grammar or style. Although the length of entries will vary by student, at least 500 words per entry are required (roughly 2 double-spaced typewritten pages using 12-point standard font like Times New Roman).

Position papers. (300 points each competence.) Position papers are opportunities for students to develop a persuasive argument on an issue raised by readings or class discussions in terms of the perspectives (scientific, historical or ethical) corresponding

to the students' enrolled competences. The required lengths of papers will range depending on whether 1 or 2 competencies are addressed. For one competence, the papers will range between 5-7 pages; for 2 competencies, the papers will range between 6-8 pages when following the required format: 1-inch margins, standard 12-point font like Times New Roman, and double-spaced. The instructor will assess the papers for (1) the effectiveness of the argument: clear, strong thesis, coherent and logical flow of argument, and relevant supporting evidence from course readings; (2) development toward the criteria of the competences; (3) effectiveness of the writing style and grammar; and (4) proper citation of sources.

Case-studies. (200 points.) This culminating assignment, due in the last week of the course, provides students an opportunity to integrate their learning and demonstrate development of competence criteria through critical analysis and presentation of case-studies. Presentations may take on different formats that are accessible and viewable in an online medium (e.g., Word or PowerPoint file). Presentations will be assessed using the following criteria:

- Effectively demonstrates the criteria for all enrolled competences;
- Achieves good presentation mechanics: focus, organization, coherence, and clarity;
- Supported by relevant and well-documented evidence from required readings and other sources;
- As appropriate, effectively supported with clear, relevant, and well-integrated media;
- As appropriate, formal writing demonstrates good use of style and grammar.

Course Structure

This course consists of 10 modules. The time to complete each module is typically 1 week.

To view the course schedule, click on the Schedule link on the left-hand navigation bar. This page contains the most recently updated listing of the topics and assignments due for each week of the course.

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Assessment

Policy on Late Assignments

Any missed assignment or work submitted late will merit no credit unless an arrangement was negotiated with the instructor prior to the due date. (Documented emergencies are exceptions.) All negotiated late submissions are subject to a grade reduction of 5% for each weekday for which the submission is late.

Course Grading Scale

Overall grades by competence are determined using the following percent scale; letter grades are interpreted according to the university definitions:

A = 93 to 100	A- = 90 to 92	B+ = 87 to 89
B = 84 to 86	B- = 80 to 83	C+ = 77 to 79

C = 74 to 76	C- = 70 to 73	D+ = 67 to 69
D = 65 to 66	F = 64 and below	

- A** Accomplished the stated objectives of the course in an EXCELLENT manner
- B** Accomplished the stated objectives of the course in a VERY GOOD manner
- C** Accomplished the stated objectives of the course in a SATISFACTORY manner
- D** Accomplished the stated objectives of the course in a POOR manner
- F** Did NOT accomplish the stated objectives of the course

IN Temporary grade indicating that the student has a satisfactory record in work completed, but for unusual or unforeseeable circumstances not encountered by other students in the class and acceptable to the instructor is prevented from completing the course requirements by the end of the term. The student must request this grade from the instructor by submitting the form, "Contract for the Issuance of an Incomplete (IN) Grade," available on the SNL Web site. At the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) following the term in which the incomplete grade was assigned, a remaining IN grade will automatically convert to an F grade. Ordinarily no incomplete grade may be completed after the grace period has expired. Instructors may not change IN grades after the end of the grace period without the SNL Exceptions Committee's permission.

PA Passing achievement in a pass/fail course. (Grades A through C-.) **Students who take this course pass/fail must request this option from the instructor before the end of the 2nd week of the quarter. Students who request pass/fail grading cannot revert to A-F grading.**

W Automatically recorded when the student's withdrawal is processed after the deadline to withdraw without penalty, but within the stipulated period.

WA Administrative withdrawal, assigned by someone other than the student, whether within or outside the stipulated period of withdrawals.

WN Administrative withdrawal for no-shows, to indicate a student who was admitted, registered for one term of classes, but never actually came to DePaul.

FX Student stopped attending course. This is an apparent withdrawal. The grade can be changed to a grade of W, WA or WN. If not administratively removed, it is scored in the grade point average the same as an F. Students are advised to contact their college office to initiate the request to amend an FX grade. An FX grade may not be changed if it has remained on the student's record beyond twelve months except in extraordinary circumstances.

Percentage distribution of Assessments

As noted above, students demonstrate development of each enrolled competence through a variety of activities and assignments. The total points possible for each competence are:

200	Online discussion (addressing all enrolled competences)
300	Journal entries (addressing all enrolled competences)
300	Position paper (addressing all enrolled competences)

200	Case-study presentation (addressing all enrolled competences)
1000	Total each competence

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Policies

Academic Integrity

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html> for further details.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

- The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's.
- Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgement.
- Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.
- The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.

Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If a instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion.

Disability Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities on an individualized and flexible basis. The Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD) determines appropriate accommodations through consultation with the student. For certain learning disabilities and/or attention deficit disorders, the Productive Learning Strategies Program (PLuS) determines the appropriate accommodations. See the instructor for more information or call OSD at 773-325-7290 (phone) or 773-325-7296 (TTY); or call PLuS at 773-325-1677.

Incomplete Grades

The intent of the Incomplete grade is to allow students extra time to complete their final assignments. This need arises because, in the closing weeks of the course, they have an event of significant magnitude that adversely affects their ability to complete the course, e.g. serious illness, death in the family, overseas deployment, or natural disaster.

You must request an incomplete grade in writing two weeks before the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades will be considered only after you have satisfactorily completed at least 75 percent of the coursework, and you have such an unexpected, uncontrollable event that prevents you from completing your course. Do not assume that you will qualify for an incomplete. Students who are failing the course at the point where they request an incomplete will not receive one, nor will they be granted after the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades are given at the discretion of the instructor.

If you do receive permission from the instructor to take an incomplete in the course, you will be required to complete a contract with the instructor, specifying how you will finish the missing work within the next two quarters (excluding summer). Incompletes not finished by the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) will automatically become an F grade on your transcript.

Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee.

NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification.

Protection of Human Subjects

For more information see: <http://research.depaul.edu/>.

Demonstrating the acquisition of competences in this course can involve “interactions”—interviewing and or observing other people—discussing those interviews or observations with other class members and writing them up in one or more final report(s). As such, these activities qualify as “research” with “human subjects” and are subject to University and Federal guidelines. Because it takes place in the context of this course, your research is exempt from approval by the School for New Learning’s Local Review Board only under the following conditions:

1. The information you collect is EXCLUSIVELY for the purpose of classroom discussion and will NOT be used after the term is over. If there is any possibility that you will EVER use it in further research or for publication, you must obtain approval from the Local Review Board before you begin.
2. You assess and ensure that no “harm”—physical, mental, or social—does or could result from either your interviews and/or observations or your discussion and/or reports.
3. The privacy and confidentiality of those that you interview or observe must be protected. Unless you receive specific permission, in writing, from the person(s) you interview or observe, please change their names, and make sure that their identity cannot be readily ascertained from the information you provide.
 - a. If you want to use real names and relationships, they must sign an “informed consent” document. For information on creating an “informed consent document” see, for example, <http://www.research.umn.edu/consent>.

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Course Expectations

Time Management and Attendance

SNL's online courses are not self-paced and require a regular time commitment EACH week throughout the quarter.

You are required to log in to your course at least four times a week so that you can participate in the ongoing course discussions.

Online courses are no less time consuming than "face to face" courses. You will have to dedicate some time every day or at least every second day to your studies. A typical four credit hour "face to face" course at SNL involves three hours of classroom meeting per week, plus at least three to six hours of study and homework per week.

This course will require at least the same time commitment, but your learning activities will be spread out through the week. If you have any problems with your technology, or if you need to improve your reading or writing skills, it may take even longer.

The instructor should be notified if your life events do not allow you to participate in the course and the online discussions for more than one week. This is particularly important when there are group discussions or you are working as part of a team.

If you find yourself getting behind, please contact the instructor immediately.

Your Instructor's Role

Your instructor's role in this course is that of a discussion facilitator and learning advisor. It is not their responsibility to make sure you log in regularly and submit your assignments. As instructor, s/he will read all postings to the general discussion forums on a daily basis but may not choose to respond to each posting. You will receive feedback to assignments.

The instructor may choose to designate "office hours" when s/he will be online and available and will immediately respond to questions. Depending on the instructor, this response may be by e-mail, instant messenger or telephone. Otherwise, you will generally receive a response to emailed or posted queries within 48 hours.

Your Role as a Student

As an online student, you will be taking a proactive approach to your learning. As the course instructor's role is that of a learning guide, your role is that of the leader in your own learning.

You will be managing your own time so that you can complete the readings, activities and assignments for the course, and you will also be expected to take a more active role in peer learning.

Credits

This course was designed and produced by Donald L. Opitz, Ph.D., and staff of SNL Online at DePaul University.

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