MSc in Philosophy, Science, and Religion

Philosophy, Science and Religion 1: The Physical World

PHIL11160
Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to the course! The teaching and support staff here at the University of Edinburgh are thrilled to be working with you this year. Do familiarise yourself with the contents of the course guide, and always feel free to contact the course organiser or teaching assistant if we can be of help.

People

Course Organiser:
Name: Dr Sarah Lane Ritchie
Email: sarah.laneritchie@ed.ac.uk
Office: New College Room 2.05
Office hours: On Request (or feel free to request a Skype meeting)

Teaching Assistant:
Name: Andrew Johnson
Email: ajohnso4@exseed.ed.ac.uk

Course Secretary:
Name: Becky Verdon
Email: Rebecca.Verdon@ed.ac.uk

Course Librarian:
Name: Anne Donnelly
Email: anne.donnelly@ed.ac.uk

Office hours:
Please email Dr Sarah Lane Ritchie or Andrew Johnson to make an appointment if you need to discuss material covered in the course or essay topics.
Course aims and objectives

This is a level 11 course for students seeking an advanced introduction to contemporary issues in the intersection of science and religion. This course will provide students with the necessary background to complete the online MSc programme in Philosophy, Science and Religion. Students will gain an understanding of the relevant science – including quantum mechanics, relativity and cosmology – and the relationship of these with issues in theology and religious belief – including the doctrine of creation, divine action and miracles.

Intended learning objectives

On completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Be able to demonstrate a good understanding of key areas in the current science/religion interface and to engage with them philosophically.
- Be able to demonstrate strong analytical skills and philosophical acumen in approaching debates between science and theology.
- Be able to engage critically with key textual sources in the field.
- Be able to engage constructively in cross-disciplinary conversations.
- Have demonstrated an openness to personal growth through a commitment to dialogue across intellectual and cultural boundaries.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Syllabus

Schedule of lectures, seminars, tutorials and assessments

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;16 September</td>
<td>What is philosophy, what is science, what is religion, and what might their relationship be?</td>
<td>Dr Jamie Collin</td>
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<td><strong>Week 2</strong>&lt;br&gt;23 September</td>
<td>‘In the Beginning’: Big Bang Cosmology</td>
<td>Dr Mark Harris</td>
<td>Assessed Discussion Board Activity</td>
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<td><strong>Week 3</strong>&lt;br&gt;30 September</td>
<td>Science and Scripture</td>
<td>Dr John Walton</td>
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<td><strong>Week 4</strong>&lt;br&gt;07 October</td>
<td>A Scientist’s Interpretation of the Book of Job</td>
<td>Dr Tom McLeish</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>14 October</td>
<td>Theism and the Fine Tuning of the Laws of Nature</td>
<td>Dr Jamie Collin</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>21 October</td>
<td>Are Miracles Rationally Believable?</td>
<td>Dr Jamie Collin</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>28 October</td>
<td>Laws of Nature and Divine Action</td>
<td>Dr Jamie Collin</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>04 November</td>
<td>Care for Creation in the Anthropocene</td>
<td>Dr Michael Northcott</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>11 November</td>
<td>Physics and Reality: Classical or Quantum?</td>
<td>Dr Mark Harris</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>18 November</td>
<td>Truth and Reality: Part 1</td>
<td>Dr Jamie Collin</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>25 November</td>
<td>Truth and Reality: Part 2</td>
<td>Dr Jamie Collin</td>
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**Topics and reading**

**Week 1 - What is philosophy, what is science, what is religion, and what might their relationship be?**

**Essential Readings**


**Further Readings**

**Week 2 – ‘In the Beginning’: Big Bang Cosmology**

**Essential Readings**


**Further Readings**


**Further Readings | Also of interest:**


**Week 3 – Science and Scripture**

**Essential Readings**


**Further Readings**


**Week 4 – A Scientist’s Interpretation of the Book of Job**

**Essential Readings**

**Further Readings**

**Week 5 – Theism and the Fine Tuning of the Laws of Nature**

**Essential Readings**

**Further Readings**

**Week 6 – Are Miracles Rationally Believable?**

**Essential Readings**

**Further Readings**

**Week 7 – Laws of Nature and Divine Action**

**Essential Readings**


**Further Readings**


**Week 8 – Care for Creation in the Anthropocene**

**Essential Readings**


**Further Readings**


Ruskin, J. (n.d.). Lectures on Art, Delivered Before the University of Oxford in Hilary Term, 1870.


**Week 9 – Physics and Reality: Classical or Quantum?**

**Essential Readings**


**Further Readings**


**Week 10 – Truth and Reality: Part 1**

**Essential Readings**

Further Readings


Week 11 – Truth and Reality: Part 2

Essential Readings


Further Readings


Resources

Reading list materials are available via the course LEARN site. Please ensure you have completed the library induction tutorial. Should you have any problems accessing any of the materials for the course please contact the course librarian, Mrs Anne Donnelly: anne.donnelly@ed.ac.uk

Assessment

Coursework (85%)

This course will primarily be assessed through the submission of an essay of no more than 2500 words on a topic chosen by the student. The student must consult with the course organiser on the chosen topic. This essay will account for 85% of the student’s course mark. The essay is due on Monday, 9 December, 2019 at 2pm UK time.

Participation (15%)

The remaining 15% of the final course mark will be determined by the student’s successful participation in the on-line course discussion board. The requirements and guidance for discussion board postings can be found on Learn.
Live Seminars

There will be four live seminars held throughout the semester. Dates and times will be made available on Learn. While these seminars are optional, they are strongly encouraged as an essential part of the overall learning experience.

How to submit assessments

Instructions for online essay submission will be made available on Learn.

Marking and feedback

Each essay is marked by two members of the academic staff, who will also provide feedback on the content and quality of the essay. Essays are marked within 21 working days of their submission.

External examiners

Professor Michael Reiss