Philosophy, Science and Religion 1 – The Physical
World (PHIL11160)

Course Organiser – Dr. James Henry Collin

University of Edinburgh

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.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course students should:

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

This course will primarily be assessed through the submission of an essay of no more than 2500 words on a topic set by the course organiser. This will account for 85% of the student’s course mark. The remaining 15% of the final course mark will be determined by the student’s successful participation in the on-line activities associated with the course, such as relevant postings on the course discussion board.

SYLLABUS

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.


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

**Essential Readings**


**Further Readings**


(2012). PhysPhil Conference from the University of St Andrews. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAwLyn5tTJJIL1rAUTl3ybMKntQv4KIVu

Week 10 | Truth and Reality 1

Essential Readings

Further Readings

Week 11 | Truth and Reality 2

Essential Readings

Further Readings
