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**Syllabus/Class Overview Template**

**Required Components**

**General Class Information**

Instructor Name and Contact Information: Leo Daugherty – ld8t@virginia.edu

Subject Area and Catalog Number: ISIN 4520 (BIS)

Year and Term: Fall, 2014

Class Title: God and Darwin

Level (Graduate or Undergraduate): 4th-year

Credit Type: Standard, 3 credits

Class Description God and Darwin is an examination of the question, Are some contemporary biologists and some contemporary religionists correct or incorrect in arguing that belief in God and belief in Darwin are irreconcilable – that is, mutually exclusive?

Required Text (Include ISBN, specific edition): See below under “Class Specific Information”

Learning Outcomes: See below under “Class Specific Information”

Assessment Components: See below under “Class Specific Information”

Delivery Mode Expectations (Classroom/Internet and Web-based classes, specify any live (synchronous) meetings, dates, times, and location of delivery): All sessions F to F.

Required Technical Resources and Technical Components: N/A

**Class Specific Information**

[Note: SUBJECT TO REVISION}]

SYLLABUS: ISIN 4520: GOD AND DARWIN: FRIENDS OR FOES?

Fall 2014

Days and Time: Tuesdays (7:00-9:45 p.m.)

Room: Zehmer TBA

Leo Daugherty <ld8t@virginia.edu>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Several eminent, highly respected, high-profile scientists and philosophers have made rigorous arguments in recent years that God and Darwin are logically irreconcilable -- and thus that no reasonable person can have both. Stated more specifically, they have claimed that the idea of a world-creating monotheistic god of any kind is mutually exclusive with the idea of evolution by natural selection as set forth by Darwin and Wallace in the nineteenth century, and as modified by their followers in evolutionary biology and genetics in the past hundred-plus years. It is also true that many of the world's devoutly religious people, including millions of Americans believe the same thing, but for very different reasons. At the same time, however, several eminent, highly respected, high-profile scientists and philosophers have argued that God and Darwin are complementary -- that they in no real sense conflict at all.

In this course, we will read and discuss the books at the heart of the current debate – plus two others (and some quick-start journalistic handouts) that students may find useful in getting oriented and in framing the debate. No previous formal study of either religion or evolutionary biology is required, although students are expected to have an educated layperson's understanding of the idea of evolutionary biology by natural selection -- no matter what they may think of it.

"Full Disclosure Statement." The instructor considers himself to be a devout, nondenominational believer in monotheism who is also a devout Darwinist. With that acknowledged up front, he would add that he is open to changing his mind in any direction, and that, if he were not, he would not be offering this course, and that, in any event, he will not be putting forth his own beliefs (such as they are) in the course. The course has absolutely no ideological agenda -- and couldn't be any good if it did.

*Attendance at the first session on 26 AUGUST is required. No exceptions, except with*

*instructor's written permission*.

REQUIRED BOOKS. (in Probable Order of Reading):

Barbara Sproul, *Primal Myths: Creation Stories from Around the World*. A wide-ranging collection of creation stories from all cultures. Includes the Account in Genesis*.*

Karen Armstrong, *The History of God.* A recent best-seller, this book provides what

some consider the best account of the history of belief in the monotheistic god of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. (As she explains in her introduction, Armstrong is a former nun who remains a nondenominational believer. The book, however, does not espouse religious belief.

Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion (*along with Dawkins' film *The Root of All Evil*). Dawkins is one of the world's leading geneticists, and one of its most famous atheists. He has taught at Oxford for over forty years. He strongly advocates "mutual exclusivism."

Daniel Dennett: *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon.* One of the world's most eminent living philosophers, Dennett is (among many other things) the most radical exponent of "mutual exclusivism" on logical grounds.

Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God.* Collins, another eminent geneticist, was for years been head of the Human Genome Project and is at present head of the National Institute of Health. He claims that his Darwinism and his study of genetics reaffirm his belief in God.

Kenneth Miller: *Finding Darwin's God*. Miller, one of the most prominent cell biologists and a prize-winning teacher (Brown), argues in everyday language for common ground between belief in God and belief in Darwin.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS (optional but in the UVa Bookstore on our shelf):

Francis S. Collins: *Belief. A terrific new collection of useful essays from the past and*

*president in defense (and advocacy) of Religious or Spiritual Belief.*

Christopher Hitchens: *The Portable Atheist. A terrific new collection of useful essays*

*from the past and present in defense (and advocacy) of Atheism.*

OTHER MATERIALS  *(free)*

Handouts on recent Neo-Darwinian theory from *The Smithsonian Magazine*, *National Geographic*, and *The Economist, New York Review of Books, Slate*.

Booklets from the Templeton Foundation on the question, Can God and Darwin be reconciled?

Films: Probably *The Rapture*, a prize-winning story about Belief and Atheism, plus a

controversial recent DVD from the Discovery Institute advocating "Intelligent Design."

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Faithful attendance at class, careful preparation of weekly readings, vigorous participation in discussion. Completion of each week’s reading, in the order in which the readings are listed, with each reading to be completed by the date of the meeting for which it is listed.

2. Essay writing. Probably two essays. Details to be provided in Revised Syllabus handed out at first or second meeting.

3. Completion of a mid-term and of a final examination. These examinations will consist of long and short essay questions. Both examinations will be take-home exercises.

4. Active participation, collaboration, and journal-keeping.

GRADING SYSTEM

Essays: approximately one-third (or one-sixth each)

Active Participation, collaborative work, and personal journal-keeping: approximately one-third

Mid-term examination: approximately one-sixth

Final examination: approximately one-sixth

OTHER COURSE-SPECIFIC INFORMATION FROM UVa

**Technical Specifications: Computer Hardware:**

* Computer with basic audio/video output equipment
* Internet access (broadband recommended)
* Microsoft Word

**Technical Support Contacts:**

* Login/Password: scpshelpdesk@virginia.edu
* UVaCollab: collab-support@virginia.edu

BbCollaborate (Elluminate) Support: <http://support.blackboardcollaborate.com>

SHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS

1. 26 August. [Introduction and Orientation Meeting.] *Attendance Required*. No readings expected and no discussion of texts, but students should be busily reading the first book for the term, Sproul’s *Primal Myths*.

2. 2 September. Sproul, *Primal Myths.* At a minimum, students should have read pp. 1-30; pp. 77-90; pp. 123-135; pp. 146-151; pp. 151-155; pp. 156-171; 192-194; more if you wish, all if you wish and can.

3. 9 September*.* Armstrong, *History of God* to p. 170.

4. 16 September. Armstrong, *History of God,* p. 257 to end.

5. 23 September. Dawkins, *God Delusion,* exact pages TBA; Templeton booklet, pp. 2-6, 23-25; *History* magazine handout, “Darwin vs. God?”; *Smithsonian* magazine handout, “The Origin of a Theory”; *Economist* magazine handout, “The Story of Man”; *Smithsonian* magazine handout (only one page long and easy to miss), “Interview; Fred Spoor”; *Time* magazine handout (again, one page long and easy to miss), “Human Evolution.”

6. 30 September. Dawkins (continued); Templeton booklet, pp. 30-32, 36-38. *National*

*Geographic* magazine article, “Was Darwin Wrong?”; *New York Review of Books*

magazine article, “Not So Natural Selection” (a review of the current best-seller –

among scientific professionals! – “What Darwin Got Wrong” by Fodor and Piatelli-

Palmarini. FIRST ESSAY DUE ON THIS DATE (advisory). MID-TERM EXAMS HANDED OUT ON THIS DATE.

7. [7 October. UVa-wide Reading Day – No Classes.]

8. 14 October. Dennett, *Breaking the Spell*, pp. TBA. MID-TERM EXAMS DUE BACK.

9. 21 October. Dennett, continued to end.

10. 28 October. Collins, *Language of God* through Chapter 4. Templeton booklet, pp. 8-22.

11. 4 November. Collins, concluded.

12. 11 November. FILM: *The Privileged Planet.* Discussion following.

13. 18 November. Gilbert, *Finding Darwin’s God,* through Chaprter 5.

14. 25 November. FILM: *The Rapture*. To be discussed at meeting of 2 December, after initial reactions are over and serious contemplation begun. SECOND ESSAY DUE ON THIS DATE.

15. 2 December. Consolidation and Synthesis Meeting. Read remainder of Gilbert for

 discussion beforehand. FINAL EXAM HANDED OUT. DUE BACK (TO BIS

 OFFICE) BY 5:00 p.m. THURSDAY, 11 DECEMBER.

**STANDARE U.Va. and SCPS Policies**

**Purpose Statement:** The central purpose of the University of Virginia is to enrich the mind by

stimulating and sustaining a spirit of free inquiry directed to understanding the nature of the

universe and the role of mankind in it. Activities designed to quicken, discipline, and enlarge the

intellectual and creative capacities, as well as the aesthetic and ethical awareness, of the members

of the University and to record, preserve, and disseminate the results of intellectual discovery and

creative endeavor serve this purpose. In fulfilling it, the University places the highest priority on

achieving eminence as a center of higher learning.

**Content and Discourse in Professional Education Courses:** Students are expected to discuss issues respectfully and to honor differing points of view. Disrespectful behavior, verbal and nonverbal, will not be tolerated.

**SCPS Grading Policies:** Courses carrying a School of Continuing and Professional Studies subject area use the following grading system:  A+, A, A-; B+, B, B-; C+, C, C-; D+, D, D-; F.  S (satisfactory) and U (unsatisfactory) are used for some course offerings. For noncredit courses, the grade notation is N (no credit). Students who audit courses receive the designation AU (audit). The symbol W is used when a student officially drops a course before its completion or if the student withdraws from an academic program of the University. Please [visit SCPS Grades](http://www.scps.virginia.edu/audience/students/grades) for more information.

**Attendance**: Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Instructors establish attendance and participation requirements for each of their courses. Class requirements, regardless of delivery mode, are not waived due to a student's absence from class. Instructors will require students to make up any missed coursework and may deny credit to any student whose absences are excessive.

**University Email Policies:** Students are expected to check their official U.Va. email addresses on a frequent and consistent basis to remain informed of University communications, as certain communications may be time sensitive. Students who fail to check their email on a regular basis are responsible for any resulting consequences.

**University of Virginia Honor System:** All work should be pledged in the spirit of the Honor System at the University of Virginia.The instructor will indicate which assignments and activities are to be done individually and which permit collaboration. The following pledge should be written out at the end of all quizzes, examinations, individual assignments and papers: “I pledge that I have neither given nor received help on this examination (quiz, assignment, etc.)”. The pledge must be signed by the student. For more information please visit <http://www.virginia.edu/honor>.

**Special Needs:** It is the policy of the University of Virginia to accommodate students with disabilities in accordance with federal and state laws. Any SCPS student with a disability who needs accommodation (e.g., in arrangements for seating, extended time for examinations, or note-taking, etc.),should contact the Student Disability Access Center (SDAC) and provide them with appropriate medical or psychological documentation of his/her condition. Once accommodations are approved, it is the student’s responsibility to follow up with the instructor about logistics and implementation of accommodations. Accommodations for test taking should be arranged at least 14 business days in advance of the date of the test(s). Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the SDAC*:* 434-243-5180/Voice, 434-465-6579/Video Phone, 434-243-5188/Fax. Further policies and statements available[: U.Va. Department of Student Health](http://www.virginia.edu/studenthealth/sdac.html#types)

For further policies and statements about student rights and responsibilities, please see [U.Va Website](http://www.scps.virginia.edu/audience/students) (<http://www.scps.virginia.edu/audience/students>

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