

## 840:352 RELIGION AND SCIENCE

Dr. James W. Jones

Spring, 2012

Office Hours, M 1:00 – 3:00, and other times by appointment, Loree 118

Readings. The following books have been ordered at the Douglass Bookstore

Ian Barbour, *When Science Meets Religion*.

Holmes Rolston, *Science and Religion: A Critical Survey*

Michael Ruse, *Can A Darwinian be a Christian?*

James W. Jones, *Waking From Newton's Sleep: Dialogues on Spirituality in an Age of Science*

Requirements. Each class period will be devoted to both lecture and discussion. Students are expected to have done the reading and come to class prepared with questions and comments for discussion. This is one of the reasons the class is being kept small. Class participation will be part of the final grade. There will be four brief (approximately 8-10 pages) essays due, as marked on the syllabus. The topic for the final essay will be given out the last day of class. No extensions will be given on any assignments. No one will get credit for the course who does not complete all the assignments

Essays. One of the purposes of this course to help students learn to think critically about the relationships between religion and science. The essays will require students to critically evaluate and discuss various aspects of this relationship. Each of the three required essays must contain at least three components: (1) reference to the specifics of the texts that you are evaluating, and not a just report of general conclusions; (2) discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the argument made there; and (3) discussion of the implications of this article for the relationship between science and religion. No readings or references beyond the course material should be consulted. Students are required to do their own analysis and evaluation of the material. Violations of the university policy on academic integrity will be dealt with severely. The University Policy can be found at <http://TeachX.rutgers.edu/integrity/index.html>. Essays are to be submitted in two forms: a hard copy at the beginning of class on the assigned day and thru the Turn-it-in portal on Sakai. These essays will be graded according to the enclosed FAS Grading Template. This means, among other things, that no particular credit will be given for simply repeating the contents of the readings.

Note: All cell phones, pagers, etc. must be turned off in class. Anyone whose device goes off during class will be asked to leave for the remainder of that period.

## COURSE OUTLINE

### Knowledge in Religion and Science

1/23 – 2/13

J. W. Jones, *The Texture of Knowledge*, chapters 1-4, 6 (electronic reserve).

Holmes Rolston, *Science and Religion: A Critical Survey*, Chapter 1.

James W. Jones, *Waking From Newton's Sleep: Dialogues on Spirituality in an Age of Science*

2/20 First essay due at the beginning of class today: Use the material presented so far in the course, to evaluate the following quotation in a 8-10 page paper. Specific reference to course material is required.

*"A universe with a God would look quite different from a universe without one. So religion is a scientific theory... Faith is the great cop-out, the great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence. Faith is belief in spite of, even perhaps because of, the lack of evidence. Richard Dawkins*

Do you agree with this quotation? Why or why not? What are the implications of your essay for understanding the relationships between religion and science?

### Matter and Spirit

2/20-2/27

J. W. Jones, *The Redemption of Matter*, chapters 4, 5, 6 (electronic reserve)

Ian Barbour, *When Science Meets Religion*, chapters 3 & 6.

Holmes Rolston, *Science and Religion: A Critical Survey*, chapter 2.

F. Capra, "Emptiness and form," from *The Tao of Physics*, chapter 14. (electronic reserve).

J. Polkinghorne, "Does God act in the physical world" from *Belief in God in an Age of Science* (electronic reserve).

3/5 Second essay, 8-10 pages, on the following topic: F. Capra, "Emptiness and form," and J. Polkinghorne, "Does God act in the physical world" both seek to articulate the relationship between an ultimate reality and the physical world that is congruent with modern science. Critically compare and contrast their approaches to this question. Where do they agree and disagree? Whose argument, if any, is more successful and why. Essay is due at the beginning of class today. No extensions will be given.

### Life and Evolution

3/5 – 3/26

H. Rolston, *Science and Religion*, chapter 3

Ian Barbour, *When Science Meets Religion*, chapter 4.

Michael Ruse, *Can A Darwinian be a Christian?* Chapters 1, 3-7, 11-12, epilogue.

[Note; No Class on 3/12]

4/2. Third essay, 8-10 pages on the following topic? H. Rolston, *Science and Religion*, chapter 3, and M. Ruse, *Can A Darwinian be a Christian?* Seek to reconcile Christianity with evolutionary theory. What are the similarities and differences in their approaches. Who is more convincing and why? Or is this an impossible project. Essay is due at the beginning of class today. No extensions will be given.

### Mind, Brain, and Soul

4/2-4/9

J.W. Jones, "Mind, Brain and Spirit – A clinician's Perspective – Or why I am not afraid of Dualism" from *Soul, Psyche, Brain*. (electronic Reserve)

Ian Barbour, *When Science Meets Religion*, chapter 5.

Nancey Murphy, "Non-Reductive Physicalism" (electronic reserve).

### Beyond the warfare of Religion and Science

4/16-4/30

Ian Barbour, *When Science Meets Religion*, chapter 1.

H. Rolston, *Science and Religion*, chapters 6, 7

J. W. Jones, *The Redemption of Matter*, chapter 7 (electronic reserve)

4/30 Last day of class. Topic for the final essay will be handed out.

5/7 Final essays due in the Religion Dept. office by 10:00am today. No extensions will be given.