

V2593: SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Spring 2010

Professor Philip Kitcher

Requirements

Two short essays and one final essay. The short essays (3-5 pages) will be due on February 27 and April 12; a list of topics from which you should choose will be handed out at least ten days in advance. The final essay (maximum 10 pages) is due on May 7; this will be on a topic of your own choosing, *which you must discuss with me before the last class.*

Grading

First essay 20%, second essay 25%, final essay 55%. Credit will be given for constructive contributions to class discussion.

Readings

You should buy the following books. The books are available at Book Culture. Readings marked CW are posted on Courseworks.

William James *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (Penguin) – VRE
Fyodor Dostoyevsky *The Brothers Karamazov* (Pevear/Volkhonsky translation) – BK
Søren Kierkegaard *Fear and Trembling* (Penguin) -- FT
Paul Tillich *The Courage to Be* – CB
Philip Kitcher *Living with Darwin* – LWD
John Dewey *A Common Faith* – CF

Schedule of Topics and Readings

1/19	<i>Introduction: A Simple Story?</i>	No Reading
1/25	<i>What is Knowledge?</i>	No Reading
1/27	<i>The Objectivity of Science</i>	No Reading
2/1	<i>What is Religion?</i>	VRE Lecture (Chapter) II
2/3	<i>The Problem of Evil</i>	Hume <i>Dialogues</i> X, XI [CW]
2/8	<i>Belief in Miracles</i>	Hume <i>Inquiry</i> X [CW]
2/10	<i>Displacing God</i>	LWD Chapters 1-3
2/15	<i>Design, Good and Bad</i>	LWD Chapter 4

- 2/17 *The Enlightenment Case: Symmetry* LWD Chapter 4
 2/22 *The Enlightenment Case: Sacred Texts* Selections from Hebrew Bible
 and New Testament [CW]

FIRST ESSAY DUE

- 2/24 *The Enlightenment Case: Political and Social Pressures* No Reading
 3/1 *Challenges for Secularism: Community and Values* Kitcher "Challenges
 for Secularism" [CW]
 3/3 *Challenges for Secularism: Meaning and Purpose* No Reading
 3/8 *Faith, Knowledge and Responsibility* Clifford "Ethics of Belief" [CW]
 3/10 *The Will to Believe* James "The Will to Believe" [CW]

SPRING BREAK

- 3/22 *Religious Experience* VRE pp. 53-188
 3/24 *Conversion and Mysticism* VRE pp.189-258, 379-457
 3/29 "Other Ways of Knowing" No Reading
 3/31 "The Knight of Faith" FT (omit pp. 109-36)
 4/5 *Radical Faith* No Reading
 4/7 *Existential Commitment* CB pp. 32-63, 103-13, 123-90.
 4/12 *Religion and the Religious* CF Lecture (Chapter) 1

SECOND ESSAY DUE

- 4/14 *Faith without Mythology?* CF Lecture (Chapter) 2
 4/19 *A Common Faith?* CF Lecture (Chapter) 3
 4/21, 4/26, 4/28 *Faith, Love, and Commitment* BK (entire)*

*Because BK is long, you are urged to read it early in the semester.

- 5/3 *Concluding Reflections* No Reading

Office Hours

Office hours will be held twice weekly, at times to be determined. My office phone is 4-4884 and my e-mail is psk16@columbia.edu. My office is 717 Philosophy Hall.