



RELS 225 / 325

Science, Religion and Knowledge

2019



COURSE OUTLINE (SYLLABUS)



## Course Description

Critics of religion argue that religion and science are in conflict. Is this true? The paper invites you to answer this question by offering an overview of the issues involved and an analysis of the conceptions of knowledge found in scientific and religious communities.

## Lectures

Mon	11.00–11.50 (Lecture)	Castle C
Thu	10.00 – 10.50 (Tutorial)	St David C
Fri	11.00–11.50 (Lecture)	Castle C

See the [Lecture Schedule](#) below.

## Course Coordinator

Prof. Greg Dawes

Philosophy Programme

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To contact me outside of class time, please send an email.

## Workload

The course is worth 18 points, which is equivalent to 12 hours of work each week. Outside of lectures, ten hours a week should be devoted to your own study and assignment preparation.

Most learning in the humanities occurs while sitting in a quiet place, without distractions (digital or analogue), with a book or a printed article (and a pencil in hand to annotate it).

It is useful to have a question in mind as you read, so begin writing your assignments as early as possible. This will help to motivate your reading.

## Assessment

Internal assessment for the course has three components.

- (a) The first consists of weekly writing assignments, to be done in class each Friday, worth 15% of the final mark. (Distance students will submit these by email by Friday midday.)

- (b) The second consists of an essay outline, worth 5% of the final mark.
- (c) The third consists of an essay of no more than (a) 2000 words for Rels 225 or (b) 3000 words for Rels 325, worth 25% of the final mark.

Details of each are found below. In addition to the internal assessment, there will be a three-hour written exam, worth 55% of the final mark.

### (a) In-class Short Assignments

#### *On Campus Students:*

On Friday each week, students will be given 10 minutes to write a one-paragraph summary of the reading assigned for that week's material. (The readings are listed in the Coursebook and copies are on the Blackboard site.)

#### *Distance Students:*

Distance students will also be required write a summary, which they should submit by email (to [gregory.dawes@otago.ac.nz](mailto:gregory.dawes@otago.ac.nz)) by midday (12.00 noon) each Friday.

#### *All Students:*

A very good summary will gain 1.5 marks, a reasonably accurate one 1 mark, and one that shows little knowledge of the reading will gain (at most) 0.5 marks.

To gain the full 15%, a student must complete at least ten of these during the semester.

Where there is more than one reading listed in the Coursebook for topics covered in a particular week, the class will be told on the Monday which reading to prepare.

#### **A Sample Summary** (from a different course, viz. RELS 217/317):

Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 641–68.

In this extract from his book *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, Thomas reflects on what factors may have brought about a decline in belief in magic after the seventeenth century. He notes, first of all, that magical beliefs tend to be immune to evidence that would tell against them. The magician can generally 'explain away' the failure of a ritual. So it is hard to see what led (at least many educated) people to abandon such beliefs. Thomas examines

several possibilities. The first is the intellectual change represented by the 'scientific revolution'. This undermined the Aristotelian and neo-Platonic ideas to which magicians could appeal, as well as demanding experimentally demonstrable evidence for claims about the world. A second factor was the development of new technologies, which increased our control over the environment. This alleviated at least some of the anxieties which had led people to rely on magic. But often magic was abandoned before these new solutions had been developed. So a third factor seems to have been a new faith in the *possibility* of such technological solutions, even before they were found.

## (b) Essay Outline

Value: 5% of final mark.

Due Date: Mon 12 August.

Each student is to produce a one-page outline of the topic chosen for the essay (see below).

It should include:

- (a) headings and subheadings, to show what topics you will cover;
- (b) a brief indication of the anticipated conclusion; and
- (c) a list of at least three of the works you intend to consult.

The purpose of this outline is to assist you in writing a good essay. Your final essay need not resemble what you present on your outline, if I suggest you approach the topic differently. A sample outline (for a Rels 101 essay, as it happens) is given later in this Course Outline.

*On Campus Students:*

Please submit the outline in hard-copy form, in the essay box in the Religion office space on the fourth floor of the Te Tumu building by midday (12.00 noon) on the due date.

*Distance Students:*

Please submit your outline by email (to [gregory.dawes@otago.ac.nz](mailto:gregory.dawes@otago.ac.nz)) by midday (12.00 noon) on the due date.

## (c) Essay

Value: 25% of final mark.

Due Date: Mon 16 September.

The essay topics at each level are given below. Another topic may be chosen, *but only with the permission of the lecturer.*

An essay that exceeds the specified maximum length by more than 20% will also be penalized, unless it is of exceptional quality.

*On Campus Students:*

Please submit the essay in hard-copy form, in the essay box in the Religion office space on the fourth floor of the Te Tumu building, by midday (12.00 noon) on the due date.

*Distance Students:*

Please submit the essay by email (to [gregory.dawes@otago.ac.nz](mailto:gregory.dawes@otago.ac.nz)) by midday (12.00 noon) on the due date.

### Essay Topics for RELS 225

1. Choose one nineteenth-century Christian opponent and one nineteenth-century Christian supporter of Darwin's theory and outline the arguments each put forward.
2. Describe the Catholic Church's view of evolutionary theory, as found in Pope John Paul II's 1997 'Message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences'. Is it compatible with modern evolutionary science?
3. Citing three of Merton's critics, discuss and evaluate the view of scientific norms found in Robert Merton's 1942 essay, 'The Normative Structure of Science'.

### Essay Topics for RELS 325

1. The nineteenth-century Christian theologian Charles Hodge argued that 'Darwinism' is 'virtually equivalent to atheism'. Why did he believe this and how might a Christian supporter of Darwin have responded?
2. The theologian Keith Ward, in his article 'Theistic Evolution', defends the view that evolution is God's method of creation. Outline his view and evaluate the arguments by which he defends it.
3. 'Faith is belief in spite of, even perhaps because of, the lack of evidence.' (Richard Dawkins) Is this how Thomas Aquinas understood the act of faith?

A significant proportion of the essay mark will be awarded on the basis of how well you have answered the particular question you chose. If, for instance, you choose question 3 (for RELS 225), make sure you find and discuss the work of three critics of Merton's position. Or if you choose topic 3 (for RELS 325), don't spend all your time discussing Dawkins's position. The main focus should be on Aquinas's view.

**Marks will be deducted for essays that cite websites.** (A Google search is not research.) Cite books from academic publishers and peer-reviewed articles instead. The only exception will be for web-based material that is peer-reviewed, such as the [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#).

### Submitting Essays

- (a) All assignments should be typewritten in a 12-point serif typeface (e.g. Times Roman or Century Schoolbook [as used here]) on one side of A4 paper, with a line spacing of at least 1.3 (130%) and a 3cm left-hand margin for comments.
- (b) Make frequent back-up copies of your essay as you write, and keep a backup copy even after submission. Excuses of the 'my dog ate my pendrive' variety will not be accepted.
- (c) The essay should have a cover page, with the following information in the **top, right-hand corner**.

Rels 225 [325] Student ID No: <your ID no.> Lecturer: Prof. Greg Dawes Due Date: 11 Sept. 2017
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- (d) The cover page should also include the **essay question**, written out in full, and the following **declaration**, signed:

I declare that this essay is entirely my own work and does not contravene the University's policy regarding plagiarism, as found on the course outline.
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Signed: <your signature>

- (e) The essay should be stapled in the top, left-hand corner and the pages numbered.
- (f) Essays must be handed in (or, in the case of Distance Students, emailed to me) by 12.00 noon on the due date. (Only Distance

Students should email copies.) On-campus students should place their essays in the essay box in the Religion office space on the fourth floor of the Te Tumu building.

- (g) Late assignments will be penalized at the rate of one mark (5%) for each working day overdue.
- (h) When marked, the essay will be given back to you in class. Essays not collected in class will be retained by the Department for collection, but the Department takes no responsibility for their safe-keeping.

## Referencing / Footnoting Conventions

In general, footnotes (or in-text author-date references) must be used to indicate

- (a) the sources of any quotations in your text, and
- (b) the sources of any ideas that are not your own.

In other words, every contestable claim – every statement that is not an undisputed and well-known matter of fact – must be backed up by evidence or by an argument, either your own or someone else’s (supported by a reference).

References must follow one or other of the recognized formats for academic writing. You may use

*either* the **author-date, in-text** referencing system (with a bibliography at the end) e.g. (Flew 2007: 14), or  
*or* **footnotes** (with a bibliography at the end if short titles have been used in footnotes),

but don’t mix the two.

In either case, I recommend (but do not insist on) the conventions set out the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition (*CMS*<sub>15</sub>), which are as follows.

In a **footnote**, I would suggest (following *CMS*<sub>15</sub>) that you use short titles in footnotes. But if you do so, you must provide the full entry in the bibliography (see below). Short titles should take this form:

Boadt, <i>Reading Plato</i> , 356. Bockmuehl, “To Be or Not to Be,” 275. Frederic Engels, “Judaism,” 150.
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In a **bibliography**, where **footnotes with short titles** have been used, the same works should be cited as follows.

Boadt, Lawrence. *Reading Plato: An Introduction*. New York, NY: Prometheus Press, 1984.

Bockmuehl, Markus. “‘To Be or Not to Be’: Moral Dilemmas in Shakespeare.” *Journal of Philosophy* 51 (1998):271–81.

Engels, Frederic. “Judaism.” In *The Communist Encyclopedia*, edited by Karl and Eleanor Marx, 144-54. London: Soncino, 1873.

In a **bibliography**, where the **author-date** system has been used in the text, the same works should be cited as follows.

Boadt, Lawrence. 1984. *Reading Plato: An Introduction*. New York, NY: Prometheus Press.

Bockmuehl, Markus. 1998. “‘To Be or Not to Be’: Moral Dilemmas in Shakespeare.” *Journal of Philosophy* 51:271–81.

Engels, Frederic. 1873. “Judaism.” In *The Communist Encyclopedia*, edited by Karl and Eleanor Marx, 144-54. London: Soncino.

**Note:** Where a book contains chapters by many authors – as in the case of the last example – cite the author of the particular chapter you are using. Do not cite merely the editor of the collection.

## Marking Standards

A **B-grade** essay shows signs of competence but offers little evidence of independent thought. You will receive a **C-grade** or lower if it is clear you don’t understand what you have read, have make mistakes, or cannot present the material clearly. You will receive an **A-grade** for depth of understanding and for presenting material that goes beyond what has been discussed in class. Wit, style, and clarity will help. We do not do any scaling nor do we have a prearranged number of passes, fails, or As. The relation between grades and percentage marks is as follows:

<b>A+</b> 90–100	<b>B+</b> 75–79	<b>C+</b> 60–64	<b>D</b> 40–49 Fail
<b>A</b> 85–89	<b>B</b> 70–74	<b>C</b> 55–59	<b>E</b> 0–39 Fail
<b>A-</b> 80–84	<b>B-</b> 65–69	<b>C-</b> 50–54	

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves copying or paraphrasing another's work, whether intentionally or otherwise, and presenting it as one's own. Students found to have plagiarized will be subject to the University's dishonest practice regulations. This may result in forfeiture of marks for the piece of work submitted, a zero grade for the paper, or in extreme cases, exclusion from the University.

To avoid breaching this policy, do not copy text from a published work without acknowledgement. In reporting the words of an author, you must clearly indicate it is a quotation. For short quotations, this is done by enclosing the words in quotation marks. For longer quotations (four lines or more), indent the text on both sides and (ideally) print it in 11-point type. Remember that all quotations must be followed by a source reference.

## Library Assistance

### *Self Help Resources*

This guide offers tips and techniques in developing independent research & information skills. <http://otago.libguides.com/selfhelp>

### *Library Website*

The Library website provides online access to resources and services, including the Catalogue, Library Search, and Article Databases.

Library website: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/library>

### *Religion Subject Guides*

These guides will help you find information for your assignments including articles, books, websites and more.

<http://otago.libguides.com/religion>

### *Distance Library Service*

This guide will provide you with access to a range of key Library resources and services: <http://otago.libguides.com/distance>

### *Ask a Question*

Library staff at any lending and information desk are available Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 6.00pm. You can also contact staff by phone at (03) 479 8910 or email at [ask.library@otago.ac.nz](mailto:ask.library@otago.ac.nz)

## Sample Essay Outline

(originally for Rels 101, but the structure is what you need to note)

Outline the origin, nature, and development of Karaism. What influence, if any, did this movement have on later Judaism?

### **1. Origins and Development**

8th-century: Founder was Anan ben David (in 'Babylon' = Baghdad)

- (a) challenges authority of Jewish leadership
- (b) moves to Palestine & establishes community.
- (c) key work: *sefer ha-mitzvot* (book of the commandments).

9th–11th centuries: the movement spread to Persia, Egypt, Spain, Asia. Rabbis in the tradition of the Mishnah were strongly opposed to the Karaites and by the 12th century, the movement began to disintegrate, although it never disappeared.

### **2. Nature**

Karaites = *Bnai Mikra*: 'children of the [written] text'

- (a) denied authority of Oral Torah (Mishnah & Talmud)
- (b) stressed right of individual interpretation.
- (c) effect = some freedom from 'extra' (non-biblical) commandments, but also a loss of the Talmudic adaptations (led to rigidity).

### **3. Influence on Judaism**

Mainly by reaction: a strong re-affirmation of Oral Torah by the rabbis in the tradition of the Mishnah.

### **Sources**

Sachar, Abraham Leon. *A History of the Jews*. 5th edition. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1965.

Spielberg, Stephen. "Karaites." In *Encyclopedia Judaica*, edited by Moshe Idel, 3: 235–240. Jerusalem: Ktav Publishing, 1973.

Trepp, Leo. *A History of the Jewish Experience*. New York: Behrman House, 1962.

## Lecture Schedule

1.	Mon	8 July	What is the Question?
Part One – The Warfare Thesis			
2.	Fri	12 July	John William Draper
3.	Mon	15 July	Andrew Dickson White
Part Two – Science and Religion			
4.	Fri	19 July	Ian Barbour’s Fourfold Typology
5.	Mon	22 July	Mikael Stenmark’s Analysis
6.	Fri	26 July	Definitions (A): Science and Modern Science
7.	Mon	29 July	Definitions (B): Two Types of Religion
Part Three – A Case Study: Creationism			
8.	Fri	2 Aug.	Darwin and Creation (A)
9.	Mon	5 Aug.	Darwin and Creation (B)
10.	Fri	9 Aug.	Reactions to Darwin (A)
11.	Mon	12 Aug.	Reactions to Darwin (B) <b>Outline Due Date</b>
12.	Fri	16 Aug.	The Creationist Revival (A)
13.	Mon	19 Aug.	The Creationist Revival (B)
14.	Fri	23 Aug.	Varieties of Modern Creationism
<i>Mid-semester break (26 – 30 Aug.)</i>			
Part Four – Locating the Conflict			
15.	Mon	2 Sept.	Locating the Conflict (A)
16.	Fri	6 Sept.	Locating the Conflict (B)
Part Five – Norms and Knowledge			
17.	Mon	9 Sept.	The Norms of Science
18.	Fri	13 Sept.	Authority in Science (A)
19.	Mon	16 Sept.	Authority in Science (B) <b>Essay Due Date</b>
20.	Fri	20 Sept.	Religious Faith
21.	Mon	23 Sept.	The Norms of Religion
22.	Fri	27 Sept.	<b>No Class (SS4C)</b> <b>Email Summaries</b>
Part Six – Science as a Religion			
23.	Mon	30 Sept.	Grand Narratives
24.	Fri	4 Oct.	Dodgy Metaphors
25.	Mon	7 Oct.	A Diagnosis <b>Exam Info.</b>

