



RELS 225 / 325

Science, Religion and Knowledge

2017



COURSE OUTLINE

## Course Description

It is commonly supposed that religion and science are in conflict. But is this true? The paper invites students to answer this question by offering an analysis of the differing conceptions of knowledge to be found in scientific and religious communities.

## Lectures

Mon 10.00–10.50

Fri 10.00–10.50

See the Lecture Outline below.

## Lecturer

Dr Greg Dawes

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tel. 479 5232

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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.

## Assessment

Internal assessment for the course has two components.

- (a) The first consists of in-class short assignments, worth 10% of the final mark.
- (b) The second 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.

In addition to the internal assessment, there will be a three-hour written exam, worth 65% of the final mark.

### ***(a) In-class Short Assignments***

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.)

A reasonably accurate summary will gain one mark. A summary that shows little or no knowledge of the reading will gain no marks.

To gain the full 10%, a student must complete ten of these.

Where there is more than one reading for that week, the class will be told on the Monday which reading to prepare.

**A Sample Summary** (so you know what is expected):

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**

The essay topics at each level are given below.

An essay that exceeds the specified maximum length by more than 20% (which is, for instance, more than 2400 words in the case of a 2000-word essay) will also penalized, unless it is of exceptional quality.

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.

Note that marks will be deducted for essays that cite websites. (A Google search is not research.) Cite books and 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) 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 back-up copies of your essay as you write, and keep a backup copy even after submission.

- (c) The essay should have a cover page, with the following information in the **top, right-hand corner**.

Rels 225 [325] Name: <your name> Lecturer: Dr Greg Dawes Due Date: 9 Sept. 2013
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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. Signed: <your signature>
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- (e) The essay should be stapled in the top, left-hand corner and the pages numbered.
- (f) Essays must be handed in by 12 noon on the due date. Please do not use plastic folders, when submitting. Place your essay in the essay box outside the Departmental Office, on the fourth floor of the Burns (Arts) 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. <i>Reading Plato: An Introduction</i> . New York, NY: Prometheus Press, 1984. Bockmuehl, Markus. "To Be or Not to Be': Moral Dilemmas in Shakespeare." <i>Journal of Philosophy</i> 51 (1998):271–81. Engels, Frederic. "Judaism." In <i>The Communist Encyclopedia</i> , edited by Karl and Eleanor Marx, 144-54. London: Soncino, 1873.
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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. <i>Reading Plato: An Introduction</i> . New York, NY: Prometheus Press. Bockmuehl, Markus. 1998. "To Be or Not to Be': Moral Dilemmas in Shakespeare." <i>Journal of Philosophy</i> 51:271–81. Engels, Frederic. 1873. "Judaism." In <i>The Communist Encyclopedia</i> , edited by Karl and Eleanor Marx, 144-54. London: Soncino.
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**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 made 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***

### ***University of Otago Policy***

Students should make sure that all submitted work is their own. Plagiarism is a form of dishonest practice and is defined as copying or paraphrasing another's work, whether intentionally or otherwise, and presenting it as one's own.

In practice this means plagiarism includes any attempt in any piece of submitted work (e.g. an assignment or test) to present as one's own work the work of another (whether of another student or a published authority).

Assignments submitted electronically may be checked through the software "Safe Assign" for evidence of copied material. A match with other written material may be interpreted as plagiarism if it is not properly cited according to departmental bibliographical standards.

Submission of an assignment requiring your student ID and password is an admission that what you have submitted is your own work.

Any student found responsible for plagiarism in any piece of work submitted for assessment shall be subject to the University's dishonest practice regulations which may result in various penalties, including 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

### ***Library Search Video Tutorial***

This 3 minute video covers the basics: <https://unitube.otago.ac.nz/view?m=qlUI54rkNHj>

### ***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>

### ***Theology and Religion Subject Guides***

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

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

<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 i desk are available Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm. Try these people first to answer any questions you might have about using the Library and its resources.

tel: 64 3 479 8910

email: [ask.library@otago.ac.nz](mailto:ask.library@otago.ac.nz)

### ***Study Smart***

The Study Smart tab in Blackboard offers advice and links to services and resources to help you with your studies.



## Lecture Outline

1.	Mon	10 July	What is the Question?
<b><i>Part One – The Warfare Thesis</i></b>			
2.	Fri	14 July	John William Draper
3.	Mon	17 July	Andrew Dickson White
<b><i>Part Two – Science and Religion</i></b>			
4.	Fri	21 July	Ian Barbour’s Fourfold Typology
5.	Mon	31 July	Mikael Stenmark’s Analysis
6.	Fri	4 Aug.	Defining ‘Science’ and ‘Religion’
<b><i>Part Three – A Case Study: Creationism</i></b>			
7.	Mon	7 Aug.	Darwin and Creation (A)
8.	Fri	11 Aug.	Darwin and Creation (B)
9.	Mon	14 Aug.	Reactions to Darwin
10.	Fri	18 Aug.	The Creationist Revival
11.	Mon	21 Aug.	Varieties of Modern Creationism
<b><i>Part Four – Locating the Conflict</i></b>			
12.	Fri	25 Aug.	(a) Bodies of Doctrine (b) Distinct Communities
<i>Mid-semester break (28 Aug. – 1 Sept.)</i>			
13.	Mon	4 Sept.	(c) Modes of Thought (d) Epistemic Norms
14.	Fri	8 Sept.	Goals and Means
<b><i>Part Five – Norms and Knowledge</i></b>			
15.	Mon	11 Sept.	The Norms of Science
16.	Fri	15 Sept.	Authority in Science
17.	Mon	18 Sept.	Religious Faith (A)
18.	Fri	22 Sept.	Religious Faith (B)
19.	Mon	25 Sept.	Religion without Faith (A)
20.	Fri	29 Sept.	Religion without Faith (B)
<b><i>Part Six – Science as a Religion</i></b>			
21.	Mon	2 Oct.	Grand Narratives & Dodgy Metaphors
22.	Fri	6 Oct.	The Scientific Priesthood
23.	Mon	9 Oct.	The Warfare Thesis Revisited & EXAM PREP.