



THEO6309/PHIL6311-Defend – Christianity and the Sciences
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Spring 2024: January 16 – May 8, 2024
DEFEND (January 2-5) & Online (Jan 16 – May 8)

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New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

This course is a study of the relationship between Christianity and the natural, social, and mathematical sciences. It will survey the history of the relationship between Christianity and the sciences, with a critique of the “warfare metaphor.” Special attention will be given to the creation/evolution debate and the age of the earth debate. The question of the possibility of a natural theology will be addressed, with an assessment of the various approaches. The scientific disciplines will be surveyed, such as mathematics, physics, biology, geology, psychology, and the social sciences, along with their impact on Christian thought.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you will:

1. Understand and be able to articulate the dialogues regarding the definition and nature of science.
2. Grasp the importance of philosophical reflection upon the discipline of science.
3. Demonstrate how your Christian faith affects your consideration of and interaction with scientific theories, consensus, and practices.
4. Exhibit the ability to interact deeply with scientists and philosophers of science with a broad spectrum of disciplines, views, and theories.
5. Critically assess various models of the interaction between Christianity and science.
6. Understand the various positions on Christianity, science, evolution, and primeval history; and clearly articulate a rationally grounded and biblically faithful personal approach to such debates.

Textbooks

[AC] Chalmers, A. F. *What is this thing called science? 4th ed.* Indianapolis: Hackett, 2013. ISBN: 978-1-62466-038-2

[4HA] Barrett, Matthew, and Ardel B. Caneday, eds. *Four Views on the Historical Adam.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-310-49927-5

[3C&S] Copan, Paul, and Christopher L. Reese, eds. *Three Views on Christianity and Science.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2021. ISBN: 978-0-310-59854-1

[AP] Plantinga, Alvin. *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, & Naturalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. ISBN: 978-0-19-981209-7

[4C&E] Stump, J. B. ed. *Four Views on Creation, Evolution, and Intelligent Design*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017. ISBN: 978-0-310-08097-9

[PT] Tyson, Paul. *A Christian Theology of Science: Reimagining a Theological Vision of Natural Knowledge*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2022. ISBN: 978-1-540966516

Course Teaching Methodology

The course will involve the following methodologies:

1. Assigned required reading
2. Classroom lectures & discussion (at Defend)
3. Online quizzes
4. Video lectures

Course Requirements

Notes:

- (1) *All work is to be completed/submitted via Canvas. Assignments are due by 11:59 P.M. on the indicated date unless otherwise specified.*
- (2) *After the January 2-5 Defend Conference, the remainder of the coursework is on a paced asynchronous calendar. Late work will be penalized by 10%. No late work will be accepted after Wednesday, May 1 – NO EXCEPTIONS. You are permitted and encouraged to complete and submit work early.*

1. Conference Attendance (4%)

This course is associated with NOBTS/LC's annual apologetics conference, Defend the Faith. As such, students are required to attend *all* plenary lectures in Leavell Chapel, and to attend *each* breakout session time slot (see below for specific required breakout sessions). You will upload a document to Canvas listing all plenary and breakout sessions attended. Your conference attendance confirmation is due by **Friday, January 12**, and is worth **4%** of your overall grade.

2. Defend Breakout Session Summaries (10%)

Students will write a 2-page (400-600 words) summary and reflection over each of **five** break-out sessions (total ~10 pages, 2000-3000 words). The reflections are informal but thoughtful submissions, reflecting your comprehension of the session material and your interaction with at least one major point. Each reflection is worth **2%** of your grade, for a total of **10%**. All five reflections must be compiled in **one** document, and submitted by **Wednesday, January 17**.

3. Defend Plenary Session Summaries (14%)

Students will write a 2-page (400-600 words) summary and reflection over each of **seven** plenary lectures (total ~14 pages, 3000-4000 words). The reflections are informal but thoughtful submissions, reflecting your comprehension of the lecture material and your interaction with at least one major point. Each reflection is worth **2%** of your grade, for a total of **14%**. All seven

plenary reflections must be compiled in **one** Word document, and submitted by 11:59 P.M. on **Friday, January 19**.

4. Personal Position Paper: *Christianity & Science* (11%)

After reading the point-counterpoint book *Three Views on Christianity & Science*, you will adopt (at least tentatively) a position on the relationship between the Christian faith and the natural sciences. Your paper must demonstrate familiarity with the three authors, their viewpoints, and the critiques & responses they each offer. In articulating your position, you should identify strengths and weaknesses of your position in comparison to the views that you do not embrace. Your position paper must be between 1500-2000 words, and is due on **Monday, January 29**. Papers will be graded on (a) comprehensiveness, (b) persuasiveness, and (c) writing style, and will be worth **11% of your final grade**.

5. Chalmers Reading Quizzes (12%)

Thoughtful and comprehensive reading is an essential aspect of graduate education, particularly in philosophy and theology. To encourage thorough reading, there will be short quizzes over each of the **nine** assigned 'sections' of A. F. Chalmers' *What is this thing called Science?* (4th ed.). The quizzes will not require additional work beyond a careful reading of the assigned material for that day. **Quizzes are closed-book and no-notes:** you are not permitted to utilize any resources other than your own mind. Quizzes will consist of multiple-choice and true-false questions, with occasional fill-in-the-blank or matching questions. The nine quizzes are due on January 31; February 5, 9, 12, 16, 21, and 26; and March 1 and 6. There will be 10 questions on each quiz, and only 7 minutes to complete the quiz. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped; each of the other 8 quizzes is worth 1.5% of your grade, for a total of **12%** of your final grade.

6. Tyson Analytical Book Review (15%)

Students will write an analytical review of Paul Tyson's *A Christian Theology of Science*. Book reviews will be 1750-2250 words in length, formatted in Turabian style. Your book review should be approximately half summary, half analysis. That is, spend the first half of your book review articulating the purpose, structure, and primary contours of the book; spend the second half evaluating the book, adjudicating how successful Tyson has been at accomplishing his goals and persuading his readers, and pointing out strengths and weaknesses of his work. The book review is **due on Friday, March 8**, and is worth **15% of your final grade**. A grading rubric is posted on the Canvas book review assignment page.

7. Plantinga Reading Quizzes (12%)

As with the Chalmers text, there will be short quizzes over each of the **nine** 'sections' of Alvin Plantinga's *Where the Conflict Really Lies*. The quizzes will not require additional work beyond a careful reading of the assigned material for that day. **Quizzes are closed-book and no-notes.** Quizzes will consist of multiple-choice and true-false questions, with occasional fill-in-the-blank or matching questions. The nine quizzes are due on March 18, 20, 22, 25, and 27; and April 1, 3, 5, and 8. There will be 10 questions on each quiz, and only 7 minutes to complete the quiz. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped; each of the other 8 quizzes is worth 1.5% of your grade, for a total of **12%** of your final grade.

8. Personal Position Paper: *Creation & Evolution* (11%)

After reading the point-counterpoint book *Four Views on Creation, Evolution, and Intelligent Design*, you will adopt (at least tentatively) a position on the timing and means of God’s creative activity. Your paper must demonstrate familiarity with the four authors, their viewpoints, and the critiques & responses they each offer. In articulating your position, you should identify strengths and weaknesses of your position in comparison to the views that you do not embrace. Your position paper must be between 1500-2000 words, and is due on **Thursday, April 18**. Papers will be graded on (a) comprehensiveness, (b) persuasiveness, and (c) writing style, and will be worth **11% of your final grade**.

9. Personal Position Paper: *The Historical Adam* (11%)

After reading the point-counterpoint book *Four Views on the Historical Adam*, you will adopt (at least tentatively) a position on the historicity of Adam’s creation, existence, and fall. Your paper must demonstrate familiarity with the four authors, their viewpoints, and the critiques & responses they each offer. In articulating your position, you should identify strengths and weaknesses of your position in comparison to the views that you do not embrace. Your position paper must be between 1500-2000 words, and is due on **Wednesday, May 1**. Papers will be graded on (a) comprehensiveness, (b) persuasiveness, and (c) writing style, and will be worth **11% of your final grade**.

Evaluation of Grade

The student's grade will be computed as follows:

Defend Attendance Log	January 12		4%
Defend Breakout Summaries	January 17	5 @ 2%/ea	10%
Defend Plenary Summaries	January 19	7 @ 2%/ea	14%
Christianity & Science Position Paper	January 29		11%
Chalmers Reading Quizzes	Top 8 of 9 @ 1.5%/ea		12%
Tyson, <i>Christian Theology of Science</i> Book Review	March 8		15%
Plantinga Reading Quizzes	Top 8 of 9 @ 1.5%/ea		12%
Creation & Evolution Position Paper	April 18		11%
Historical Adam Position Paper	May 1		11%

NOTE: All late work will receive an automatic and non-negotiable 10% late penalty. Late submissions will not receive substantive feedback. All late assignments must be turned in by Wednesday, May 1.

GRADING SCALE

- A: 93 - 100
- B: 85 - 92
- C: 77 - 84
- D: 70 - 76
- F: below 70

COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Attendance Policy

Students are required to attend all Defend sessions, and to engage regularly with course content through Canvas. Students who fail to participate consistently in course activities may receive a grade of “F” for the course.

Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. Canvas.NOBTS.com Click on the “Help” button for technical questions/support requests regarding the NOBTS Canvas System. You can also email questions to Canvas@nobts.edu.
3. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Policy for Late Submissions

All late work (quizzes as well as written assignments) will receive an automatic penalty of 10% *regardless of the reason for which the work was submitted late*. Late work must be turned in no later than Wednesday, May 1, and late written assignments will receive less substantive feedback.

Classroom and Online Decorum

Each student is expected to demonstrate appropriate Christian behavior. The student is expected to interact with other students in a fashion that will promote learning and respect for the opinions of the others in the course. A spirit of Christian charity is expected at all times.

Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer. A copy of the approved NOBTS Style Guide can be found in the course Canvas shell, or can be located online at the Writing Center’s page on the seminary website at: <https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf>

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

A high standard of personal integrity is expected of all NOBTS students. Copying another person’s work, submitting downloaded material without proper references, submitting material without properly citing the source, submitting the same material for credit in more than one course, and committing other such forms of dishonesty are strictly forbidden. *Although anything cited in three sources is considered public domain, we require that all sources be cited*. Any infraction may result in failing the assignment and the course. Any infraction will be reported to the Dean of Graduate Studies for further action. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for further definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Course Schedule

*NOTE: “Christianity and The Sciences” is a Defend ‘conference course’ and as such does not follow a regular ‘course schedule’. What follows is my outline for what you should be accomplishing each week of the semester. You are welcome to adopt your own schedule, with one important caveat – you may complete readings and assignments **early**, but **published due dates** (indicated in parentheses) **are firm**.*

January 2-5

1. ATTEND Defend apologetics conference
2. KEEP log of every plenary and breakout session that you attend
3. TAKE NOTES on at least 5 breakout sessions and 7 plenary sessions

January 8-12

1. NO scheduled learning activities
2. SUBMIT Defend Attendance Log (**January 12**)

January 16-19

1. WRITE and SUBMIT Defend Breakout Summaries (**January 17**)
2. WRITE and SUBMIT Defend Plenary Summaries (**January 19**)

January 22-26

1. READ 3C&S, Intro & Chapter 1 (9-76): Independence View - Ruse
2. READ 3C&S, Chapter 2 (77-132): Dialogue View – McGrath
3. READ 3C&S, Chapter 3 & Conc. (133-208): Constrained Integration View – Gordon

January 29 – February 2

1. WRITE and SUBMIT Christianity & Science Position Paper (**January 29**)
2. READ AFC Intro & Chapter 1 (ix-17): The Nature of Science
3. TAKE Chalmers Reading Quiz #1 (**January 31**)
4. READ PT Intro & Chapter 1 (1-17): Defining Theology and Science

February 5-9

1. READ AFC Chapters 2-4 (18-54): Observation, Experimentation, and Induction
2. TAKE Chalmers Reading Quiz #2 (**February 5**)
3. READ PT Chapters 2-3 (18-39): Christian Theology & Truth
4. READ AFC Chapters 5-6 (55-80): Falsificationsim
5. TAKE Chalmers Reading Quiz #3 (**February 9**)

February 12-16

1. READ AFC Chapters 7-8 (81-120): Limits of Falsificationism & Kuhnian Paradigms
2. TAKE Chalmers Reading Quiz #4 (**February 12**)
3. READ PT Chapter 4 (40-73): Viewing Science Through Theology
4. READ AFC Chapters 9-10 (121-48): Research Programs & Anarchism
5. TAKE Chalmers Reading Quiz #5 (**February 16**)

February 19-23

1. READ PT Chapters 5-6 (74-98): History, Science, and Theology
2. READ AFC Chapters 11-12 (149-78): Method & Bayesian Approaches
3. TAKE Chalmers Reading Quiz #6 (**February 21**)
4. READ PT Chapter 7 (99-130): Christian Theological Epistemology

February 26 – March 1

1. READ AFC Chapters 13-14 (179-208): Experimentalism & Scientific Laws
2. TAKE Chalmers Reading Quiz #7 (**February 26**)
3. READ PT Chapter 8 (131-56): Myth & History
4. READ AFC Chapters 15-16 (209-32): Realism & Anti-Realism
5. TAKE Chalmers Reading Quiz #8 (**March 1**)

March 4-8

1. READ PT Chapter 9 & Epilogue (157-82): Integrating Science & Theology
2. READ AFC Chapter 17 (233-66): Concluding Thoughts on Science
3. TAKE Chalmers Reading Quiz #9 (**March 6**)
4. WRITE and SUBMIT Tyson Book Review (**March 8**)

March 11-15 – SPRING BREAK

March 18-22

1. READ AP Preface & Chapter 1 (ix-30): Evolution & Christianity – Dawkins
2. TAKE Plantinga Reading Quiz #1 (**March 18**)
3. READ AP Chapter 2 (31-64): Evolution & Christianity – Dennett, Draper, Kitcher
4. TAKE Plantinga Reading Quiz #2 (**March 20**)
5. READ AP Chapters 3-4 (65-128): God's Interaction with Creation
6. TAKE Plantinga Reading Quiz #3 (**March 22**)

March 25-28

1. READ AP Chapter 5 (129-62): Superficial Conflict between Science & Faith
2. TAKE Plantinga Reading Quiz #4 (**March 25**)
3. READ AP Chapter 6 (163-92): Scientific Defeaters for Christianity?
4. TAKE Plantinga Reading Quiz #5 (**March 27**)

April 1-5

1. READ AP Chapter 7 (193-224): The Concord between Science & Faith – Fine-Tuning
2. TAKE Plantinga Reading Quiz #6 (**April 1**)
3. READ AP Chapter 8 (225-64): The Concord between Science & Faith – Design
4. TAKE Plantinga Reading Quiz #7 (**April 3**)
5. READ AP Chapter 9 (265-306): Deep Concord – The Christian Roots of Science
6. TAKE Plantinga Reading Quiz #8 (**April 5**)

April 8-12

1. READ AP Chapter 10 (307-50): The Evolutionary Argument against Naturalism
2. TAKE Plantinga Reading Quiz #9 (**April 8**)
3. READ 4E&C Intro & Chapter 1 (9-70): Young-Earth Creationism
4. READ 4E&C Chapter 2 (71-123): Old-Earth (Progressive) Creationism

April 15-19

1. READ 4E&C Chapter 3 (124-76): Evolutionary Creationism
2. READ 4E&C Chapter 4 & Conclusion (177-235): Intelligent Design
3. WRITE and SUBMIT Evolution & Creation Position Paper (**April 18**)
4. READ 4HA Intro & Chap 1 (13-88): No Historical Adam – Evolutionary Creation View

April 22-26

1. READ 4HA Chapter 2 (89-142): A Historical Adam – Archetypal Creation View
2. READ 4HA Chapter 3 (143-96): A Historical Adam – Old-Earth Creation View
3. READ 4HA Chapter 4 (197-254): A Historical Adam – Young-Earth Creation View

April 29 – May 1

1. READ 4HA Reflections (255-79): Pastoral Reflections – Boyd & Ryken
2. WRITE and SUBMIT Historical Adam Position Paper (**May 1**)

Selected Bibliography

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