

Ann Blair
Fall 2016, MWF 10-11

Culture and Belief 20
Reason and Faith in the West
Near-final syllabus (August)

This course will examine from a historical perspective one of the central themes in the Western intellectual tradition, the desire to reconcile rational philosophy with religious and biblical authority. We will discuss the transformations in conceptions of reason, science, biblical interpretation and divine intervention (among other themes) in the context of the long period of change from medieval to modern.

Gen Ed rationale:

News coverage of on-going school-board battles over teaching evolution often gives the impression that controversies about science and religion are of recent origin. This course will challenge that assumption by examining the long history of interactions between rational philosophy and Christianity through selected episodes from the 4th century CE to the present. We will study some persistent sources of conflict (including ideas about divine intervention, creation and church and biblical authority), but also a variety of strategies for reconciliation and positive interaction between science and religion. The course will focus on interpreting and understanding primary texts in their historical and cultural contexts, to examine changing conceptions of God and nature, of tradition and modernity, through the writings of a few significant scientific and religious figures. In studying how past thinkers have approached these questions we can better appreciate the complexity and deep roots of these problems when we confront them today in the news or in our own thinking. Although this course is primarily concerned with the study of the past, learning more about the history of the relationship between reason and faith can have important consequences for our lives today as citizens, and as members of an academic community.

Instructors

Prof. Ann Blair
Dept of History, CGIS South #437
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TF: Max Straus
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Requirements

- regular attendance and informed participation in section (10%)
- in-class quiz (5%) in Week IV
- source review (5-7pp) (15%), due in section (dates to be arranged in each section)

- in-class midterm (20%) in Week VII
- research paper (10-12pp) (20%) due on Fri Dec 10 [reading period ends on Dec 12], at twelve noon. NB: written statement of paper topic due in lecture in Week X
- final exam (30%) on Saturday Dec 10.

Course format

Prof. Blair will generally lecture MW at 10; a variety of mandatory course activities will be scheduled for Friday 10-11--please consult the syllabus. Although you may occasionally be free at that time, **please be available for the Friday hour throughout the semester**. This time will also be used for scheduling make-up activities in case of need.

Course policies

Honor Code:

Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity – that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one's own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs.

Collaboration policy:

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. We will distribute a list of the chosen paper topics to make this easier. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard history citation practices and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work; see "Writing with Sources: A Guide for Harvard Students" (available on-line if you've lost your copy). If you received any help with your writing (feedback on drafts, etc.), you must also acknowledge this assistance. Please note that plagiarism is a serious offense; this course will enforce College policy on academic honesty. (In the interest of proper attribution, note that this paragraph is derived from one of Harvard's suggested collaboration policies.)

Disability policy:

Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term, **Wed Sept 14**. Failure to do so may result in the Course Head's inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although Faculty are invited to contact AEO to discuss appropriate implementation.

Discussion sections: This course places a high priority on the discussion of assigned primary sources in section; sections are therefore an integral part of the course and do not duplicate the lectures. Sections will be scheduled for one hour on Wednesday or Thursday. **Students in the**

course must be enrolled in a section and attendance at section is mandatory. Students may not be excused from section without a valid reason, viz. a medical or family emergency (notify your TF by e-mail as soon as you can). Students may not "make up" for their absence, should they miss section on a regular basis. Any student with more than three unexcused absences from section will be failed from the course.

Paper assignments: Each student is required to submit one source review and one research paper for this course. Ideally, three students will do a source review each week, between week IV and week IX; there are no source reviews in the last weeks of the course to leave time for work on the research paper. The source review should be an in-depth discussion of one primary source assigned for that week. The source review should answer questions which range from the mundane (who wrote this document? when? etc.) to the more complicated (e.g. what were the author's motivations? why did the author write in this way? what was the historical impact of this text?). During week II each student will settle on a source review topic and associated due date; please keep in mind your other obligations when you accept a source review assignment, so that you can meet the deadlines for it (deadlines earlier in the semester are usually easier to meet!).

The research paper is on a subject of your choice, focused on a primary source (or set of related sources) analyzed in historical context and with reference to appropriate secondary sources. You may focus on a topic or a primary source discussed in the course, but this assignment is especially designed for you to pursue a topic relevant to the course but which is not covered in it. In any case you must settle on a topic in consultation with your TF. "Supersections" held on some Fridays with Prof. Blair are also designed to help you through the various stages of the research paper process. These Friday sections are **an addition to, not a substitute for** regular section meetings.

Your teaching fellows welcome any outlines or drafts that you would like to submit to them. Outlines and drafts should be submitted a few days in advance, to allow time for your TF to respond and for you to make revisions that might be recommended.

You are encouraged to discuss your paper topics with your peers, in and out of class. If you are working on the same topic as someone else, collaboration can be a useful part of the writing process, but your final paper should present your own ideas, writing and bibliographic work. If you are using some of the same books as someone else in the course, please work cooperatively to share library resources. We will distribute a list of the chosen paper topics after November 1 to make this easier. Please note that plagiarism is a serious offense; this course will strictly enforce College policy on academic honesty.

Deadlines: Students requiring special accommodations for written work should present documentation of such at the beginning of the semester to their TF and the Head TF. Papers, quizzes, exams, etc. must be submitted or taken at the day and time indicated, unless students are prevented from doing so by a medical or family emergency. Students should inform their TF of this emergency as soon as possible and provide a letter from UHS or their resident Dean (Assistant Dean for First-years, Senior Tutor for all others). In those cases, the TF will set a new deadline for any written work, and the Head-TF will pick a day for any make-up quizzes or midterm exams. In all other cases, late papers will be graded down by one full letter grade a day, viz. an A paper that is one day late becomes a B paper, etc. **Failure to fulfill any of the major course requirements (source review, midterm, final paper, final exam) will automatically result in a failing grade for the course.**

Books ordered at the Coop

All book purchases are at your discretion. The books for this course have been ordered at the Coop, but are also available at the Harvard Bookstore and through a number of on-line book order services (prices listed here are from amazon). All books are also on reserve in Lamont.

-coursepack available from the Coop (items on syllabus marked "C")

-David Lindberg and Ronald Numbers eds., God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter between Christianity and Science (University of California Press; 0520056922); \$31.14

-Augustine, On Christian Doctrine (Prentice Hall; 0024021504); \$13.80

-Aquinas, On the Eternity of the World (Marquette University Press; 0874622166) \$15

-René Descartes, Discourse on Method tr. Donald Cress (Hackett; 0-915144-84-0); \$5.95

-Pascal, Pensées, ed. Roger Ariew (Hackett; 978-0872207172); \$11.95

If you already own a Bible, no need to buy one--ANY edition is fine for the course readings. If you would like to buy one, The Bible: Authorized King James Version (Oxford UP); 978-0199535941 has been ordered at the COOP (\$12.89)

Also on reserve in Lamont:

John H. Brooke, Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives (1991)

Gary Ferngren ed., Science and Religion: a historical introduction (2002)

Available on Hollis:

Peter Harrison ed., Cambridge Companion to Science and Religion (2010)

Near-Final Syllabus

Stars indicate the primary source readings, which will be the main focus of section discussions and the object of the source reviews starting in Week IV. (C) indicates readings in the coursepack.

Part I: the traditional points of conflict

Week I (Wed Aug 31): introduction

W: lecture 1: about the course

F: no class

NO SECTION MEETINGS THIS WEEK

Week II (Sept 5): early Christianity

M: Labor Day (no class)

W: lecture 2: building blocks of the Western tradition (I): Aristotle's physics

Required F: lecture 3: building blocks of the Western tradition (II): Christianity--the Bible and the Church

NO SECTION MEETINGS THIS WEEK

Reading: God and Nature, introduction, esp. pp. 10-14.

(C) David Lindberg, The Beginnings of Western Science, pp. 47-62 (on Aristotle)

Bible (any edition OK), Genesis 1-11.

Week III (Sept 12): Augustine and his principles of biblical interpretation

M: lecture 4: Augustine

W: lecture 5: Aristotle in the medieval university

Optional F: historians' toolkit: session for first year students and others to new college courses in

History. Attendance at this session is optional but is **in addition to** attendance at your regular section (Robinson Hall Basement Seminar Room).

FIRST WEEK OF SECTION MEETINGS (on Augustine and building blocks); SOURCE REVIEWS ASSIGNED IN SECTION

Reading: *Augustine, On Christian doctrine, prologue, book I, para. i-v, xxxv-end, book 2 entire, book 3, i-xxx.

God and Nature, ch. 1.

Week IV (Sept 19): Christianizing Aristotle

M: lecture 6: Aquinas and the problem of the eternity of the world

W: lecture 8: Reformation and Counter-Reformation [NOTE: no lecture 7]

Required F: full course: in-class quiz (20 minutes) followed by viewing selections from the movie "The Name of the Rose" (in lecture room)

FIRST SOURCE REVIEWS DUE IN SECTION (on Aquinas)

Reading: *Thomas Aquinas, Siger of Brabant, Saint Bonaventure, On the Eternity of the World, **entire** except for pp. 24-59 and pp. 69-72. NB: There are actually only 38pp of primary source reading in this assignment, but they're slow-going--give yourself time to read carefully and to re-read when necessary; the introductory material is helpful.

alternative translation for Siger available in pdf here:

http://individual.utoronto.ca/pking/translations/SIGER.Eternity_of_World.pdf

* (C) condemnations of 1210 and 1277 in Edward Grant, A Sourcebook in Medieval Science, pp. 42-50.

God and Nature, ch. 2.

Week V (Sept 26): Copernicus and Copernicanism to 1616

M: lecture 9: Copernicus' De revolutionibus (1543)

W: lecture 10: reception of Copernicus to 1616

Required F: Houghton session

SECOND SOURCE REVIEWS DUE IN SECTION (on Copernicus)

Reading: (C) Richard Blackwell, Galileo, Bellarmine and the Church, ch. 1 (pp. 5-14) + appendixes I and II (pp. 181-86).

*Copernicus, On the motions of the heavenly spheres, prefaces (foreword by Osiander, letter of Nicholas Schönberg, preface "to his holiness"), Book I, chs. 1 and 10.

Available through google at <http://www.webexhibits.org/calendars/year-text-Copernicus.html>

God and Nature, ch. 3.

Week VI (Oct 3): Galileo and a new point of tension: the problem of biblical interpretation

M: lecture 11: the trial and condemnation of Galileo—1633

W: review for the midterm

Required F: full course: simulation of the trial of Galileo (in lecture room; visitors are welcome!)

THIRD SOURCE REVIEWS DUE IN SECTION (on Galileo)

Reading: (C) Blackwell, Galileo, Bellarmine and the Bible, ch. 2 pp. 29-40.

* (C) Maurice Finocchiaro, The Galileo Affair, pp. 148-50, 256-70, 286-93.

* Galileo, "Letter to the Grand-Duchess Christina":

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/galileo-tuscany.html>

excerpts from Dialogue Concerning Two Chief World Systems: available at <http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/galileo/dialogue.html>: read preface and the last page of the text.

God and Nature, ch. 4.

Bible: Joshua ch. 10

Week VII (Oct 10): midterm

M: Columbus Day (no class)

W: **in-class midterm**

F: no class [Kishlansky conference]

NO SOURCE REVIEWS THIS WEEK--SECTIONS MEET AS USUAL

Reading : (C) Charles Taylor, A Secular Age, pp. 1-28

(C) John Hedley Brooke, "Science and Secularization," in Cambridge Companion to Science and Religion, ed. Peter Harrison (2010), pp. 103-23. available on HOLLIS

Part II: new forms to old problems

Week VIII (Oct 17): divine intervention in a mechanical world

M: FINAL PAPER TOPIC DUE IN LECTURE: what is the question you are trying to answer?
which primary and secondary sources will you use?

M: lecture 13: Descartes and the rise of mechanical philosophy

W: lecture 14: Newton and a response to mechanical philosophy

Optional F: problem-solving re final paper topics; library resources session in Robinson Lower Library

FOURTH SOURCE REVIEWS DUE IN SECTION (on Descartes and Newton)

Reading: *Descartes, Discourse on Method, parts I-IV, and part V 1st four paragraphs

* Newton, selected writings on God and theology:

General scholium: <https://isaac-newton.org/general-scholium/>

<http://www.newtonproject.sussex.ac.uk/prism.php?id=44>: theological writings on-line. Read: seven statements on religion (#6), a short schem of true religion (#7), 12 articles on religion (#8), three paragraphs on religion (#9), four letters to Richard Bentley (#254-57) and browse some of the longer manuscripts at the website

God and Nature, chs. 8 (except pp. 219-24), 9. John Henry in Camb Comp??

Week IX (Oct 24): belief by faith or by reason

M: lecture 15: Blaise Pascal--a religion of the heart

W: lecture 16: making Christianity reasonable

Optional F: problem-solving re final paper topics; library resources session, in Robinson Lower Library

FIFTH SOURCE REVIEWS DUE IN SECTION (on Pascal)

Reading: *Blaise Pascal, Pensées :

Ariew I, 7-8 (greatness, oppositions =Penguin, I, vi-vii)

Ariew I, 14-17 (submission, excellence, transition, nature =Penguin I, xiii-xvi)

Ariew IV, 45 (wager =Penguin II, ii); IV, 46 (a letter to further the search for God =Penguin against indifference + eternal judgment, II, iii, iv); IV, 47 (preface to the second part =Penguin two essential truths of Christianity II, v); IV, 53 (around corruption =Penguin proofs of religion, II, xi)

Ariew, II, 30-31 (miracles =Penguin: opinion, rules for miracles, III, xxxii-xxxiii)
Ariew III, 37- 41 (miscellaneous thoughts =Penguin: diversion, superiority, relativity, habit, figurative language, II, xxvii-xxxi); Ariew V, 62 (memorial).

God and Nature, ch. 5.

Week X (Oct 31): 18th-century developments

M: lecture 17: natural theology

W: lecture 18/19: Lyell and geology; species and evolution before Darwin

F: no class [senior thesis confs]

SECTIONS MEET AS USUAL THIS WEEK; SOURCE REVIEWS DUE IF RESCHEDULED
DUE BEFORE SECTION: CONTRIBUTION TO TIMELINE on course website (1-3 events relating to your final paper topic)

Reading: God and Nature, chs. 12-13

* (C) William Paley, Natural theology (1830), dedication, table of contents, chs. 1-2, ch 3 to page 16; ch 5, pp. 39-54; ch. 26 pp. 316-35, 342-44 and 356-62 as in course pack.

Week XI (Nov 7): Darwin and his reception in the 19th century

M: lecture 20: Darwin and On the Origin of Species (1859)

W: lecture 21: the reception of Darwin in the late 19th century

F: no class

Reading: God and Nature, chs. 14-15. OR Jon Roberts, Religious reactions to Darwin in Cambridge Companion to Science and Religion (2010) available on HOLLIS.??

(C) *Harold Y. Vanderpool, Darwin and Darwinism: Revolutionary insights concerning man, nature, religion and society, pp. 43-138: selections by Darwin, Wilberforce, Sedgwick, Huxley, Baden Powell et al.

(C) Andrew Dickson White, A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom (1896), introduction and Ch. 3 (astronomy), sections iv-end

Week XII (Nov 14): the rise of American creationism

M: lecture 22: the American religious landscape

W: lecture 23: creationism since the 1920s

Required F: POSTER SESSION (Robinson Hall Basement Seminar Room)

Reading: Ronald Numbers, "Scientific creationism and intelligent design," in Cambridge Companion to Science and Religion (2010) available on HOLLIS.

On Michael Behe's concept of irreducible complexity and critiques of it see <http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/behe.html>

Stephen J. Gould, "Non-overlapping magisteria" The Unofficial Stephen J. Gould Archive: http://www.stephenjgould.org/library/gould_noma.html

Phil Zuckerman, "Atheism: contemporary numbers and patterns," in Cambridge Companion to Atheism, ed. Michael Martin. pp. 47-65. available through HOLLIS.

Week XIII (Nov 21): other religious responses

M: liberal/modernist and neo-orthodox theologians (possible panel)

W: no class

NO SECTIONS THIS WEEK

Reading (to be discussed in week XIV):

Pope John Paul II, "The Greatness of Galileo is Known to All," (1979) at:
<http://www.casinapioiv.va/content/dam/accademia/pdf/sv100.pdf>

Pope John Paul II, "Fides et ratio" encyclical (1998), www.cin.org/jp2/fides.html pp. 1-11, 19-39, 61-65 and corresponding notes (esp. note 29).

God and Nature, introduction pp. 1-9.

Week XIV (Nov 28): interactions in physics

M: lecture 25: science and religion in Albert Einstein

W: lecture 26: concluding lecture

F: no class [Lower Library booked]

LAST SECTIONS THIS WEEK (last day of class Fri Dec 2)

Reading: include readings from week XIII

*Albert Einstein, "Religion and Science," and "Science and Religion" (1 and 2),
"Science and Religion: Irreconcilable?" in Ideas and Opinions (1949), on-line <http://www.sacred-texts.com/aor/einstein/einsci.htm#RELIGION>

God and Nature, chs. 17-18.

Final paper due Thurs Dec 8 (last day of reading period) at noon on canvas website. This is a firm deadline—please refer to the course policies for lateness penalties.

Final review session Thurs Dec 8, 4pm (room TBA)

Final exam (Saturday Dec 10). A review session for the final exam will be scheduled during reading period.