

Theology and the Science: Varieties of Religious Naturalism
Meadville Lombard Theological School
Spring 2008
Professor Mike Hogue

I. Overview

This course examines ways of relating religion, theology, and the sciences, with special emphasis given to recent and contemporary varieties of religious naturalism. Among the themes to be explored are the dynamics and configurations of religious traditions in relation to the natural sciences, feminist and postcolonial interventions in sciences studies, Islamic and Hindu perspectives on religion and sciences, the diversity of forms of religious naturalism within the religions and sciences dialogue, religious naturalism and ethics, and the social and spiritual possibilities and challenges of religious naturalism. Our purposes in the course include the analytic ones of mapping the commonalities and differences among diverse expressions of religious naturalism and surfacing religious naturalisms' methodological strategies and epistemological routines. More constructively, the course provides an opportunity for students to engage religious naturalism as an increasingly vital form of contemporary religious thought and practice.

II. Objectives

Objectives guiding the course include the following:

- *To encourage students to hone their skills in theological thinking, speaking, and writing;
- *To lead student in becoming familiar with some of the general themes in religion and science studies;
- *To introduce students to leading feminist and postcolonial criticisms of the sciences;
- *To be able to discuss and represent some of the contemporary theoretic and applied challenges and possibilities facing religion and science studies and religious naturalism

III. Expectations

As a graduate level course in theology, it is assumed that students will come to each session well prepared, having read and reflected upon the texts for the day. In addition, each student is expected to write a single page reflection paper for each session, and to bring this to class. These will be used for discussion and group work. A final paper or project is also expected, and I encourage creative thinking about this.

IV. Bibliography (in chronological reading order)

Ian Barbour, "Four Views of Science and Religion," Chapter 1, *When Science Meets Religion: Enemies, Strangers, or Partners?* [Text on Moodle; MLTS Library Reserve]. **(READ THIS PRIOR TO THE FIRST SESSION!!!)**

Jerry Stone, "What is Religious Naturalism?" *The Journal of Liberal Religion* (Fall 2000, 2:1). [Link to text on Moodle].

Donald Crosby, "Religious Naturalism," *Routledge Companion to the Philosophy of Religion*. [Text on Moodle].

Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of the Partial Perspective," and "The Cyborg Manifesto," *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* [Texts on Moodle; MLTS Library Reserve].

Sandra Harding, "A Role for Postcolonial Histories of Science in Theories of Knowledge?" and "Postcolonial Science and Technology Studies," *Is Science Multicultural?* [Texts on Moodle; MLTS Library Reserve].

H. N. Wieman, *Sources of Human Good*, [Selections on Moodle; MLTS Library Reserve].

Bernard Loomer, "The Size of God," *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 8: 1-2 (January-May 1987), 20-52. [Selections on Moodle; MLTS Library Reserve].

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, ed. William Chittick, [Selections on Moodle; MLTS Library Reserve].

Varadaraja V. Raman, "Science and the Spiritual Vision: A Hindu Perspective," *Zygon* 37:1 (March 2002), 83-94. [Text on Moodle; MLTS Library Reserve].

Ursula Goodenough, *The Sacred Depths of Nature* [Seminary Coop; MLTS Library Reserve].

Donald Crosby, *The Religion of Nature* [Seminary Coop; MLTS Library Reserve].

Loyal Rue, *Religion is Not About God: How Spiritual Traditions Nurture our Biological Nature and What to Expect When They Fail* [Seminary Coop Bookstore; MLTS Library Reserve].

Michael Dowd, *Thank God for Evolution* [Seminary Coop Bookstore; MLTS Library Reserve].

V. Calendar

Week I: Getting Oriented (Read this in advance of first session).

Ian Barbour, "Four Views of Science and Religion," Chapter 1, *When Science Meets Religion: Enemies, Strangers, or Partners?* [Text on Moodle; MLTS Library Reserve].

Week II: Naturalisms and Religious Naturalisms: Getting Oriented: Religion and Science, and Religious Naturalism

Jerry Stone, "What is Religious Naturalism?" *The Journal of Liberal Religion* (Fall 2000, 2:1) [Text on Moodle].

Donald Crosby, "Religious Naturalism," *Routledge Companion to the Philosophy of Religion* [Text on Moodle].

Week III: Feminist and Postcolonial Critical Perspectives:

Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of the Partial Perspective," and "The Cyborg Manifesto," from *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* [Texts on Moodle; MLTS Library Reserve].

Sandra Harding, "A Role for Postcolonial Histories of Science in Theories of Knowledge?" and "Postcolonial Science and Technology Studies," from *Is Science Multicultural?* [Texts on Moodle; Library Reserve].

Week IV: Classical Exemplars of RN:

H. N. Wieman, *Sources of Human Good*, [Selections on Moodle; MLTS Library Reserve].

Bernard Loomer, "The Size of God," [Selections on Moodle; MLTS Library Reserve].

Week V: Muslim and Hindu Critiques of RN:

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, ed. William Chittick, [Selections on Moodle; MLTS Library Reserve].

Varadaraja V. Raman, "Science and the Spiritual Vision: A Hindu Perspective," *Zygon* 37:1 (March 2002), 83-94. [Text on Moodle; MLTS Library Reserve].

Weeks VI

Ursula Goodenough, *The Sacred Depths of Nature* [Seminary Coop; MLTS Library Reserve].

Week VII

Donald Crosby, *The Religion of Nature* [Seminary Coop; MLTS Library Reserve].

Week VIII: NO CLASS

Week IX

Loyal Rue, *Religion is Not About God: How Spiritual Traditions Nurture our Biological Nature and What to Expect When They Fail* [Seminary Coop Bookstore; MLTS Library Reserve].

Week X

Michael Dowd, *Thank God for Evolution* [Seminary Coop Bookstore; MLTS Library Reserve].