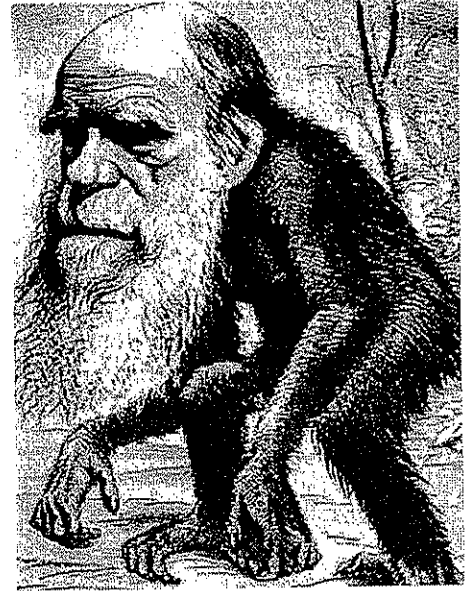


# SCTR 35, SCIENCE VS. THE BIBLE: THE GENESIS DEBATES

## Course Outline and Reading Schedule Winter 2009 Instructor: Prof. J. David Pleins (UC Core 17)



### General Information:

Phone: 554-4763

E-mail: [jpleins@scu.edu](mailto:jpleins@scu.edu)

Office Hours: 1:00-1:30, 3:30-4:30 or by appointment

Section: 46193, 4 units

Class Meeting Times: Tues/Thurs 1:45-3:30, Kenna 304

E-Res password for this class: "genesis" (all lower case letters)

Course Website:

<http://www-relg-studies.scu.edu/facstaff/pleins/sctr35/index.htm>

**Scope of the Course:** Why do religious fundamentalists and evolutionists continue to feud in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Has science destroyed the Bible? Can a Darwinist be religious? Must our public schools serve as battlegrounds over "intelligent design" and "creation science"? This course considers the current debate over the Genesis creation story from a variety of angles, looking in particular at the theological debates, the scientific challenges, the history of the conflict, the public policy debates, and the enduring meaning of myth.

### Required Texts:

P. Appleman, *Darwin*

C. Darwin, *Autobiography*

K. Miller, *Finding Darwin's God*

J. D. Pleins, *When the Great Abyss Opened*.

M. Ruse, ed., *But Is It Science?*

N. K. Sandars, *Poems of Heaven and Hell*.

**Prerequisites:** Since this is a Second Course in religious studies, the prerequisite for this course is any one course from among SCTR 1-19, TESP 1-19, or RSOC 1-19.

### Aims and Outcomes:

·Methodological/interpretative: Students will regularly engage and learn how to analyze the key hermeneutical questions regarding the interpretation of the biblical text in relation to the scientific method.

·Biblical/textual: By exploring the narratives texts of Genesis, students will engage in reflection, discussion, and written analysis regarding enduring theological questions of biblical worship and belief.

·Ancient/comparative: Through the reading of a major Mesopotamian myth, students will develop perspectives on how to place the biblical materials into broader historical and literary contexts.

·Reflective/existential: Students in this course will discuss and write on the contemporary theological, political, and philosophic dimensions of biblical texts. Students will address the public policy challenges of using such texts in the public school educational setting and the public square.

### **Pedagogy:**

·Lecture/Seminar Format: In terms of instructional style or pedagogy, this Second Course in religion is conducted in a lecture/seminar form that accents collective investigation into the issues at hand. Key questions are posed for each session to focus our discussion and debates.

·Collective Inquiry: Prime importance is placed on students raising their own questions of the material, discussing and debating the issues at hand, and formulating tentative hypotheses in dialogue both with the course readings and with the other members of the class.

·Subject-Oriented Learning: Rather than being a teacher focused class or even a student focused class, the course seeks to put debate topics at the center of the class, allowing each of us who gather around that subject to act as “knowers” who wrestle with and explore the issues as they emerge in class discussion.

### **Grading and Required Assignments:**

1. Initial DBQ (Document Based Question): Evaluation of Court Case, 5% of course grade.
2. Research Paper #1: 35% of course grade.
3. Research Paper #2: 35% of course grade.
4. Field Research Assignment: Evaluations of one “creationist” website, one Local Religion Project “church profile,” and one “evolutionist” organization’s web site, 15% of course grade.
5. Class Participation and Outside Appointments: Active and informed course participation based on the reading as well as regular outside discussions with the instructor constitute 10% of the final course grade.

### Research Paper Descriptions:

1. The research papers are to be 7-10 pages in length, typed double space. Attach a bibliography at the end. The topic must be approved by the instructor before the paper proposal due date.
2. Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography: One week before the paper is due you are to hand in an annotated bibliography. Start by giving the **key debate question and basic view defended** in the paper. Then give a preliminary **description of primary and secondary sources**. For each source discuss in a sentence or two the essential argument or contribution of the source. Do not simply list titles. The description is required.
3. Primary vs. Secondary Sources: Each paper must be based on a split between primary and secondary sources. Your bibliography must set up these two categories and distribute the sources accordingly. (Also, your papers must reflect library sources and not be simply based on internet materials.)
  - a. Primary Source: A primary source is not the source you use the most but a original historical document from the time period or a figure under investigation. The letters of Charles Darwin, the writings of Henry Morris, the essays of T. H. Huxley, the books of Philip Johnson, and the Scopes Trial manuscript are all primary sources. Fundamentalist films can be considered primary sources. Interviews that you transcribe can be considered primary sources. Supreme court documents that are issued regarding creationism in the public schools would be primary sources.
  - b. Secondary Source: A secondary source is not a source you use the least but a digested discussion of issues, movements, time periods, or specific individuals. A book about Charles Darwin, for example, would be a secondary source.
4. Course Readings as Research: The use of a broad range of course readings (quoted) as part of your research is expected. You need to show where your paper fits into the reading you are doing for the course.
5. Thesis: The paper needs to argue for a specific view that engages and interprets the evidence. Papers that simply recount the events of a particular time period are not acceptable.

### Place of the Course in the Department and the University

#### A. This Course and Its Place in the Department:

Religious Studies courses are divided into three major categories:

- Area I--Scripture and Tradition
- Area II--Theology, Ethics and Spirituality

### Area III--Religion and Society

This course is in Area I, which means that the course examines the sacred texts and stories of specific religious traditions both in terms of origins and later historical developments.

#### **B. This Course in Relation to the University's Core Requirements:**

This Second Course in the Core Requirement in Religion is connected to the Core Theme that is entitled *Reaching Out*. At this level, students are expected to draw on and evaluate a broad range of perspectives to articulate an integrated vision of religious values and beliefs in relation to societal needs and commitments.

#### **C. Description of Second Courses in Religion:**

Second courses in religion (generally for Sophomores) aim to involve the student more fully in developed methodologies, specific religious traditions, or defined systems of thought. These courses teach the disciplined use of sources and methods in the understanding of specific texts, theological or ethical systems, or culturally and historically formed religious communities. Courses that address specific religious traditions such as Buddhism, Protestantism, or Greek Religion (which are offered as second courses) attempt to do more than simply present the history of these entities. They try to demonstrate two things: 1. the significance of such material--that is, the engagement of a body of data in its own terms (as much as possible)--for any understanding of religion or religiosity as a human phenomenon; and 2. the historical and social conditions shaping our own intellectual enterprise of studying religion in this way, such as the precariousness of many categories, definitions, or historical attempts at objectivity.

#### **Standards, Policies, and Procedures:**

##### **Attendance Policy:**

·All students are expected to attend all classes and to *arrive promptly*. Chronic lateness or failure to attend class may result, at the instructor's discretion, in immediate dismissal and/or failure of the course, *regardless* of completion of assigned work.

·Exceptions require written proof of illness from the health service or from the student's personal physician. If you are unable to attend, leave word at 554-4763.

·The basic rule of thumb is: 3 absences and the highest grade you may receive in the course is a C (you have missed 15% of the course at this point); with 4 absences (20% of the course), you are encouraged to withdraw from the class because if you do not, you will fail the course.

·Note that your presence in class is particularly expected for the discussion of papers and that your papers may not be handed in by another student.

**Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty Policy:**

·One's Own Work: All written work must be uniquely and individually one's own work. While in-class discussion and outside of class discussion is certainly desirable and encouraged, the material that a student hands in must reflect one's own labor and ought to be clearly and decisively distinguishable from the work of all other students in the class.

·Quoting Sources: In assignments and papers, you are to make clear when you are quoting sources others have written or when you are substantially paraphrasing the work of others. You are not to claim as your own the work that others have done. Such dishonest conduct harms the class, fellow students, the university degree, and oneself.

·Failure and Dismissal: Failure to abide by the spirit and the letter of this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the course and will merit a failing grade for the course. Note also that such academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office for Student Life and Leadership for action under the University Code of Conduct.

·Students in the School of Engineering are reminded that their work is also governed by the Engineering Honor Code.

**DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION POLICY:**

To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Resources located in Benson 216, (408) 554-4109. Students must register and provide documentation of a disability to Disability Resources prior to receiving academic accommodations. (Other advising matters can be directed to The Drahnann Center in Kenna 101, (408) 554-4318.)

## Course Outline and Reading Schedule

### I. Battling of the Book of Genesis

January 6: The Split in America

Question: Which social bubble are you living in when it comes to the creation-evolution split?

Video: What About God? (PBS Evolution Series)

January 8: Religion's Story: Creationism

Question: Is there a Designer behind the "design" of the universe?

Reading: Time Magazine, "God vs. Science" (E-Res)  
 Genesis, 1-11 (E-res): [print this out, read it, and bring to class]  
 Appleman, pp. 41-44 (Paley)

Listen: [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org) In the archives find the program "Fundamentalist Religion and Science" (Nov 29, 2006) and listen to the interview with Richard Dawkins.

Guest: Short description of Local Religion Project.

January 13: Science's Story: Evolution

Question: Does Darwin's Natural Selection view derail belief in God?

Reading: Appleman, pp. 95-116 (Darwin, Origin of Species)  
 Darwin, Autobiography, pp. 56-96

### II. Creationism and the Public Schools

January 15: Fundamentalists in Court: The Scopes Trial

Question: Did the secularists really win the Scopes trial?

Video: Scopes Trial (Film in History of Law Series)

Reading: Pleins, ch. 4  
 Appleman, pp. 542-549 (trial segments)

Due: Initial DBQ assignment due: court case evaluation

January 20: Creation Science Today

Question: Is there no logic to the fundamentalist war on science?

Reading: Appleman, pp. 555-564 (ICR, Henry Morris)  
 Ruse, chs. 17 (Gish)  
 Miller, ch. 3

Viewing: Inherit the Wind (Media Services 2:00 pm, 4:00 pm, 6:00 pm, 8:00 pm)

January 22: Equal Time?

Question: Should creationism get equal time in our public schools?

Video: Creationists, Part I (ICR museum tour)

Reading: Appleman, pp. 564-76 (evaluations of creationism)  
 Ruse, chs. 19-20 (Arkansas court case)

### III. Intelligent Design Controversies

January 27: Intelligent Design Controversies in the Public Schools

Question: Should we allow the teaching of the controversy about Intelligent Design in our public schools?

Video: Icons of Evolution (segment 1) (DVD 86)

Reading: Appleman, pp. 577-580 (Dawkins)  
 Appleman, pp. 592-612 (Behe and others)  
 Wedge Document ([www.antievolution.org/features/wedge.html](http://www.antievolution.org/features/wedge.html))

Due: Field Research Assignment #1 (1 Creationist Web Site)

January 29: Icons of Evolution or Evolving Icons?

Question: Does God tinker with bacteria cells?

Video: Icons of Evolution (segment 2)

Reading: Miller, ch. 5  
 Wells, Homology in Vertebrate Limbs (E-res)  
 Dembski, The Third Mode of Explanation (E-res)

#### **IV. Grappling with Scientific Materialism: Innocent Method or Dangerous Metaphysics?**

February 3: Debating Darwin in Darwin's Day

Question: Was Darwin's view really dangerous to Victorian belief in God?

Reading: Appleman, pp. 44-64 (Natural philosophers before Darwin's Origin of Species)

Appleman, 255-288 (Victorian authors debate Darwin)

Ruse, chs. 3 (Britain 1830-1870)

Due: Annotated bibliography for paper #1 (JSTOR; ICR; Primary v. Secondary)

Viewing: Darwin's Dangerous Idea (Media Services 2:00 pm, 4:00 pm, 6:00 pm, 8:00 pm)

February 5: Darwin's Materialism on Trial Today

Question: Does Darwinism remain morally dangerous today?

Video: Creationists (Part 2, Johnson segment)

Reading: Miller, ch. 4

Appleman, pp. 581-592 (Johnson and others)

February 10: Paper #1 Due

Topic: Developed in Consultation with the Instructor. Attendance is mandatory.

Discuss: Field research prep and handout on Evolution website.

#### **V. Putting Science First: Contemporary Readings of Genesis**

February 12: Darwin and Religion Today

Question: Can a Darwinian be religious?

Video: Creationists (Part 1, Gould segment)

Reading: Haught, Does Evolution Rule Out God's Existence (E-res)

Peacocke, Welcoming the Disguised Friend (E-res)

Appleman, pp. 527-533 (religious support for evolution)

February 17: The Scientific Method and Theology's Methods

Question: Is theology a delusion?

Video: Creationists (Part 2, Krishtalka segment)

Reading: Dawkins, Theology, Delusion, and the Appetite for Wonder (E-Res)  
 Appleman, 289-300, 613-623 (National Academy of Sciences and others)

February 19: The Quest for Noah's Flood as Modern Science

Question: Is Noah's flood a myth?

Reading: Pleins, chs. 1, 2, 3, 5

Video: Hero's Journey (pt. 1)

Due: Field Research Assignment #2 (1 Evolutionary Web Site)

February 24: A Science of Myth?:

Question: Is the Genesis creation story a myth?

Reading: Sandars, pp. 73-111 (Babylonian Creation Epic)  
 Pleins, ch. 6 and 7

Video: Hero's Journey (pt. 2)

**VI. Evolution, Religion, and Ethics**

February 26: Humans, Apes, and Culture

Question: Do apes have a moral sense? Has human morality evolved from primate roots?

Reading: Wrangham, Demonic Males (E-res)  
 Appleman, pp. 409-14 (Wilson, Sociobiology)

Video: The Last Great Ape (Bonobos)

### March 3: Rising Above Evolution?

Question: Should we build our ethics on evolutionary principles or wage war against evolution now that we are no longer its prisoners?

Reading: Appleman, pp. 481-524  
 Appleman, pp. 398-403 (Kropotkin, Mutual Aid)

Video: The Family of Chimps (Arnhem Zoo)

Due: Field Research Profile Assignment Due (including (1) an introduction page, (2) the overall evaluation of the church or group visited for this project, and (3) individual interview descriptions.

### March 5: Myth, Race, Sexism, Violence and the Book of Genesis

Question: Can we liberate ourselves from religion's violence without losing religious belief?

## VII. Integrating Religion and Science

### March 10: Evolving God?

Question: Why are we the spiritual ape?

Reading: Pleins, chs. 8-10  
 Miller, ch. 9

Video: In Search of Human Origins, pt. 3 (= #5350), Lascaux cave segment

Due: Annotated bibliography for paper #2

### March 12: The Future of Genesis

Question: Does belief in God and the Bible have a future in an age of science?

Reading: Thich Nhat Hanh (E-res)  
 Appleman, pp. 625-30

## FINALS WEEK:

Exam Time: Tuesday, March 17, 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Due: Presentation of second research paper. Topic developed in consultation with the instructor. Attendance for presentations is mandatory. No exceptions.

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Pennock and Ruse, ch. 3

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Pennock and Ruse, ch 21

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 Pennock and Ruse, ch. 28

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