UGS 303 (63695) – Fall, 2010
Printed Title
"Difficult Dialogues: Sci/Religion"

Actual Title
"Intelligent Design, Evolution, Creationism, and Science: Exploring the 'Culture War' in 21st Century America"

READING AND PROJECT SCHEDULES and SEQUENCE OF DISCUSSION TOPICS

TIME & PLACE: T-Th 2 - 3:30 p.m., WAG 308

INSTRUCTOR:
Chris Bell
Office: GEO 3.314A
Phone: 512-471-7301 (don’t bother)
Email: cjbell@mail.utexas.edu
Office Hours: M 3:30-4:30, or by appointment

Sequence of discussion topics and associated readings

Aug. 26 Introductions, structure, scope, content, and expectations (yours and mine); thoughts on paper topics

Aug. 31 VIEWING (in-class): “Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed”

ASSIGNMENT: Write a Position Paper about the film: Two pages (= front and back of one piece of paper), double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins. Email to Chris by no later than midnight Sept. 1

Sept. 2 Discussion of “Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed”

READINGS: Expelled Exposed (part), posted online at www.expelledexposed.com;
Read sections on Richard Sternberg and Intelligent Design posted at the URLs below’ also peruse the site for topics related to your position paper

http://www.expelledexposed.com/index.php/the-truth/sternberg
http://www.expelledexposed.com/index.php/the-truth/id
Sept. 7  Logical fallacies, critical thinking, and Monty Python


Initial discussion of paper topics

Sept. 9  VIEWING (in-class): “The God Who Wasn’t There”

ASSIGNMENT: Write a Position Paper about the film: Two pages (= front and back of one piece of paper), double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins. Email to Chris by no later than midnight Sept. 10.

Sept. 14  Discussion: “The God Who Wasn’t There”

READING: No reading today (review your position paper and be prepared to discuss)

Sept. 16  Defining Science, defining Intelligent Design, and exploring the legal roots of the ‘Culture War’

READING: The Constitution of the United States of America (posted online in many places).

Sept. 21  What is Creationism?

READING: A Creationist Continuum (handed out in class)

PAPER: Final Decision on Paper Topic Due Today: To be emailed to Chris by no later than midnight. cjbell@mail.utexas.edu

Sept. 23  Information literacy: **Meeting in PCL 1.124** (basement of PCL)

**NOTE: WE MEET IN A DIFFERENT PLACE TODAY**

NOTEBOOK: Turned in for first time

Sept. 28  Discussion of writing assignment and writing techniques
Sept. 30  VIEWING (in class): “Flock of Dodos”
READING: no reading today

Oct. 5  Discussion: Flock of Dodos
READING: no reading today

Oct. 7  Additional topical discussion and guidance on papers

**PAPER: Outline and Preliminary Annotated Bibliography due in class**

Oct. 12  Out-of-class viewing exercise: View “Christopher Hitchens: The Moral Necessity of Atheism” posted on You Tube as eight videos, viewing time approximately 75 minutes.

Oct. 14  Out-of-class viewing exercise: View “Does god exist? David Wolpe vs. Sam Harris” posted on You Tube as 11 videos, viewing time approximately 102 minutes

**ASSIGNMENT:** Write a Position Paper about Hitchens and Wolpe v. Harris videos (from You Tube): Two pages (= front and back of one piece of paper), double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins. **Email to Chris by no later than midnight Oct. 15.**

Oct. 19  Discussion: Hitchens and Wolpe v. Harris videos (from You Tube)
READING: No reading today (review your position paper and be prepared to discuss)

Oct. 21  Academic Freedom: issues in the Culture war

**READINGS:** AAUP “1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure” posted online at

http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/1940statement.htm?PF=1
NOTEBOOK: Turned in for second time

Oct. 26  Academic Freedom continued
READINGs: Discovery Institute’s posting on Academic Freedom...

...and The Free Speech On Evolution Campaign posting

Text of 2008 Florida Senate Bill entitled “An Act Relating to Teaching Chemical and Biological Evolution” posted online at
http://ncseweb.org/webfm_send/787

See also 1-paragraph call-to-action statement at:
http://offensivechristians.com/florida-battle-for-academic-freedom-heats-up

Oct. 28  Exploring Intelligent Design: The Wedge Document

READING: posted online at:
http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/barbara_forrest/wedge.html


PAPER: First draft of paper due in class

Nov. 2  The Wedge document continued

READING: The “Wedge Document”: “So What?”

Posted online at:

Nov. 4  The issue of Naturalism. Part I.

**PAPER: First (student) review due**

Nov. 9

The issue of Naturalism. Part II.


Nov. 11

The issue of Naturalism. Part III. Rebuttals and open forum

READING:


**PAPER: Second draft due**

Nov. 16

The Dover Trial

READING: pp. 7-35; 64-89; 136-139 from:
United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania
Case No. 04cv2688
Tammy Kitzmiller et al. v. Dover Area School District et al.
Memorandum Opinion
December 20, 2005

Nov. 18

Can we achieve a rational dialogue?


Nov. 23

Exploring a University Treasure: Technology and religion meet in the making of the Gutenberg Bible (on display in the HRC)

READING: TBA

**NOTEBOOK: Turned in for Third time**
PAPER: Second (CJB) review returned

Nov. 25  Thanksgiving Holiday (no class)

Nov. 30  Personal reflections:
            READING: TBA

Dec. 2   Final comments and Course Evaluations

PAPER: Final draft of paper due

There is no final exam.
Policy Statement

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TEXT: There is no text for this course; we will use selected readings and other sources (videos, etc.) throughout the semester.

PREREQUISITES: There are no prerequisites.

GRADING: The grade for the class is based on the following:

A) Class Participation 30%  
B) Class Paper 35%  
    Draft #1 5%  
    Draft #2 10%  
    Final 20%  
C) Student review 10%  
D) Notebook 15%  
E) Position papers 10%

Grading elements for Class Participation:
- Attendance (required; see below)  
- Preparation  
- In-class discussions and projects
- University Lectures (must attend/view at least one University Lecture on Oct. 4 or 5)

Grading elements for Notebook:
- Thoughts and reflections on readings, videos, movies, course discussions, etc.
- Description/reflection of course content as it pertains to other courses or activities
- Comment/reply section

GRADING:
Final course grades will be based on the following scale
A  94-100  C  73-76
A- 90-93   C- 70-72
B+ 87-89   D+ 67-69
B  83-86   D  63-66
B- 80-82   D- 60-62
C+ 77-79   F  59 or less

READINGS AND VIEWINGS: You are required to read/view all the materials designated under the "READING" and "VIEWING" headings on the Syllabus. Readings should be completed before you come to class on the day for which they are assigned. You are required to watch and listen carefully to the videos and movies we will discuss in class. Some of the readings and videos will be challenging, but my expectation is that you will work through them and be prepared to discuss them in class on the date for which they are assigned (i.e., read or view the material before arriving in class that day!). For some days, there may be multiple readings, and the number of assigned pages will vary from day to day; you must plan ahead and budget your time carefully so that you can complete the readings on time.

Most readings will be posted on the UT Library Electronic Reserves site. This system is occasionally unreliable, so plan ahead to access the readings. I will not accept excuses for failure to do the reading because the web site could not be accessed.

The Electronic Reserve readings can be accessed by going to the following URL

http://reserves.lib.utexas.edu/eres/

go to “Student Access to Electronic Reserves Course pages”
Select Instructor (or “any search field”) and fill in Bell, and hit “search.” You will then see a link to UGS303 “Difficult dialogues”; click on the “UGS303”. For copyright reasons, the course page is password protected. Your password is discourse.

Read the copyright stuff, hit “accept” and you will be carried to a page with a link to the PDF file for the readings. Readings are sorted alphabetically by author’s last name.
ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: Because this seminar is centered on
dialogue, it is absolutely essential that all students not only attend each meeting, but also
participate in discussions. Attendance and active participation during in-class discussions
and projects will be the basis for the majority of your participation grade. The University
policy is to respect religious holidays; please notify me well in advance of any conflicts
that result from religious holidays or observations.

UNIVERSITY LECTURES: The University Lecture series is sponsored by the School
of Undergraduate Studies and provides special lecture opportunities for first-year students
at UT. Two events will presented in the Fall semester, and will be available for viewing
online if you cannot attend the live event. I encourage you to attend both, but you are
required to attend at least one. For more information about the series see
<http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/uls/>.

October 4 “Cirque du Politique.” UT Speech coach Martin “Randy” Cox will discuss
current political discourse and campaign politics, illustrated by presenting prize-winning
students on controversial topics of the day.

October 5 “The Great Debate: How do you Change the World?” The University claims
that we change people and they change the world. Notable faculty will be asked in front
of on-stage student juries what they teach that could help students change the world.
Participants include Larry Speck, Leigh McAllister, David Springer, Sean Theriault, and
David Laude. John Daly will moderate.

Semester paper: Each student is required to write a semester paper. Two topics are
provided, and you are free to choose the one that interests you most, or to develop your
own relevant topic (subject to advance instructor approval). Length, structure, scope, and
format will be discussed in the early weeks of class. You must select your topic by no
later than September 21. An outline and annotated bibliography is due in-class on
October 7, the first draft is due October 28. Each student will provide a peer-review of
another student paper (author and reviewer will be anonymous); peer reviews are due in
class on November 4. The second draft is due November 11, and my review will be
returned on November 23. Final draft is due December 2 It is essential that you meet all
deadlines. Note that my reviews are returned to you on Nov. 23, the Tuesday of
Thanksgiving week. DO NOT make plans to leave Austin early for Thanksgiving;
attendance in class that day is required.
Topic #1. The Dover Intelligent Design Trial. Intelligent Design had its debut in Federal Court in 2005. In the months leading up to the trial, during the trial, and following the Memorandum Opinion by the judge, the trial had a significant impact on the 'culture war,' both locally (Dover, Pennsylvania) and nationally. Choose one of the tracks below and explore the implications of the trial for the 'culture war' in the United States.

Investigate media coverage of the trial from its inception through today. How was/is various aspects of the trial portrayed (e.g., individual testimony, the trial as a whole, the judge)? You must include a diversity of sources; these can include newspaper articles, popular-press periodicals (e.g., Time, Newsweek, The Economist, Scientific American, Skeptical Inquirer, etc.), on-line blogs and commentaries, You Tube videos, television news programs). You must also include at least two of the five books published about the trial itself.

Topic #2. Exploration of Origins issues in the context of the ‘culture war’ in the United States. The scientific investigation of ‘origins’ (e.g., of the universe, of Life, of particular groups of organisms, of humans) has for many decades stimulated controversy among and between scientists and other groups within our society. These issues emerged again in recent years as a focal point of contention between (among others) proponents of Intelligent Design on one hand and theistic evolutionists and methodological naturalists on the other. In your paper, investigate how different authors represent scientific research on ‘origin’ issues, and how they respond to criticism and feedback from those with other opinions. This will include reference to the numerous books discussing the many facets of Intelligent Design, and also can be explored through other popular-press media (e.g., newspapers, magazines, films, documentaries, You-Tube postings, etc.).

If you would like additional assistance with writing, The Undergraduate Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. The Writing Center is located in FAC 211 (phone: 471-6222); for more information, see their web site at http://uwc.fac.utexas.edu/

NOTEBOOK:
The Notebook is intended to be a (more-or-less) personal notebook of thoughts, questions, and comments pertaining to the readings, videos, discussions, projects, and activities associated with this course. As you work through the assigned readings, use the notebook to jot down discussion ideas, questions to ask in class, references to track down for further reading, critiques of the article, or thoughts and opinions about videos or movies (especially thoughts and opinions that were not incorporated into Position Papers). You can use the notebook to help you remember key points or questions for position papers. I am especially interested in your comments and reflections about how
course content from this seminar (including discussions, comments made by other students, topics, readings, ideas, etc.) influence your thinking in this course, other courses, and in your personal (non-academic) life. In other words, are you able make connections between content of this course and other aspects of your life?. Your notebook will be turned in three times for evaluation. Content and organization will necessarily be individuated, but I will be looking for evidence that you are taking this portion of the course seriously, and are regularly making a serious written record of your thoughts and questions pertaining to the course and the topics we explore. I will occasionally reply to comments, usually by attaching a sticky-note; these will permit an informal, written comment-reply dialogue between us. I will not share your notebook or its contents with anyone else.

POSITION PAPERS: We will watch five movies/videos during the semester. For each, you will prepare a brief (two pages) position paper on your opinions of the video (for example, your reaction to its content, your opinion of the quality of argumentation, your assessment of it goals and whether they were achieved, etc.).

UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE: The University Honor Code reads “The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.” In all of your writing, you must avoid plagiarism and always provide adequate citation to your sources of ideas, information, and data.

OFFICE HOURS: If you have any questions that are not answered during discussion sessions, or if you are confused by a concept or topic we cover, or if you want more information on a topic, please do not hesitate to come to see me in office hours. If you cannot meet during scheduled office hours, please feel free to make an appointment that suits your schedule. Questions? Comments? Clarifications? Concerns? Call them out in class or come see me in office hours.

OTHER ISSUES: Please notify me as soon as possible of any modifications or adaptations you may require to accommodate a disability-related need. The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 or 471-4641.