

## STSC301: SCIENCE and RELIGION

2008A, Wednesdays, 2:00-5:00, Williams 301/Logan 366  
Prof. Mark B. Adams (madams@sas.upenn.edu)

The relationship between science and religion is controversial, and is often treated simplistically, as if both “science” and “religion” were monolithic and discrete. In fact, both are richly diverse, they were deeply interconnected through much of their history, and each has been repeatedly transformed over the centuries. Although the complex relationship is often treated nowadays as though science and religion are opposed, modern science arose in religious cultures and was created and shaped by thinkers with strong religious views which interacted with, and helped to shape, their scientific work.

This undergraduate research seminar will explore the relationship between science and religion as manifested in the lives, ideas, and careers of some of the founders of modern science. Each week, we will examine one important figure. Although I can provide suggestions on where to begin, students are expected to research the figures, using whatever resources they can, to address a series of central questions: (1) What was their most important scientific work; (2) What role did religion play in their life; and (3) What was the relation between science and religion in their thinking and their scientific careers. Each week, each student should come to class with one or two pages (to be distributed) listing the sources they found most useful, and assessing the major issues concerning science and religion raised by the person’s life and work.

Course requirements include active participation in seminar discussion; short weekly sheets; and a final 15-page research paper on an approved topic (due the final Wednesday of class).

### SEMINAR SCHEDULE

- Jan 16: Introduction
- Jan 23: Johannes Kepler\*
- Jan 30: Galileo Galilei\*
- Feb 6: Francis Bacon (*The New Atlantis*)
- Feb 13: Isaac Newton\*
- Feb 20: William Paley (*Natural Theology*)
- Feb 27: Bridgewater Treatises (*Bridgewater Treatises*)
- Mar 5: August Comte (*Catechism of Positivism*)
- Mar 12: *Spring Break* (no class)
- Mar 19: Thomas Henry Huxley\*
- Mar 26: Ernst Haeckel (*Riddle of the Universe*)
- Apr 2: Julian Huxley (*Religion Without Revelation*)
- Apr 9: J. B. S. Haldane and C. S. Lewis
- Apr 16: Teilhard de Chardin (*The Phenomenon of Man*)
- Apr 23: Presentation of Student Research Papers

**RESEARCH:** In preparing class reports (and researching your final paper), consult the appropriate articles in *The Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, use the web aggressively and critically, and explore selectively recent articles, biographies, and books dealing with the topic of science and religion in the lives of the figures we will be discussing. You may also find helpful the articles in *Science and Religion: A Historical Introduction*, ed. Gary B. Ferngren (Hopkins 2002). For some weeks, particular essays or books by our central figure will be discussed in detail, and should be read.

**FINAL PAPER:** Your final paper (10 pages) should be an essay on some aspect of the relation between science and religion in the life, work, or career of a single person—either one of those we have discussed, or someone else of your choice (subject to instructor’s approval).