



Walters State Community College Course Syllabus

Course Information

Course Number and Name: PHIL 2640 Science and the Modern World

Section ID: 81331.202380

Semester and Year: Fall 2023

Credit Hours: 3

Start Date: August 21, 2023

End Date: December 08, 2023

Course Format: WEB - Web Classes

Catalog Course Description: A study of the nature of science and the relationship between science and other areas of life including religion, ethics, politics.

General Education Course Designation: General Education Course

Meeting Details: TBD

Course Drop Deadline: October 27, 2023

Instructor Information

Name: Dr. Roger Turner

Office Location: CCEN 215 - C

Office Hours: M: 4p - 9p; W: 9a - 4p; TR: 2:10p - 3:40p

Office Phone: 423-585-6948

Email: Roger.Turner@ws.edu

Supervisor Name: Dr. Robert Pratt

Supervisor Phone: 423-585-6952

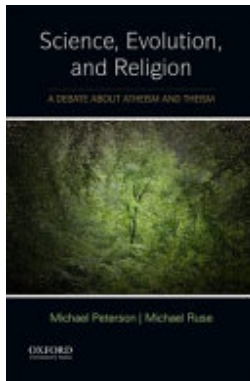
Required Textbook(s) and Materials

Science, Evolution, and Religion

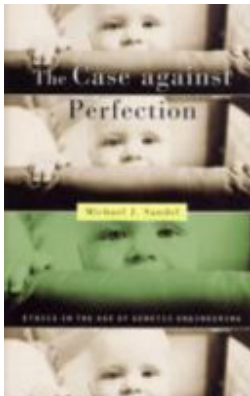
ISBN: 9780199379378

Authors: Michael L. Peterson, Michael Ruse

Publisher: Oxford University Press, USA



Publication Date: 2016-07-01



The Case against Perfection

ISBN: 9780674043060

Authors: Michael J Sandel

Publisher: Harvard University Press

Publication Date: 2009-06-30

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- 1. Define the concepts of explanation, confirmation, and falsifiability.
- 2. Explain the demarcation problem in science.
- 3. Explain scientific realism and its problems.
- 4. Describe several theories critical of modern science.
- 5. List the four classifications of Ian Barbour's fourfold typology of the relationship between science and religion.
- 6. Critically evaluate Stephen Jay Gould's NOMA principle.
- 7. Explain the ethical theories of utilitarianism and deontology and show how they apply to cases of scientific research and technology.

- 8. Argue for a point of view on the issue of using humans in research.
- 9. Argue for a point of view on the issue of using animals in research.
- 10. Explain how science influences public policy and vice versa.

Instructional Approach and Methods

This course is online; so there is no lecture or in-class discussion component to instruction.

Evaluation happens through through graded assignments consisting of ten reflective note assignments, two exams on the Peterson and Ruse text (one exam on chapters 2 - 5, the other on chapters 6 - 10), and one exam on the material in the Sandel text.

Assessment, Evaluation and Testing Procedures

Assessment in the course takes place through written assignments as well as three exams.

Grading Scale

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	0-59

Assignments

Exam #1 on chapters 2 - 5 of the Peters/Ruse text = 150

Exam #2 on chapters 6 - 10 of the Peterson/Ruse text = 150

Reflective Notes (10 @ 10 points each) = 100

Discussion Board Assignment on the Plantinga/Craig vs. Gale/Smith Debate:125

Discussion Starter: 75

Replies to colleagues (x2): 50 (25 each)

Exam on the Sandel text = 150

Total = 675 points

Class Participation

This is an online course. Students are expected to keep up with the reading schedule (below), and to submit assignments on time.

Course and Class Policies/Procedures

You must be reachable via your WS email (eLearn email). I cannot stress this enough: you will be notified of any changes that occur to the course over the semester (if there are any changes, that is) via email. Moreover, if I need to contact you, personally, for any reason at all, this will be the method through which I contact you. Do not neglect to check your WS email (eLearn email) often! **If a student wishes to email the instructor, s/he can expect a reply within 48 hours *except on weekends and holidays*.**

Additional Course Requirements/Details/Information

I. Assignments and Assessment

Exam #1 on chapters 2 - 5 of the Peterson/Ruse text = 150

Exam #2 on chapters 6 - 10 of the Peterson/Ruse text = 150

Reflective Notes (10 @ 10 points each) = 100

Discussion Board Assignment on the Plantinga/Craig vs. Gale/Smith Debate:125

Discussion Starter: 75

Replies to colleagues (x2): 50 (25 each)

Exam on the Sandel text = 150

Total = 675 points

Discussion Board Posts on Debate Video

Students will write three (3) discussion board posts. They will write one (1) 'discussion starter', and two (2) replies. Each 'reply' must reply to a different discussion starter.

Discussion starters are basically mini-argument analysis papers. Students will write *two* (2) substantive (4 or 5 sentence) paragraphs. The first paragraph should *briefly* summarize what *one side of the discussion* says (for example, what either Plantinga or Craig say, i.e., what they *argue*). The second paragraph should be an evaluation of the content in the first paragraph.

Replies are, basically, a critical response to *someone else's* discussion starter. For each 'reply', students will write one (1) substantive (4 or 5 sentence) paragraph to do this.

One reply per discussion starter

The rubric for the discussion starters goes as below. Replies are given either full or no credit (anything like a proper critical response will receive full credit; anything else will receive no credit).

Discussion starter rubric:

Quality of writing = 30%

Grammar and style are polished = 27 – 30

Grammar and style are good = 24 – 26.5

Grammar and style are acceptable, but some problems may make reading difficult = 21 – 23.5

Grammar and style obstruct reading = 1 – 20.5

Meets minimum requirements = 20%

Discussion starter is not an argument analysis essay = 0

Discussion starter is not on a relevant topic = 0

Discussion starter is one paragraph or less = 0

Quality and clarity of argument = 50%

Excellent: Discussion starter is logically organized, and makes this organization clear to the reader; paper accurately presents the argument (in standard form) and states that it is valid; paper very clearly explains any special terms in the argument; paper very clearly explains the argument; paper says whether or not premise 1 is true, and supports this with excellent reasons; paper says whether or not premise 2 is true, and supports this with excellent reasons; paper considers what might be said by someone who disagrees with the paper's assessment of the argument, and makes a cogent reply to it = 45 – 50

Good: a 'good' discussion starter will meet most, or all, of the above criteria, but either fail completely to do so, or to do so at a level whose quality is below that found in an 'excellent' paper = 40 – 44.5

Acceptable: An 'acceptable' discussion starter *might* meet most, or all of the above criteria, but will probably meet some number of the criteria that won't count as 'most'. Even so, in the case that it does meet most or all of the criteria, it will be done at a level whose quality is well below that found in an 'excellent' paper, and notably below that of a 'good' paper = 35 – 39.5

In the case that the discussion starter is seriously deficient in most of the above criteria = 1 – 34.5

All three posts due on or before **Sunday, October 8th**.

No late discussion board posts will be accepted.

Exams

There will be one exam covering the material in chapters 2 - 5 of the Peterson/Ruse text. This exam is due on or before **Sunday, September 17th**.

There will be one exam covering the material in chapters 6 - 10 of the Peterson/Ruse text. This exam is due on or before **Sunday, October 29th**.

There will be one exam on the Sandel text. The exam will cover the *entire* book, including the epilogue. The exam is due on or before **Friday, December 8th**.

Reflective Notes (RNs)

Each Reflective Note (RN) you submit will earn a grade of 'Acceptable' or 'Unacceptable'. An *Acceptable* RN will be a healthy paragraph (i.e., five or more sentences) in which you raise *either* (i) a question about or (ii) an objection to something that happens in a particular assigned reading. To ensure that I understand exactly how your question or objection engages the material you're writing about, you'll need to provide some context by briefly summarizing the part of the reading your question or objection concerns. Sincere effort will usually suffice for an Acceptable RN. However, an RN that's too short or inaccurate or unclear will earn a grade of 'Unacceptable', and won't count toward this portion of the final grade. (See the end of the syllabus for two sample Acceptable RNs.)

- Here are five important rules about RNs:

RNs can only be submitted through the eLearn dropbox.

No more than two RNs per chapter.

All RNs due on or before Sunday, **October 22nd**.

Academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism), or failure to turn in an assignment will result in a '0'.

There is no extra credit for the course. You should do your best to stay current with the readings and come to class prepared for discussion; those who participate in class will be looked upon favorably when it comes to deciding borderline grades, though there is no penalty for not participating.

Moreover, if you stay current on the readings and come to class prepared to discuss the readings, it's a good bet that adequate performance on the assignments will follow.

II. Class Policies

- You must be reachable via your WS email (eLearn email). I cannot stress this enough: you will be notified of any changes that occur to the course over the semester (if there are any changes, that is) via email. Moreover, if I need to contact you, personally, for any reason at all, this will be the method through which I contact you. Do not neglect to check your WS email (eLearn email) often! **If a student wishes to email the instructor, s/he can expect a reply within 48 hours except on weekends and holidays.**

III. Important Dates

8/21 (M): First class meeting

9/17 (S): Exam #1 on chapters 2 - 5 of Peterson/Ruse text

10/8 (S): Craig/Plantinga vs. Gale/Smith discussion board posts due on or before this date

10/29 (S): All RNs due on or before this date

10/29 (S): Exam #2 on chapters 6 - 10 of Peterson/Ruse text

12/8 (F): Exam on Sandel book due on or before this date

IV. Reading Schedule

UNIT 1: Science and Religion

Aug. 21 – Aug. 27: Read chapter 2: Science, of the Ruse and Peterson text. (Watch Craig/Plantinga vs. Gale/Smith debate video at some point during this unit—pay special attention to the due date of the discussion board assignment associated with the video.)

Aug. 28 – Sept. 3: Read chapter 3: Cosmic Origins

Sept. 4 – Sept. 10: Read chapter 4: Origins of Life

Sept. 11 – Sept. 17: Read chapter 5: Darwin and Design

Sept. 18 – Sept. 24: Read chapter 6: Evolutionary Directionality

Sept. 25 – Oct. 1: Read chapter 7: Mind and Rationality

Oct. 2 – Oct. 8: Read chapter 8: Morality

Oct. 9 – Oct. 15: Read chapter 9: Evil and Suffering

Oct. 16 – Oct. 22: Read chapter 10: Meaning and Purpose

UNIT 2: Science and Values (A Test Case)

Oct. 23 – Oct. 29: Read chapter 1: The Ethics of Enhancement in *The Case Against Perfection*

Oct. 30 – Nov. 5: Read chapter 2: Bionic Athletes

Nov. 6 – Nov. 12: Read chapter 3: Designer Children, Designing Parents

Nov. 13 – Nov. 19: Read chapter 4: The Old Eugenics and the New

Nov. 20 – Nov. 26: Read chapter 5: Mastery and Gift

Nov. 27 – Dec. 3: Read Epilogue: Embryo Ethics

V. Appendix: Sample ‘Acceptable’ RNs, and Sample ‘Excellent’ Argument Analysis Paper:

- ‘Question’ RN:

One of Turner’s main aims in this syllabus is to give us a clear sense of the questions and issues we’ll explore in this course. Unfortunately, he sometimes slips into using unfamiliar terminology. One important place this happens is when Turner tries to describe the questions about God’s existence that we’ll be exploring. Here, he uses the expression ‘intellectually justified’: “is anyone ever *intellectually justified* in believing that God exists?” ‘Intellectually justified’ is not an “everyday” or “ordinary” expression: the typical person on the street probably won’t know exactly what that means. Rather, this unfamiliar term seems to be one that’s defined and used primarily within the field of Philosophy. So, my question: What does it mean for a belief in God to be intellectually justified?

- ‘Objection’ RN:

According to Turner, the “main intellectual tool” we use to explore philosophical questions is what he calls the “power of *reason* or *rational insight*”. Turner distinguishes what he calls ‘reason’ or ‘rational insight’ from the “five senses” (vision, touch, taste, smell, hearing). Apparently, then, Turner thinks that we can gain knowledge and/or intellectually justified beliefs using something *other than* the five senses. I don’t buy this vaguely “spooky” idea. Instead, it seems to me that whatever knowledge we

have comes *only* from the five senses. So, it looks like *either* Turner is wrong about the proper way to explore philosophical questions or Philosophy turns out to be a pretty dubious discipline. Either way, Turner seems to be wrong about Philosophy.

Academic Honesty

Faculty expect all students to refrain from acts of academic misconduct including but not limited to:

1. Plagiarism - refers to using another person's ideas or writing without giving proper credit to the original source. Indulging in this type of conduct will subject the student to disciplinary sanctions, which may be imposed through the regular institutional procedures of Walters State Community College as outlined in the Student Handbook. Plagiarism will result in a grade of "0" for the paper/exam/presentation. Student Conduct and Disciplinary Sanctions contained in the college Catalog/Student Handbook apply (see policy 04:18:02 Disciplinary Sanctions). Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Using cut/paste tool from original document with no references given.
 - b. Copying another student's work and submitting it as one's own.
 - c. Forging or otherwise altering signatures.
 - d. Giving or falsifying academic documents or materials.
2. Cheating - construed as attempting to deceive or mislead which includes, but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Utilizing old tests, projects, notes or written papers.
 - b. Providing unauthorized information to a fellow student about exam content.
 - c. Receiving unauthorized aid from any source with quizzes, examinations, or other assignments.
 - d. Seeking information in an unacceptable manner during/preceding an exam or other assigned work (cheat sheet, verbal exchange, looking at another person's paper or electronic device, utilizing headphones, using textbook when the test/quiz is not an open book test/quiz, using textbook test bank etc.).
 - e. Consulting with a classmate or others when taking a computerized test.
 - f. Disregarding other specific policies and procedures outlined for a particular class.
 - g. Utilizing unapproved technology/electronic equipment during testing (i.e.: mobile devices such as cell phones, smart devices, or tablets, etc.).
 - h. Using the same Internet Protocol network address (IP address) as another student for testing without approval from the course faculty.
3. The use of any generative artificial intelligence (AI) tool, such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google's Bard, or any other pre-trained language model (commonly referred to as "chatbot"), must be

cited for any assignment where it has been used and may not be used unless specifically allowed by your instructor. Please see your instructor or the course policies within the syllabus if you have questions.

Student Resources

TUTORING SERVICES

Students in need of tutoring assistance are encouraged to contact the Office of Student Tutoring located as follows:

- Morristown Campus - Student Services Building Room L107 - (423) 585-6920
- Niswonger Campus - GRNV 226 - (423) 798-7982
- Sevierville Campus - MMH Room 210 - (865) 286-2787
- Claiborne Campus - Room 123A - (423) 851-4761

Specific tutoring assistance in mathematics and writing is available in-person and online as follows:

- Morristown Campus - English Learning Lab - HUM 120 - (423) 585-6970

[Walters State English Learning Lab \(opens in new window\)](https://www.walters.edu/academics/humanities/writing-lab)
[ws.edu/academics/humanities/writing-lab](https://www.walters.edu/academics/humanities/writing-lab)

- Morristown Campus - Mathematics Lab - MBSS 222 - (423) 585-6872

[Walters State Mathematics Learning Lab \(opens in new window\)](https://www.walters.edu/academics/mathematics/learning-lab)
[ws.edu/academics/mathematics/learning-lab](https://www.walters.edu/academics/mathematics/learning-lab)

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

Students who need assistance with computing and technology issues should contact the IET Helpdesk by phone at Morristown: (423) 318-2742; Niswonger: (423) 798-8186; or Sevierville: (865) 286-2789 or on-line access.

[Walters State Helpdesk \(opens in new window\)](https://www.walters.edu/helpdesk)
[helpdesk.ws.edu](https://www.walters.edu/helpdesk)

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES SUPPORT SERVICES

Students with disabilities must register with Student Support Services each semester in the Student Services Building, Room U134 (phone (423) 585-6892) if they need any special facilities, services, or consideration.

[Walters State Student Support Services \(opens in new window\)](https://www.waltersstate.edu/student-services/disability/)
[ws.edu/student-services/disability/](https://www.waltersstate.edu/student-services/disability/)

SUICIDE PREVENTION STATEMENT

Walters State is committed to and cares about all students. Support services are available for any person at Walters State who is experiencing feelings of being overwhelmed, hopelessness, depression, thinking about dying by suicide, or is otherwise in need of assistance. For immediate help, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by calling or texting 9-8-8 or the Trevor Lifeline at 1-866-488-7386. Veterans may also contact the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (press 1) or Text 838255.

Walters State has a relationship in place with the following community agencies to provide services (may include crisis referral services, prevention screenings, etc.):

- Cherokee Health Systems 423-586-5032
- Frontier Health 423-467-3600

College Policies

STUDENTS HANDBOOK AS OFFICIAL GOVERNING DOCUMENT

This class is governed by the policies and procedures stated in the current Walters State Community College Student Handbook. All students attending Walters State Community College, regardless of the time, location, or format of the class, must abide by the rules and regulations outlined in the current Walters State Catalog/Student Handbook and the current Walters State Timetable of Classes.

[Walters State Catalog \(opens in new window\)](https://www.waltersstate.edu/catalog/)
[catalog.ws.edu/](https://www.waltersstate.edu/catalog/)

[Walters State Timetable of Classes \(opens in new window\)](https://www.waltersstate.edu/admissions/registration/)
[ws.edu/admissions/registration/](https://www.waltersstate.edu/admissions/registration/)

PURPOSE, LIMITATIONS AND MODIFICATION OF SYLLABUS

This syllabus sets forth the expectations for the course content, work, and grading as well as expectations for student performance and conduct. The syllabus does not constitute a contract between the student and the instructor or the College. The information contained here is subject to change at any time. The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus at any time with written notification to the students. Though changes are possible, it is expected that the course will be conducted as described in this syllabus for the semester/year specified in the Course Information

section of the syllabus. This syllabus is only valid for the semester/year specified and course requirements are not guaranteed for future semesters.

COURSE GROUND RULES

- Students must attend the first day of on-ground class or contact the instructor prior to the first class. Failure to do this may result in being dropped from the class. Excessive absences may substantially lower the course grade.
- Regular class attendance is a student's obligation for any course regardless of format. (See the Walters State Catalog/Student Handbook). If a student misses class, it is his or her responsibility to contact the instructor regarding missed assignments and/or activities and to be prepared for the next class assignment.
- Students enrolled in web courses must follow the course attendance policy defined for online attendance during the first week of class and throughout the term. Failure to do this may result in being dropped from the class during week one OR may result in the accrual of absences which may negatively impact the student's grade in the course.
- Students who have not paid fees on time and/or are not correctly registered for this class and whose names do not appear on official class rolls generated by the Walters State student information system (MyWS) will not be allowed to remain in class or receive credit for this course.
- Electronic devices must not disrupt the instructional process or college-sponsored academic activity. Use of electronic devices is prohibited unless use of the device is relevant to the activity and use is sanctioned by the faculty member in charge. Electronic devices that are not relevant to the activity or sanctioned by the faculty member in charge should be set so that they will not produce an audible sound during classroom instruction or other college-sponsored academic activity.

FINANCIAL AID

Students receiving any type of financial aid or scholarship should contact the Financial Aid Office before making any changes to their schedule. Schedule changes without prior approval may result in loss of award for the current term and future terms.

All forms of student Financial Aid may be jeopardized or lost due to the lack of Satisfactory Academic Progress in one or multiple courses. Lack of Satisfactory Academic Progress may negatively impact a student's degree/certificate completion pace and further jeopardize Financial Aid eligibility.

CANCELLATION OF CLASSES AND ACADEMIC CONTINUITY

For information related to the cancellation of classes due to inclement weather or other events, please check the Senators Emergency Text system or the college's Web site at:

[Walters State Homepage \(opens in new window\)](#)

ws.edu/home/

[Walters State Facebook page \(opens in new window\)](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/WaltersState/>

[Walters State Twitter page \(opens in new window\)](#)

<https://twitter.com/waltersstate>

or call the college's student information line, 1-800-225-4770, option 1; the Sevier County Campus, (865) 774-5800, option 7; the Niswonger Campus (423) 798-7940, option 7; or the Claiborne County Campus, 423-636-6200, option 7. Also, please monitor local TV and radio stations for further announcements.

When an event or disaster interrupts the scheduled operations of the college and the ability to proceed with the academic course activities as planned, the college and your instructor may alter the course plan outlined in the syllabus. Should an event occur, students should refer to their course e-Learn pages and/or class materials previously delivered to receive guidance from their instructor. Students should continue to monitor the official college channels of communication listed in the above paragraph. If you would like to sign up for the Senators Emergency Text system, please go to the following Web site:

[Senator Emergency Text System \(opens in new window\)](#)

ws.edu/set/

Dual Enrollment students attending on a high school campus should refer to the high school inclement weather cancellations.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Brightspace (commonly known as eLearn or D2L) is the college's Learning Management System (LMS).

Brightspace is committed to accessibility by "deliver[ing] a learning experience that meets the needs of all people, regardless of age or ability." [Brightspace Accessibility Standard \(opens in new window\)](#)

Brightspace is also committed to guarding student data and privacy. [Brightspace Privacy Policy \(opens in new window\)](#)