



Walters State Community College Course Syllabus

Course Information

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

Section ID: 81329.202380

Semester and Year: Fall 2023

Credit Hours: 3

Start Date: August 21, 2023

End Date: December 08, 2023

Course Format: CON - Conventional Methodology

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: TR; 12:45PM - 02:10PM; MBSS 223

Course Drop Deadline: October 27, 2023

Instructor Information

Name: Paul Turner

Office Location: CCEN 215 - C

Office Hours: M: 4p - 9p (virtual); W: 9a - 4p; T/R: 2:10p - 3:40p

Office Phone: 423-585-6948

Email: Roger.Turner@ws.edu

Supervisor Name: Dr. Robert Pratt

Supervisor Phone: 423-585-6952

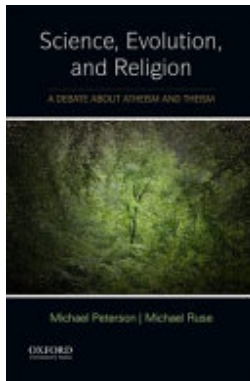
Required Textbook(s) and Materials

Science, Evolution, and Religion

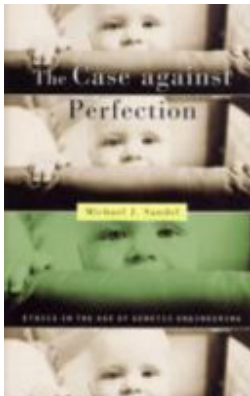
ISBN: 9780199379378

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

The course is lecture based

Evaluation happens informally through class discussion and formally through graded assignments consisting of written papers (two argument analysis papers), ten reflective note assignments, and one exam on the material in the Sandel text.

Assessment, Evaluation and Testing Procedures

Assessment in the course takes place informally through class discussion, and formally through written assignments as well as one exam.

Grading Scale

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

Assignments

Argument Analysis Papers (2 @ 150 points) = 300

Reflective Notes (10 @ 20 points each) = 200

Exam on the Sandel text = 100

Total = 600 points

Class Participation

Class attendance is mandatory, and class participation is expected.

Course and Class Policies/Procedures

Attendance is required. You are allowed to miss four (4) class periods without penalty. After the fourth absence, I will deduct 2% from your overall grade for each absence. If you have an extended illness or some other documentable crisis that will require you to miss more than four classes, please contact me for accommodations.

Intentional disrespect (for your classmates or for your instructor) will not be tolerated.

No electronic devices.

If you wish to discuss the grade you receive for *any* particular assignment you'll need to stop by during office hours. This isn't because I want to be difficult; it's because I'm much better in person, where we can talk, than I am over email or whatever else. And please, don't come up to me before or after class to discuss a grade (unless your coming up is just a matter of setting up an appointment to meet). I likely won't remember what your grade was or why you got it on whatever assignment it is you want to discuss.

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

The grading goes as follows:

Argument Analysis Papers (2 @ 150 points) = 300

Reflective Notes (10 @ 20 points each) = 200

Exam on the Sandel text = 100

Total = 600 points

Argument Analysis Papers:

Twice a semester, during a normal class period, students will write an argument analysis paper. These will be hand-written, and written in-class on **college-rule** paper. Papers must be **single-spaced**, and they must be **front and back** of just **one** college-ruled piece of paper. Papers must be on one of the topics listed below. Students cannot write on the same topic twice.

Each topic consists of a single philosophical argument. Your paper must explain and evaluate that argument. To do that, you must do everything on this checklist:

Present the argument in the standard form, with numbered premises and conclusion (just as the argument appears below).

Explain any special terms that appear in the argument.

State whether the argument is logically valid. (Hint: it is.)

For each of the premises of the argument, say explicitly whether it is true or false, and give cogent reasons for what you say.

Consider something that someone who disagrees with you about the argument would or might say by way of objection to what you have said, and reply to it.

This checklist is meant to be an exhaustive guide to everything you need to do to do well on this assignment. You need not go beyond it by (e.g.) constructing your own standard form arguments, comparing the argument to others, describing the importance of the argument, or describing your own views on the topic (except insofar as they come out in your discussion of the truth or falsity of the premises). All of those sorts of moves have their place in philosophical writing, but the point of this assignment is for you to focus your gaze on a very narrow sort of task: just explaining and evaluating one philosophical argument. If you can master this task, you can build on that success to other sorts of writing and thinking, both in philosophy and elsewhere.

Paper Topics (choose one):

- **Topic A: Moral Naturalism**

- Consider the following argument:
 - 1. If everything that exists is natural, then nothing is objectively morally wrong.
 - 2. Everything that exists is natural.
 - 3. Therefore, nothing is objectively morally wrong.

- **Topic B: Science and Morality**

- Consider the following argument:
- 1. If we can measure human happiness, then we can use this to discover what is morally best.
- 2. We can measure human happiness.
- 3. Therefore, we can use our measurements of human happiness to discover what is morally best.
- **Topic C: Fine-Tuning**
 - Consider the following argument:
 - 1. If a multiverse hypothesis is plausible, then the fine-tuning argument doesn't give us good reason to believe in God.
 - 2. A multiverse hypothesis is plausible.
 - 3. Therefore, the fine-tuning argument doesn't give us good reason to believe in God.
- **Topic D: Evolution, Theism, and Chance**
 - Consider the following argument:
 - 1. If evolution is undirected (as that term is used by biologists), then evolution and theism are incompatible.
 - 2. Evolution is undirected (as that term is used by biologists).
 - 3. Therefore, evolution and theism are incompatible.
- **Topic E: Evolution, Theism, and Suffering**
 - Consider the following argument:
 - 1. If evolutionary processes involve great suffering, then evolution and theism are incompatible.
 - 2. Evolutionary processes involve great suffering.
 - 3. Therefore, evolution and theism are incompatible.
- **Topic F: Science and Free Will**
 - Consider the following argument:
 - 1. If scientists can predict a decision before a subject notices making it, then that action wasn't consciously chosen.
 - 2. If an action wasn't consciously chosen, then that action wasn't free.
 - 3. Therefore, if scientists can predict a decision before a subject notices making it, then that action wasn't free.

Papers will be graded as follows:

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%

Paper is not an argument analysis essay = 0

Paper is not on a relevant topic = 0

Paper is either under or over the required word count = 0

Quality and clarity of argument = 50%

Excellent: Paper 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' paper 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' paper *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 paper is seriously deficient in most of the above criteria = 1 – 34.5

The paper must be argumentative within an argument analysis framework. Do not plagiarize or copy other sources without giving credit to the original author. Intentional and unintentional cases of plagiarism are treated the same: **a zero on the paper and a possible F in the class.**

Exam

There will be one exam on the Sandel text. The exam will cover the *entire* book, including the epilogue. The exam will be held on **Thursday, December, 7th.**

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 must be typed.

RNs can only be submitted in class.

An RN on a particular reading must be submitted before or during the *first* class where we discuss that reading—once we've started talking about a particular reading, it's too late to submit an RN about it.

No more than two RNs per chapter.

Due date is **TBD** .

Finally, I encourage you to draw on your RNs in class discussion: please share your questions with us, try out your objections on us, and so on. "Anonymized" RNs may sometimes be used as springboards for class discussion.

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

- Attendance is required. You are allowed to miss four (4) class periods without penalty. After the fourth absence, I will deduct 2% from your overall grade for each absence. If you have an extended illness or some other documentable crisis that will require you to miss more than four classes, please contact me for accommodations.

- Intentional disrespect (for your classmates or for your instructor) will not be tolerated.
- No electronic devices.
- If you wish to discuss the grade you receive for *any* particular assignment you'll need to stop by during office hours. This isn't because I want to be difficult; it's because I'm much better in person, where we can talk, than I am over email or whatever else. And please, don't come up to me before or after class to discuss a grade (unless your coming up is just a matter of setting up an appointment to meet). I likely won't remember what your grade was or why you got it on whatever assignment it is you want to discuss.
- 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. Tentative Reading Schedule (NB: Schedule is subject to change by the instructor)

UNIT 1: Science and Religion

Chapter 2: Science

Chapter 3: Cosmic Origins

Chapter 4: Origins of Life

Chapter 5: Darwin and Design

First Argument Analysis Paper

Chapter 6: Evolutionary Directionality

Chapter 7: Mind and Rationality

Chapter 8: Morality

Chapter 9: Evil and Suffering

Chapter 10: Meaning and Purpose

Second Argument Analysis Paper

UNIT 2: Science and Values (A Test Case)

Chapter 1: The Ethics of Enhancement

Chapter 2: Bionic Athletes

Chapter 3: Designer Children, Designing Parents

Chapter 4: The Old Eugenics and the New

Chapter 5: Mastery and Gift

Epilogue: Embryo Ethics

VI. Appendix: Sample 'Acceptable' RNs:

- '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 \(opens in new window\)](#)
ws.edu/academics/humanities/writing-lab

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

[Walters State Mathematics Learning Lab \(opens in new window\)](#)
ws.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 \(opens in new window\)](#)
helpdesk.ws.edu

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 \(opens in new window\)](#)
ws.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 \(opens in new window\)](#)
catalog.ws.edu/

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

[Walters State Facebook page \(opens in new window\)](https://www.facebook.com/WaltersState/)
<https://www.facebook.com/WaltersState/>

[Walters State Twitter page \(opens in new window\)](https://twitter.com/waltersstate)
<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 \(opens in new window\)](http://ws.edu/set/)
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 \(opens in new window\)](#)