

**221.31 • Social Science and Christianity** (3 hrs.)  
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Providence College  
Winter Session, 2008  
Mondays 11:10 & Thursdays 3:20

## SYLLABUS

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### A. Calendar Description of the Course

“An exploration of the bases, problems, possibilities, and models of integrating selected social sciences and Christianity, designed to identify common ground between the two world views, and to develop a personal philosophy of how they might be most mutually enhancing.”

This course is not the psychology, sociology, or anthropology *of* religion, in which the social sciences are cast as the subject and Christianity is cast as the object, the social sciences as the knower and Christianity as the known. Nor is it merely the reverse, in which Christianity one-sidedly critiques the social sciences. Instead, this course attempts to cast the student as a third party, so as to enable him or her to examine the character of both the social sciences *and* Christianity, comparing and contrasting them to see what presuppositions, assumptions, and concerns might be integral to both, and how they might inform each other and collaborate in the pursuit of truth about human life. Philosophical notions about the nature of knowing (epistemology), the nature of the world (cosmology), and the nature of human being (philosophical anthropology) are foundational to this enterprise.

This course is taught annually in the winter semester as a senior capstone seminar course, with instruction rotating annually among each of the professors in the Department of Social Sciences.

### B. Purpose of the Course

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. describe and characterize the nature of the social sciences and Christianity as worldviews;
2. separate authentic attempts to integrate social science and Christianity from other ways in which the two are related;
3. understand the relevance of philosophical questions of epistemology, cosmology, and philosophical anthropology to the challenge of integrating social science and Christianity;

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#### *Note re. Syllabus:*

It is the student's responsibility to retain their course syllabi for use as support for possible future applications to other educational institutions for transfer of credit.

4. explain the presuppositions, assumptions, and concerns that are integral to both social science and Christianity;
5. summarize and evaluate various models that have been advanced for integrating the social sciences and Christianity;
6. compare and contrast how relatively successfully selected social sciences have been integrated with Christianity;
7. apply the knowledge generated by the social sciences to the process of biblical studies;
8. assess how mutually enhancing the social sciences and Christian faith might be;
9. articulate a personal philosophy of the integration of the social sciences and Christianity;
10. display an appreciation for social scientific scholarship and a commitment to Christian faith.

### C. Required Textbooks

Entwistle, David. (2004). *Integrative approaches to psychology and Christianity*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.

Palmer, Parker J. (1993). *To know as we are known: Education as a spiritual journey*. San Francisco: HarperCollins.

Smith, Christian. (2003). *Moral, believing animals: Human personhood and culture*. Oxford University Press.

*Social Science and Christianity Course Reader*. Providence Bookstore, 2008.

- a bound compilation of photocopies of all assigned readings

other than the Entwistle and Smith texts

### D. Course Requirements

#### 1. Class Attendance and Participation (14%)

Your attendance and participation in class is even more important in this course than in courses that are primarily lecture courses. In upper level seminar courses such as this, you have the opportunity to learn about and from your classmates, not just your instructor, and to develop your own ability and ease in conversing intellectually. The quality of the class experience will be socially constructed by what the members of the class bring to it; the better prepared and more willing to participate each student is, the richer the course will be for all.

2. Discussion Leadership (14% + 6% = 20%)

Each student will be asked to select two class periods during the semester in which you will lead your classmates in the discussion of the assigned topic and reading. The entire class period will be given to your leadership. This includes the following:

- 1) You should come prepared with a 2 page typed outline and summary of the reading, including discussion questions for the class, that you will hand out to each of the students at the beginning of class.
- 2) Bringing additional resources on the topic to the class is required.
- 3) After introducing the topic to the class, your role is to draw out and guide discussion, ending the period with an oral summary that pulls together both what you have written prior to the class period as well as what your classmates have said during the period.

Sign-up for discussion leadership will be determined in the first class. One class will be yours alone (14%). The second class will be shared with a classmate (6%).

3. Annotated Articles (22 x .5 = 11%)

**Due Date: At the beginning of each class**

Annotate – “to make or furnish critical or explanatory notes or comments”

merriam-webster

Each assigned reading must be annotated as part of the reading process, and students are required to bring 2 copies of their annotated reading to each class. One will be submitted to the instructor at the beginning of class, and the other is to be used as a reference by the student while participating in class discussion. The student must also identify in writing what they found to be the most significant points in the article.

Note: In the case of the Entwistle readings, which are quite lengthy, do not photocopy the entire reading. Instead, type out all your comments, plus most significant points of the article, on a single page.

4. Personal Reflections (3 x 5% = 15%)

Write a 2-3 page informal reflection on selected course material that demonstrates your personal interaction with it, and functions as a form of journaling that documents the progress of your thinking throughout the semester. No further study beyond doing the assigned readings and participating in class discussion is required. Comment on ideas or analyses presented in the preceding section of the course that have interested or impressed you the most, explaining why you think they are significant. In order to develop your reflections meaningfully, you should limit your focus to the topics of one or two classes/readings in the preceding section of the course. The topics and due dates are as follows:

**Reflection Paper #1**  
**Reflection Paper #2**  
**Reflection Paper #3**

**Philosophy & History**  
**Psychology**  
**Sociology & Anthropology**

**February 11**  
**March 13**  
**April 7**

5. Book Reaction (15%)

**Due Date: February 4**

Write an informal, personal reaction to Palmer's *To Know as We Are Known*, (3-4 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font). Your reaction should **not** outline the contents of the book, but rather should discuss what you found most interesting or provocative, and demonstrate your ability to interact critically with the material. Though Palmer is writing to teachers, his reflections are at least as relevant to students of higher education. What do you think about his notions of knowing, truth, spirituality, and obedience? How do you assess your own education in light of them? How might they inform the integration of social science and Christianity?

6. Philosophy of Integration Paper (25%)

**Due Date: April 10**

Write a 10-page paper (double-spaced, 12 point font) articulating your personal philosophy of the integration of social science and Christianity, using a social scientific style of documentation (see Section G of this syllabus, "The Bare Basics of ASA Documentation"). You may focus on one specific social science or address them collectively, but your paper should express your conclusions, however tentative, about the following:

How do the following philosophical issues, as discussed in the course materials and classes, impact the study of human behaviour?

- a) the nature of knowledge (epistemology)
  - origins, assumptions, worldviews, certainty
- b) the nature of the world (cosmology)
  - open or closed, limited to nature or not
- c) the nature of humanity (philosophical anthropology)
  - determined or free, good or evil

Are social science and Christianity

- a) at complete odds with one another? i.e. enemies
- b) able to benefit from each other? i.e. spies or colonialists
- c) parallel to one another? i.e. neutral parties
- d) capable of dynamic interaction? i.e. allies

Your paper will be graded on the quality of its content (15%), rhetoric (5%), and technical competence (5%).

## E. Grading Summary

### 1. Grade Components

Class Participation	14%
Discussion Leadership	20% (14% + 6%)
Annotated Articles	11%
Personal Reflections	15% (5% x 3)
Book Reaction	15%
Personal Philosophy Paper	25%

### 2. Grading Scale

Final course letter grades and their Grade Point equivalents will be calculated using the following scale:

<i>Percent</i>	<i>G.P.</i>	<i>Quality</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>G.P.</i>	<i>Quality</i>
91 – 99 = A+	4.0	Exceptional	67 – 69 = C+	2.5	Satisfactory
85 – 90 = A		Excellent	63 – 66 = C	2.0	Adequate
80 – 84 = A-			60 – 62 = C-		
77 – 79 = B+	3.5	Superior	57 – 59 = D+	1.0	Marginal
73 – 76 = B	3.0	Good	53 – 56 = D		Poor
70 – 72 = B-			50 – 52 = D-		
			< 50 = F	0.0	Failure

## F. Course Policies

In addition to the policies outlined in the *Student Handbook*, the complete academic policies, procedures, and regulations of Providence College can be found online ([http://prov.ca/college/ac\\_pol-proc-reg.aspx](http://prov.ca/college/ac_pol-proc-reg.aspx)), or in the Library, Admissions Office, or Dean's Office.

### 1. Class Attendance

As described above, full attendance at all classes is expected, because active listening, thinking and discussing are primary learning experiences in this course. Students who find themselves struggling with course material are welcome to seek additional individual assistance from the instructor outside the classes, but only if they have demonstrated the self-discipline to attend all the classes they possibly can.

### 2. ICTs in the Classroom

Student use of information and communication technologies for purposes other than class note-taking is not allowed in the classroom, as students are expected to

give their total attention to class activities. Use of cell-phones or ipods is never appropriate in the classroom, and use of laptop computers to play games, write blogs, chat with others, browse the internet, or engage material not related to the class is always distracting to classmates and disrespectful to the instructor. Unlike some other post-secondary institutions, Providence has not yet found it necessary to ban laptops from the classroom, or prevent wireless internet access in classrooms. Only judicious use of them will keep it that way.

### 3. Plagiarism

Students are expected to demonstrate academic integrity in all its various forms, and will be held accountable for doing so by the policy on Academic Conduct in the Student Handbook (<http://prov.ca/studentLife/handbook.aspx>). One particularly problematic breach of academic integrity is plagiarism, which is stealing from the ideas and writings of another person and passing them off as one's own. For an elaboration of the nature, types, and prevention of plagiarism, see the Providence College document entitled "Academic Dishonesty: The Problem of Plagiarism in Academic Writing," in the Providence College Academic Formation Guide available in the Providence Bookstore, or in the Providence College "Academic Policies, Procedures, and Regulations" ([http://prov.ca/college/ac\\_pol-proc-reg.aspx](http://prov.ca/college/ac_pol-proc-reg.aspx)).

### 4. Late Assignments

Late assignments will be accepted up to one week after their due date, but their grades will be reduced by 10%, which equals one letter grade. Late papers will **not** be accepted more than one week after their due date, and students who do not submit a paper by at most one week after the due date will receive a grade of zero for that component of the course. The instructor will not receive requests for extensions. If you feel an extension is warranted, attach a cover letter to your assignment when you hand it in, explaining why it is late, and a decision will be made by the instructor when your paper is graded. A waiving of the 10% late reduction, or the one week deadline, will be granted only in the cases of personal or medical emergencies as detailed in the cover letter. Computer problems, conflicts with co-curricular activities, competition for library resources, and/or long weekends before or after due dates do not constitute such emergencies. Failure to plan ahead, or to maintain a margin of time for unforeseen events prior to the due date, does not warrant an extension either.

## G. The Bare Basics of American Sociological Association (ASA) Documentation

For the complete ASA Quick Style Guide for students writing sociology papers, see <http://www.asanet.org/page.wv?name=Quick+Style+Guide&section=Sociology+Depts>

### 1. In-text Citations

#### a) For ideas or information contained in a sentence:

Basic Format:

This is what you should do at the end of the sentence (Author Year-of-Publication).

Example:

This is what you should do at the end of the sentence (Smith 2008).

Basic Format:

According to Author (Year-of-Publication), this is what you should do in the middle of a sentence.

Example:

According to Smith (2008), this is what you should do in the middle of a sentence.

#### b) For direct quotations contained in a sentence:

Basic Format:

This is what you should do for a quotation “at the end of the sentence” (Author Year:page#).

Example:

This is what you should do for a quotation “at the end of the sentence” (Smith 2008:35).

Basic Format:

For a quotation “in the middle of a sentence” (Author Year:page#), this is what you should do.

Example:

For a quotation “in the middle of a sentence” (Smith 2008:35), this is what you should do.

### 2. Notes

ASA format does **not** use footnotes at the bottom of the page where a reference occurs. Endnotes numbered consecutively at the end of the whole document are permissible for material that explains or amplifies the main text.

### 3. References

Full bibliographic information for all citations in the text must appear at the end of the essay in alphabetical order under the centered title of “References” as follows:

a) Books:

Basic Format:

Last Name, First Name and Second Initial. Year. *Title Italicized and in Title Case*. City: Publisher.

Example:

Smith, John Q. 2008. *How to Document a Paper: The ASA Style*. Toronto: Academic Publishers.

b) Edited books, and editions other than the first:

Basic Format:

Last Name, First Name and Second Initial., Editor. Year. *Title Italicized and in Title Case*. Edition. City: Publisher.

Example:

Smith, John Q., ed. 2008. *How to Document a Paper: The ASA Style*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Toronto: Academic Publishers.

c) Journal articles:

Basic Format:

Last Name, First Name and Second Initial. Year. "Title of the Article in Title Case and Quotations." *Title of the Journal in Title Case and Italicized* Volume Number:Pages.

Example:

Smith, John Q. 2008. "How to Document in ASA Format." *Journal of Documentation Styles* 27:44-51.

d) Articles from edited collected works:

Basic Format:

Last Name, First Name and Second Initial. Year. "Title of the Article in Title Case and Quotations." Pages xx-yy in *Title of the Book in Title Case and Italicized* (edition), edited by First and Last Name. City: Publisher.

Example:

Smith, John Q. 2008. "How to Document in ASA Format." Pp. 65-76 in *A Comparison of Documentation Styles* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., edited by Jane X. Doe. New York: Scholar's Press.

e) Internet sites:

Basic Format:

Last Name, First Name and Second Initial. Publication or update date. "Title in Title Case and Quotations," Access date. Internet address.

Example:

Smith, John Q. 2008. "A Quick Style Guide for Students Writing Sociology Papers." Washington, DC: American Sociological Association, Retrieved July 1, 2008.

<http://www.asanet.org/page.wv?name=Quick+Style+Guide&section=Sociology+Depts>

## H. Selected Bibliography

### General

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- Gay, Craig. (1995). Evangelicals and language of technopoly. *Crux*, 31, 1, 32-40.
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- Noll, Mark. (1995). *The scandal of the evangelical mind*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Palmer, Parker J. (1993). *To know as we are known: Education as a spiritual journey*. San Francisco: HarperCollins.
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- Williams, Clifford. (2002). *The life of the mind*. Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks.
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## Philosophy of Science

- Beed, Clive & Beed, Cara. (2005). An evangelical Christian response to naturalistic social science. *Christian Scholar's Review*, 34, 1, 21-41.
- Clouser, Roy A. (2005). *The myth of religious neutrality: An essay on the hidden role of religious beliefs in theories*. (rev. ed.) Notre Dame, IN: The University of Notre Dame Press.
- Giberson, Karl. (1993). Jerusalem and the National Academy of Science: Is there a Christian philosophy of science? *Christian Scholar's Review*, 23, 2, 194-202.
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- Laudan, Larry. (1996). *Beyond positivism and relativism: Theory, method, and evidence*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
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- Richards, Jay Wesley. (1997). Many worlds hypotheses: A naturalistic alternative to design. *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, 49, 4, 218-227.
- Van Leeuwen, Mary Stewart. (1989). Evangelicals and the social sciences. *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 13, 246-263.

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Mathisen, James. (1989). The origins of sociology: Why no Christian influence. *Christian Scholar's Review*, 19, 1, 49-65.

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## Psychology

(2004). *Journal of Psychology and Theology*. 32, 3. Theme Issue: Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Integration

(1996). *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*. 15, 2. Theme Issue: Integration Revisited.

Dueck, A., & Lee, C. (Eds.) (2005). *Why psychology needs theology: A radical-Reformation perspective*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

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Hoksbergen, Roland. (1994). Is there a Christian economics? Some thoughts in the light of the rise of postmodernism. *Christian Scholar's Review*, 24, 2, 126-142.

Mason, John D. and Schaefer, Kurt C. (1990). The Bible, the state, and the economy: A framework for analysis. *Christian Scholar's Review*, 20, 1, 45-64.

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## Political Science

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## Natural Science

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## I. Class Schedule

This course employs a seminar format of learning, where the majority of class time will be given to discussion of readings. Therefore it is imperative that all students complete the readings for each class topic **prior** to that class, and then come to class, hard copies in hand, prepared to discuss them. Full bibliographic citations are given in the bibliography above. All the readings are drawn from either the course textbooks or the Course Reader. The instructor reserves the right to assign additional readings during the course of the term or to alter the schedule of topics as she sees fit.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading to be Discussed</u>
Jan. 10	Orientation to the Course	
<b>Unit I: Foundations of Integration</b>		
Jan. 14	The Relationship Between the Social Sciences and Christianity	van Leeuwen (1989) & Gay (1995).
Jan. 17	Social Science as Moral Theology	Scimecca (1979) & McClay (2001) & Postman (1988).



