

Quest 1: God, Humanity, and Evolution
IDS 2935 - 19262, 19263, 19264

Fall 2023

Quest 1: Nature and Culture

IDS 2935 - 19263, 19264, 19265

"God, Humanity, and Evolution"

General Education - Humanities (H), Writing Requirement (WR) 2000 words

**A minimum grade of C is required for general education requirements*

Instructor: Todd Best

office hours: by appointment (email for appointment)

office location: 2013 Farrior Hall (must check in at front desk)

email: tabest@ufl.edu

phone: 352-392-1521

Please email if you have any concerns, questions, or suggestions for improvement regarding this course. I am happy to set up a conversation.

Teaching Assistant: Zhu Tang

office hours: MWF 4-5pm, or by appointment

office location: Anderson 008

email: tangz@ufl.edu

phone: 352-392-1625

Lecture Meeting Times:

- Monday, Wednesday period 7 (1:55-2:45)

Discussion Section Meeting Times:

- 19562 Discussion section - Friday period 4 (10:40-11:30) - LAR 310
- 19563 Discussion section - Friday period 5 (11:45 - 12:35) - ARCH 213
- 19264 Discussion section - Friday period 6 (12:50 - 1:40) - MCCB G108

(Note: you can find your section on one.ufl.edu)

Course Description:

This course examines the language that we use to talk about science and religions with a focus on Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory. Through an examination of influential writings by scientists, philosophers, historians, and religious thinkers, this course shows the complex ways that evolutionary theory has been interpreted over time. It shows how the sciences have reshaped traditional religious views, the ways religion has reshaped the sciences, and the ways evolutionary theory impacts the portrayal of the future for natural and artificial intelligences.

Students will have the opportunity to think and write about foundational concepts invigorated by the sciences and humanities.

Quest and General Education Credit

- Quest 1
- Humanities
- Writing Requirement (WR) 2000 words

This course accomplishes the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) objectives of the subject areas listed above. A minimum grade of C is required for Quest and General Education credit. Courses intended to satisfy Quest and General Education requirements cannot be taken S-U.

Required & Recommended Course Materials (to purchase/rent)

All the required readings for the course shall be on the Canvas page for this course.

Graded Work

Reading Response Essays

Due weekly - students will submit reading response papers that address the question posed for each week of class. Class time will be devoted to addressing the question of the week in the lectures, discussions, and group work. During this time students should begin to formulate their answers. Papers should be submitted by 5:00 pm on Friday of each week. For our two field trips (i.e., the Museum of Natural History and Library West) the papers may focus on issues related to them. 100-250 words (do not count toward 2000 word requirement), 20 points each x 15 = 300.

Essay One: Analytic

Due Week 9 - This papers should shall analyze and evaluate an essential question(s) in the topics from Weeks One to Seven. Students should use MLA or a related style. 1000 words (counts toward 2000 word requirement), 200 points.

Essay Two: Connection

Due Week 16 - This paper should provide a critical reflection on your intellectual, personal, and/or professional perspective on an essential question(s) in the topics from Weeks Nine to Fifteen. Students should use MLA or a related style. 1000 words (counts toward 2000 word requirement), 200 points.

Midterm Exam/Essay

Produce clear and effective responses to essential questions in the Topics for Weeks One to Seven. Given in class. 150 points.

Final Exam/Essay/Project

Produce clear and effective responses to essential question in the Topics for Weeks Nine to Fifteen. Given: tba. 150 points.

ALL GRADED ASSIGNMENTS: TOTAL 1000 POINTS

Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academicDregulations/gradesDgradingDpolicies/>

A	94 – 100% of possible points		C	74 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%		C-	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%		D+	67 – 69%
B	84 – 86%		D	64 – 66%
B-	80 – 83%		D-	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%		E	<60

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is required and will be taken daily and recorded in the Canvas gradebook. Only those absences deemed excused according to UF policy, including university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, illness, and religious holidays will be exempted from this policy. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor prior to the date that will be missed. After two unexcused absences, **25 points per absence** will be deducted from the final grade.

Please Note: If students are absent, it is their responsibility to make themselves aware of all due dates. If absent due to a scheduled event, students are still responsible for turning assignments in on time. Tardiness: If students enter class after roll has been called, they are late, which disrupts the entire class.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Participation: students are expected to be present and fully engaged in each class session, paying attention to the class discussion from both instructor/TA and classmates and verbally

participating as much as possible. This is not a lecture based class, but one that relies on questions, processing of ideas, responses by students, and overall discussion.

In-class discussions will sometimes be led by the instructor, sometimes by TA, and possibly by a student. Each class member should come to class ready to contribute, and not merely to listen, every week. Each class session, students should come with 1-2 discussion questions that you would want to ask if you were leading a discussion on the assigned reading.

Writing Assessment Rubric

*Note: Information on University of Florida's Writing Studio is here: <https://writing.ufl.edu/>

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit at least some evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide at least an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off-topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit at least some identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement but may require readers to work to follow progression of ideas.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.

STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical sentence structure. At a minimum, documents will display a less precise use of vocabulary and an uneven use of sentence structure or a writing style that occasionally veers away from word choice or tone appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or errorD free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, papers may contain some spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive so they do not muddy the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.

The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on all of the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization.

WR Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

Weekly Course Schedule

Week One: How do we think about science and religion?

The goal of this week is to get a handle on the topic of our class, how to think critically about the definitions of science and religion, how these definitions change and shift over time, how the borders between them shift over time, and the theoretical models that scholars have proposed for thinking about their relations.

W 8/23: Class introduction; how to study and have a conversation about this

Reading for Friday:

+David Wilson, "The Historiography of Science and Religion" in *Science and Religion*, 2002, ed. by G Fergren, Johns Hopkins Press, pp.13-29 (16).

+Jonathan Edelmann, "A Dialogue Between Science and Religion?," in *Hindu Theology and Biology*, Oxford Uni Press, 2012, pp.11M17 (6).

Assignment for Friday: Orient the Teacher

F 8/25: Discussion sections

Week Two: Are science and religion two independent areas of human knowledge?

Some believe that science and religion are in conflict with one another, others believe they are complementary to one another, and yet others believe they are independent of one another. This week we examine arguments that science and religion are independent from one another

M 8/28 - Read: Steven Jay Gould, "The Problem Resolved in Principle" in *Rock of Ages: Science and religion in the fullness of life*, Ballantine Books, 1999, pp.49-67 (18).

W 8/30 - tba

F 9/1: Discussion sections

Reading Response due Friday by 5pm

Week Three: What is the complexity thesis?

Others argue no single model (like independence, conflict, or complementary) to capture the complex ways scientists and scholars think about science and religion. The goal of this week is to understand the complexity thesis, which argues that the definitions, borders, and relationships between science and religion shift over time, place, and circumstance.

M 9/4 NO CLASS - LABOR DAY

W 9/6 - Read: John Hedley Brooke, "Contributions from the History of Science and Religion" in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science*, edited by P.Clayton and Z.Simpson, Oxford Uni Press, 2008, pp.293-310 (17).

F 9/8: Discussion sections

Reading Response due Friday by 5pm

Week Four: What is the evolutionary theory of Charles Darwin?

While there are many forms of evolutionary theory, in this week we explore the work of Charles

Darwin and the intellectual context in which he lived. The goal of this week is to understand the primary features of evolutionary theory as discussed in the works of Wallace and Darwin, and furthermore it is to examine how Darwin's theory relates with religious belief, concepts of design, purpose, and morality.

M 9/11 - Read: Alfred R. Wallace, "On the Law which has regulated the Introduction of New Species" in *The Annals and Magazine of Natural History Including Zoology, Botany, and Geology*, Taylor and Francis, 1855, pp.184-196 (12).

W 9/13 - Read: Charles Darwin, "Chapter 14 (Conclusion)," in *Origin of Species*, 1859, pp.435-460 (25).

Charles Darwin, "Sexual Selection," in *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, 1871, pp.308-312 (4).

F 9/15: Discussion sessions

*Visit to UF's Museum of Natural History, 3215 Hull Rd, 32611. As you visit the exhibits, consider: Are specific philosophical and religious ideas built into the presentation of evolutionary science? Do you agree or disagree with them?

Reading Response due Friday by 5pm

Week Five: How was Darwin's theory developed by scientists in the 20th century?

The goal of this week is to understand the primary features of evolutionary theory as told by leading theorists in the 20th century, focusing on new advances in genetics, computational models, and a more developed understanding of cell biology, morphology, and the distribution of species.

M 9/18 - Read: Ernst Mayr, "Basic Concepts of Evolutionary Theory", "Accident or Design," "Selection and Directional Evolution," in *Evolution and the Diversity of Life*, Harvard Uni Press, 1976, pp.9-16; 30-51 (21).

W 9/20 - Read: Richard Dawkins, "Explaining the very improbable," and "Accumulating small change," *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the evidence of evolution reveals a universe without design*, 1986, pp.1-18; pp.43-74 (31).

F 9/22: Discussion sessions

Reading Response due Friday by 5pm

Week Six: How does evolution challenge notions of design?

In the late 19th century the Christian theologian Aubrey Moore remarked in *Lux Mundi* that “Darwinism appeared, and, under the disguise of a foe, did the work of a friend.” While some – like Moore – would argue that Darwin supported notions of design in nature, this was not a universally accepted view among religious thinkers after Darwin. The Princeton Christian theologian Charles Hodge argued in *What is Darwinism?* (1874) that Darwin’s theory is inherently and implicitly atheistic because it undermined the idea that there was an intelligence behind the formation of biological structures. This week digs into the details of how particular thinkers reconstructed their religious thought after reading Darwin.

M 9/25 - Listen to The Low Anthem, “Charlie Darwin”, live on the BBC
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiRXJ2rxqtU>

John Brooke, “Evolutionary Theory and Religious Belief,” in *Science and Religion*, Cambridge Uni Press, 1999, pp.275M320 (45).

W 9/27 - TBA

F 9/29: Discussion sessions

Reading Response due Friday by 5pm

Week Seven: How does evolution challenge notions of creation and indicate a new concept of intelligence?

This week looks at arguments from contemporary philosophy that one does not need to posit an intelligent being to produce complex biological forms, even if they appear to have been designed.

M 10/2 - Daniel Dennett, “An Idea is Born” in *Darwin’s Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the meaning of life*, Simon & Schuster, 1995, pp.35-60 (25).

W 10/4 - TBA

Reading Response due Friday by 5pm

F 10/6: NO DISCUSSION SESSIONS - HOMECOMING

Week Eight: Midterm Exam/Essay

Continuing on the argument that to one does not need to posit an intelligent being to produce complex biological forms, this week also looks at contemporary philosophical arguments that there is no specific goal or aim to evolution, i.e. that evolution is a directionless process. See topic in Week Seven for key question. We shall also review for the Mid Term examination.

M 10/9 - Elliot Sober, “Teleology Naturalized,” pp.83-88 in *Philosophy of Biology* (5)

W 10/11 - Midterm Exam/Essay

F 10/13: Discussion sessions

Week Nine: How have Jewish thinkers responded to evolution?

This week we begin to explore how religious thinkers responded to modern evolutionary theory. Jewish thinkers have also questioned the ways that evolution might undermine notions of divine purpose, but in addition there are issues here about the unique status of man as a rational creature made in the image of god, and the extent to which teaching evolution would undermine the purity of the Jewish tradition. What we shall begin to see here is that there is no single religious response to evolution, rather the responses within a religion vary greatly and they too evolve over time as thinkers build off of and respond to those that came before them.

M 10/16 - Norbert Samuelson, "Judaism and Science," in *Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science*, edited by P.Clayton and Z.Simpson, pp.49-56 (7).

Marc Swetlitz, "American Jewish Responses to Darwin and Evolutionary Theory, 1860-1890," in *Disseminating Darwinism: The Role of Place, Race, Religion, and Gender*, eds. Ronald L. Numbers and John Stenhouse, Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp.1-21 (21).

W 10/18 - Shai Cherry, Three 20th Century Jewish Responses to Evolutionary Theory, *Aleph*, 2003, pp.247-290 (43).

Paper One Due 10/19

F 10/20: Discussion sessions

Reading Response due Friday by 5pm

Week Ten: How have Christians integrated theology and evolutionary science?

In the Christian tradition in particular one finds a pointed effort to confront the perceived theological and philosophical implications of evolution in a variety of ways. The selection below focuses on the constructive approach. Both authors here argue that evolution, when properly understood and interpreted, offers new vistas for Christian thought and that Christian thought offers creative ways to rethink the future of humanity in light of evolution.

M 10/23 - Arthur Peacocke, "Biology and a Theology of Evolution", *Zygon*, 1999, pp.695-711 (16).

W 10/25 - John Haught, "Can science explain intelligent design?", in *Science and Faith: A New Introduction*, Paulist Press, 2013, pp.89-116 (27).

F 10/27: Discussion sessions

Reading Response due Friday by 5pm

Week Eleven: Why is evolution rejected by Islamic thinkers?

Many Islamic thinkers see evolution as part of suite of issues that represent the modern, European way of thinking, and that evolution has no grounding in classical Islamic theology. This week we examine the anti-evolutionary arguments of Islamic thinkers, although we shall see that there is a great degree of variation among different Islamic groups in different regions.

M 10/30 - Martin Riexinger, "Responses of South Asian Muslims to the Theory of Evolution," *Die Welt des Islams*, 2009, pp.212-247 (35).

W 11/1 - We will cover a series of lectures given at "Darwin and Evolution in the Muslim World Conference" <<https://www.hampshire.edu/ssims/darwinMandMevolutionMinMtheMmuslimMworldMconference>> in Hampshire College, MA, held October 2-3, 2009, especially, Thomas Glick (Boston University), Salman Hameed (Hampshire College), Ronald Numbers (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Public Panel Discussion: Evolution and Islam

F 11/3: Discussion sessions

Reading Response due Friday by 5pm

(Alternative to...) Visit to University of Florida's Library West (Northside of Plaza of the Americas). With the help of Library West's library staff, students will be taught how to use the library, and then asked to find one or two bits of library materials (books, movies, periodicals, etc.) that further explores a topic or author discussed in this course.

Week Twelve: What forms of evolutionary thought did Hindus draw on to construct their replies to Darwin?

The ancient Hindu texts discuss a range of evolutionary theories, and some Hindus argued that they are similar to Darwin's theory. Others argued that the concept of evolution is the key.

M 11/6 - Read: Dermot Killingley, "Hinduism, Darwinism and Evolution in Late Nineteenth-Century India", 1995, pp.174-197 (23).

W 11/8 - Read: C. Mackenzie Brown. "The Integrative Evolutionism of Śrī Aurobindo Ghose," in *Hindu Perspectives on Evolution: Darwin, Dharma, and Design*, 2012, pp.155-172 (17).

F 11/10 - NO CLASS - VETERANS DAY OBSERVED

Reading Response due Friday by 5pm

Week Thirteen: How does Buddhist philosophy inform a Buddhist reply to evolution?

For centuries Buddhist philosophers had argued that all things are coM dependent. How might a classical doctrine from Buddhism be used to think creatively about evolutionary theory? In this week we shall explore some of the central philosophical teachings of Buddhism and think about how they can be used to reinterpret Darwinian evolution in a new way.

M 11/13 - Read: Justin R. Ritzinger, "Dependent CoMevolution: Kropotkin's Theory of Mutual Aid and Its Appropriation by Chinese Buddhists," *ChungSHwa Buddhist Journal*, 2013, pp.89-112 (23).

W 11/15 - TBA

F 11/17: Discussion sessions

Reading Response due Friday by 5pm

Week Fourteen: Does evolution require us to think about ethics in a new way?

Even within Darwin's own lifetime his theory of evolution was applied to rethinking our understanding of other disciplines like psychology, ethics, linguistics, aesthetics, and many other intellectual disciplines. Evolutionary ethics has since developed into a area of philosophy and science that attempts to show how and why humans act and should act good on the basis of natural selection. In this week we explore the arguments for evolutionary ethics as a viable academic discipline.

M 11/20 - Watch and listen: Michael Ruse:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fgLD1fkx0g&t=2186s>

"Evolutionary Ethics" in *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (IEP) (ISSN 2161M0002), a peer reviewed academic resource.

Reading Response due Wednesday by 5pm

W/F 11/22 & 24 - NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week Fifteen: Evolution and the future of humanity: Is the next humanoid species even biological?

This week we will watch a movie written by Alexander Medawar Garland in which the topic of non-biological evolution is dramatized. This film rests on the assumption that higher cognitive functions like will, desire, complex thought, and self-determination can be instantiated in a non-biological matter, and that once this occurs non-human life, which will be in some ways superior to biological life, is the next likely species in the course of evolution. Do you agree with this perspective?

M 11/27 - Selections from "Ex Machina", 2014, Drama/Fantasy film, Running time 108 minutes.

W 11/29 - Watch and listen "Alex Garland: Ex Machina, Devs, Annihilation, and the Poetry of Science" | AI Podcast #77 with Lex
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUMmkuMU428>

F 12/1: Discussion sessions

Reading Response due Friday by 5pm

Week Sixteen: Course wrap-up and final exam/essay/project

M 12/4 - TBA

W 12/6 (last day of class)

Reading Response due Wednesday by 5pm

Paper Two due Friday by midnight

F 12/8 - NO CLASS - READING DAY

FINAL: TBA

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)—Gen Ed Primary Area and Quest

Humanities (H). Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

Quest 1 Nature and Culture Description: Who are we in relation to the natural world? How have humans understood their role in the natural world and their responsibility to it? How do portrayals of nature reflect our values or self understanding? A study of the ways in which humans see themselves and their place in the natural world. Topics may include conceptions of nature; how representations of the natural world have been used to express important values; humans in contrast to animals; human interventions in the landscape and the values

that guide such designs; development, sustainability, and conservation; what religious traditions and texts have to say about humanity's place in the natural world; and nature as a site for physically or spiritually healthy or harmful experiences.

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the Quest and General Education learning outcomes as follows:

Content: Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline(s). Assessments: In-class examinations, think pieces, experiential activity, and final analytical essay.

- Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory, and methodologies used in the various approaches to the relationship between religions and sciences. (H)
- Identify, describe, and explain the history, theories, and methodologies used to examine essential questions about the human condition within and across the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course. (Q1)
- Identify, describe, and explain the scientific and humanistic issues related to the intersection of science and religion through the lens of philosophical, scientific, and religious texts, displays and music.

Critical Thinking: Students carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the discipline(s). Assessment: Class participation, in-class examinations, reading analysis responses, think pieces, and final analytical essay.

- Identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape thought within the subject area. Approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives.
- Analyze and evaluate essential questions about the human condition using established practices appropriate for the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course.
- Analyze and evaluate diverse texts in the evolutionary sciences and humanities by using close reading, critical analysis, and reflection.

Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline(s). Assessment: In-class examinations, reading analysis responses, think pieces, and final analytical essay.

- Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively.
- Develop and present clear and effective responses to essential questions in oral and written forms as appropriate to the relevant humanities disciplines incorporated into the course.
- Develop and present clear, organized, supported, and effective written responses to course prompts.

Connection: Students connect course content with meaningful critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond. Assessment: Think pieces, experiential activity, interview, reflections, and final analytical essay.

- Connect course content with critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.
- Connect own experiences with those of others, examine the intellectual development and reflect on the implications of the course materials, and reflect on the implications for future professions in the sciences and humanities.

Quest Learning Experiences

Experiential Learning Component

(tentative) We will visit the University of Florida's Museum of Natural History and Library West. Both are opportunities for students to learn more about what the University of Florida has to offer on the topics in this course. Students are given specific questions and goals that shall be addressed in their weekly reading response papers. Other alternatives may be explored.

Self-reflection Component

In Paper Two, the Mid Term, and the Final students are given prompts that invite them to think critically on their personal beliefs on the content and the application of these ideas to their academic disciplines, personal belief systems, and religious, philosophical, and cultural perspectives. (These also may be adjusted.)

Unique Course Objectives

1. Read, listen to, watch course content carefully and reflectively, treating authors as conversation partners
2. Understand and articulate our authors' ideas, placing them in context of wider human experience
3. Engage the text and other materials *critically and respond *personally
4. Actively discuss course content in a thoughtful way that includes careful reading and careful listening

**Critically* does not mean negatively only. It means that it is expected that you will be able to distance yourself enough to fairly and thoughtfully analyze the content, evaluating in ways that allow you to offer thoughtful responses and not merely agree or disagree. This critical stance should be framed by a generous posture on your part. Please read "Reading Charitably" in Canvas.

**Personally* means two things: 1) realizing that as you read you are not merely seeking to find what you like and dislike; more than that, you are entering into a conversation with the book/author. Let questions emerge and let your imagination consider the implications of the reading. 2) As you interact with the reading, allow the content to be filtered through *your own* experience in life.

A Word About Academic and Human Discourse: Going Beyond Civility

This is a humanities class that raises existential questions related to the shared human experience. It probes issues that are sometimes thorny, don't always have clear answers and includes ones in which people can have strong differences of opinion. One way to think of the class is to see it as a big conversation about big issues. Optimal participation comes from the ability to be fully engaged: which is to be

- observant
- reflective
- imaginative

as we enter into conversation. In order for us to have a successful class, we need to be able to talk to and with each other well. That involves a conversation in which members are humble, respectful, thoughtfully engaged, and still free to critique (offer friendly push-back). We want to see the articulation and discussion of individual perspectives, while leaving room for friendly critique. All of us should respectfully listen to the author's views as well as each other's, without becoming dismissive or defensive, a common default when disagreement is detected; and after listening, we need to be able to converse about what we hear. As these ideals are upheld we hope to create an environment where we all sense that, fundamentally, we are in this together - as humans - in spite of our differences. (Please see article in Canvas: "Reading Charitably".)

Leaving room for religious identity and knowledge framed by a tradition:

There will be several places in which religious ideas are fully in view. A little background exposure to some religious tradition would be helpful, but not mandatory. To be clear, religious ideas will be on the table for discussion, though religion is only one lens that will be employed. There is plenty of room for a plurality of perspectives - and if you have religious identity, please know that you have full freedom to draw upon that as a resource. In fact, it is encouraged. But please do so, not merely by quoting a religious text, but by putting your own knowledge and skillful reasoning to use in articulating your thoughts. Use your own religious imagination, rooted in your tradition, but never presume that others share your perspective or commitments, and never privilege your position as the "God's Eye View" which has the authoritative truth.

Required Policies

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/getDstarted/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/publicDresults/>.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Student Honor Code for All Courses Offered by Dept. of Religion:

As a UF student, you have agreed to follow the University’s Honor Code, meaning you will not give or receive unauthorized assistance in completing assignments. Violations can result in failing an exam, paper or the course. For more information, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentrights.php>. On all work submitted for credit by University of Florida students, the following pledge is implied, “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” Please note that acts of plagiarism include:

- Turning in a paper or assignment that was written by someone else.
- Copying verbatim a sentence or paragraph of text from the work of another author without proper citation and quotation marks.
- Using and copying verbatim a sentence or paragraph of text from ChatGPT or any other AI software for any kind of course assignments.
- Paraphrasing or restating in your own words, text or ideas written by someone else without proper citation.

For more info, see <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html>

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:
<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392D1575; and the University Police
Department: 392D1111 or 9D1D1 for emergencies.

The Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writingDstudio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for oneDonDone consultations and workshops.