

**STHO/PHYS/CAST 1234**  
**CREATION AND SCIENCE**  
**SPRING 2016**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Father Joseph R. Laracy, (973) 992-0994, joseph.laracy@shu.edu.

**OFFICE HOURS:** By appointment.

**TEXTS:**

*Creation and Scientific Creativity: A Study in the Thought of S. L. Jaki*, Haffner (Required)  
*A Comprehensible Universe: The Interplay of Science and Theology*, Coyne and Heller.  
(Recommended)

**COURSE CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION:** This course seeks to deepen a student's understanding of the relationship between the Catholic theology of creation and contemporary empirical science. Topics to be covered include the birth of science, the historical-philosophical environment of this birth, the interventions of recent Popes on the issue, the specificity of the cosmos as shown by current science, the unity of the cosmos and its beauty, the importance of philosophical realism, the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo et cum tempore*, the theory of the Big Bang, and the theory of evolution. Primary sources will be emphasized.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. To introduce students to the history of the development of the natural sciences.
2. To explicate the Christian theology of creation.
3. To communicate the Papal Magisterium of the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries on creation and science.
4. To clarify the structure of the scientific method and its relationship with method in theology.
5. To introduce the fundamentals of Big Bang Cosmology, Biblical Cosmology, and the Theory of Evolution

## **COURSE MATERIAL:**

### **Chapter 1: Historical Background**

What is Creation?; Historians of Science: Pierre Duhem and Stanley Jaki; Pre-Christian Views of Creation and the Impact on Science: Egypt, Indian, China, Mesopotamia, Greece, Pre-Colombian Americas, Islamic World

*Week 1 & 2*

### **Chapter 2: The Christian Theology of Creation**

Presuppositions; Modern Causes of Flawed Perceptions of Creation: Concordism, Fundamentalism, Liberalism

*Week 3 & 4*

### **Chapter 3: The Birth of Empirical Science**

Co-Development with the Theology of Creation; Priest-Scientists; Structure of the Scientific Method; Threats to Science and Faith: Empiricism, Idealism, and Intelligent Design

*Week 5 & 6*

### **Chapter 4: Papal Magisterium**

Principle Points from Papal Magisterium; Leo XIII; Pius XI; Pius XII; John XXIII; Paul VI; John Paul II; Benedict XVI; Francis

*Week 7 & 8*

### **Chapter 5: The Theology of Creation and the Natural Sciences in Dialogue**

Essential elements of Big Bang Cosmology; Reflection on Biblical Cosmology in the thought of Pope Benedict XVI; The Logos of Faith and Science in the Thought of Pope Benedict XVI; Thomism

*Week 9 & 10*

### **Chapter 6: The Theory of Evolution**

Scientific theories and popular interpretations; Christian reception of the theories; Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

*Week 11 & 12*

### **Chapter 7: Conclusion**

The Christian Contribution; Persisting Challenges

*Week 13*

There may be additional topics should time permit.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** It is the policy and practice of Seton Hall University to promote inclusive learning environments. If you have a documented disability you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations in compliance with University policy, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and/or the New Jersey Law against Discrimination. Please note, students are not permitted to negotiate accommodations directly with professors. To request accommodations or assistance, please self-identify with the Office for Disability Support Services (DSS), Duffy Hall, Room 67 at the beginning of the semester. For more information or to register for services, contact DSS at (973) 313-6003 or by e-mail at [DSS@shu.edu](mailto:DSS@shu.edu). Link to Disability Policy - <http://www.shu.edu/offices/disability-support-services/faculty-syllabus-statement.cfm>

**PLAGIARISM & CHEATING:** Misrepresentation of someone else's work as one's own is a grave violation of academic ethics. Any material that is not your own work needs to be properly indicated and cited. When in doubt, cite or ask your instructor. It is expected that all work submitted by students is their own. Any type of plagiarism or cheating could result in a reduction in grade or formal disciplinary actions depending on the severity.

**CLASSROOM POLICY:** Attendance in this class is mandatory. Attendance will be taken in every class, whether directly or through a sign-in sheet. Students who miss three consecutive classes should contact me directly prior to returning to class. Disruptive behavior, including having your cell phone ring during class or texting is not allowed. **Turn off you cell phone and put it away before class starts.** The use of your computer for any reason other than course material is strictly prohibited. During the lecture students should only have windows relevant to the class open. **Note: Extensive absences, tardiness, disruptive or distractive behavior could result in a penalty to your final grade.**

**GRADING:** As determined by the instructor according to the following guidelines:

PowerPoint Presentation 20%

Final Paper 80%

Grading

91.00	100.00	A	75	78.99	C+
89.00	90.99	A-	71	74.99	C
85.00	88.99	B+	69	70.99	C-
81.00	84.99	B	60	68.99	D
79.00	80.99	B-	0	59.99	F

Note: The grade total on blackboard is unofficial and often inaccurate.

**FINAL:** The final paper should be the fruit of your own research and focus on a topic related to the course material. It will be due on the last day of class. For undergraduate students, a 10-12 page paper, double spaced, size 12 font, with 1 inch margins is expected. Graduate students in the School of Theology are expected to write a paper 15-20 pages. The citation style is up to the student but must be done according to a recognized scholarly standard, e.g. Chicago Manual of Style.

**POWERPOINT PRESENTATION:** Students are expected to do a 30 minute PowerPoint presentation to share the fruit of their term paper research with the other students in the class. At the conclusion of the presentation, the student should be prepared to field questions from the instructor and the class.

**COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

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