BS 753 The Human Person: Multidisciplinary Perspectives

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BS/ST753
The Human Person: Multidisciplinary Perspectives

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Fall 2004  
3 semester units  
Mondays, 5:30 - 8:15 pm

Course Description
This seminar probes the relationship of recent findings in the neurosciences to traditional Christian understandings of the human person by pressing two questions: (1) How do the innovations in our understanding of the human person which derive from the neurosciences impinge on the sort of portraits of the human person we find in Christian Scripture and classical Christian faith? (2) In terms of a coherent Christian faith, ethics, and the practices generally associated with Christian life and ministry (e.g., spirituality, evangelism, pastoral care), what is at stake in the interaction of science and theology at this point?

Prerequisites: OT520 and NT520 (or BS501-502), ST501 or DO501

Course Objectives
Having successfully completed this course, students will be able to:
• identify central issues congregating at the interface of science and theology on the question of human personhood;
• evaluate competing views of the human person in light of basic neuroscientific findings, biblical anthropology, and systematic theology; and
• propose a coherent, Christian understanding of the human person, together with its implications for faithful life and ministry practices.

Course Reading (Required Texts)
**Course Reading (Recommended Texts)**


The instructor will make available to participants in the Seminar a wide-ranging bibliography on the topic of the course.

**Web Sites of Potential Interest**

- [http://artsci.wustl.edu/~philos/MindDict/index.html](http://artsci.wustl.edu/~philos/MindDict/index.html)
  (an on-line dictionary devoted to philosophy of mind)
  (an on-line, interdisciplinary journal devoted to the mind)
- [http://aaai.org/Magazine/Editorial/magazine-contents.html](http://aaai.org/Magazine/Editorial/magazine-contents.html)
  (an on-line version of *AI*, a periodical concerned with artificial intelligence)
  (an index of on-line, cognitive-science resources)
- [http://www.personal.kent.edu/~brosmait/aibib_gs.html](http://www.personal.kent.edu/~brosmait/aibib_gs.html)
  (an annotated bibliography on philosophy of mind, from Kent State faculty)
- [http://www.uniroma3.it/kant/field/#links](http://www.uniroma3.it/kant/field/#links)
  (guided tours of selected contributions to philosophy of the mind, from A Field Guide to the Philosophy of the Mind)
- [http://www.u.arizona.edu/~chalmers/resources.html](http://www.u.arizona.edu/~chalmers/resources.html)
  (web resources related to consciousness, philosophy of mind, et al.)
- [http://www.u.arizona.edu/~chalmers/biblio.html](http://www.u.arizona.edu/~chalmers/biblio.html)
  (an annotated bibliography on consciousness, by David Chalmers)
- [http://www.counterbalance.net/neuro/index-frame.html](http://www.counterbalance.net/neuro/index-frame.html)
  (brief, mixed media presentations on the nature of the human person, by Nancey Murphy)

**Course Requirements**

*On questions of style, especially with regard to paper organization and references, see Carole Slade, *Form and Style: Research Papers, Reports, Theses* (11th ed; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000).*

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Students should submit written materials on time. Late papers will receive no written comments. Assignments that are more than one week late will be penalized one-third of a grade per day.

Students wishing feedback on written assignments prior to their due date may submit complete drafts at least 4-5 days prior to the due date.

1. Seminar Preparation, Attendance, and Participation: Attendance at and readiness to participate in all sessions of the Seminar is expected. Persons who attend all sessions of the seminar will have 2 points added to their final grade. Persons who participate frequently and substantively in the Seminar discussion, demonstrating their reflective interaction with course reading, will have as many as 2 points added to their final grade.

2. Three Reflection Papers: In preparation for the Research Paper (below), three reflection papers (typed, double-spaced, 1000-1250 words [i.e., 4-5 pages], with a standard 12-point font like Times New Roman and one-inch margins), each contributing 15% toward the final grade, will be submitted according to the schedule below. These papers will not take the form of a coherent argument, but instead will take the form of a series of items, each developed in paragraph form, drawing on class presentations, discussions, and course reading, addressing the following questions:

   • If a portrait of the human person were to take seriously the contribution of the natural sciences, what could it not neglect? Due at the beginning of class, 11 October.

   • If a portrait of the human person were to take seriously the contribution of biblical studies, what could it not neglect? Due at the beginning of class, 25 October.

   • If a portrait of the human person were to take seriously the contribution of theological studies, what could it not neglect? Due at the beginning of class, 8 November.

3. Research Paper: A major, integrative, constructive and critical essay that proposes a coherent, Christian understanding of the human person, oriented toward a single Christian practice (e.g., mission, hospitality, education, baptism, burial of the dead, preaching): approximately 3750 words (i.e., ca. 15 pages, typed, double-spaced, with a standard 12-point font like Times New Roman and one-inch margins, plus bibliography) in length, typed, double-spaced. For more information on research paper expectations and grading criteria, see the Course Center. Due 13 December. (55%)

Course Schedule

Required Reading: Brown et al., eds., pp. 1-29, 213-28; Green, ed., pp. 5-12, 171-89; Green, “Body and Soul, Mind and Brain: Critical Issues” (available in the Course Center); Jeeves, ed., pp. viii-xiv, 233-49.
Recommended Reading: Wright and Potter

20 Sept  2. The Human Person in Biblical, Theological, and Scientific Perspective—Narrative #1: Science (and Religion)

Required Reading: Brown et al., eds., pp. 31-125; Damasio; Green, ed., pp. 13-46; Jeeves, ed., pp. 1-164.

Recommended Reading: Jeeves; Russell et al., eds.

27 Sept  3. The Human Person in Biblical, Theological, and Scientific Perspective—Narrative #1: Science (and Religion)

Required Reading: Brown et al., eds., pp. 31-125; Damasio; Green, ed., pp. 13-46; Jeeves, ed., pp. 1-164.

Recommended Reading: Jeeves; Russell et al., eds.

4 Oct   4. The Human Person in Biblical, Theological, and Scientific Perspective—Narrative #1: Science (and Religion)

Required Reading: Brown et al., eds., pp. 31-125; Damasio; Green, ed., pp. 13-46; Jeeves, ed., pp. 1-164.

Recommended Reading: Jeeves; Russell et al., eds.

11 Oct  5. The Human Person in Biblical, Theological, and Scientific Perspective—Narrative #2: Biblical Studies

Due: Reflection Paper #1.

Required Reading: Brown et al., eds., pp. 149-73; Green, ed., pp. 47-100; Jeeves, ed., pp. 165-98.

Recommended Reading: Cooper.

18 Oct  6. The Human Person in Biblical, Theological, and Scientific Perspective—Narrative #2: Biblical Studies

Guest Presenter: Dr. Jerry Sumney

Required Reading: Brown et al., eds., pp. 149-73; Green, ed., pp. 47-100; Jeeves, ed., pp. 165-98.

Recommended Reading: Cooper.


Due: Reflection Paper #2.


Recommended Reading: Cooper.

1 Nov   8. The Human Person in Biblical, Theological, and Scientific Perspective—Narrative #3: Theological Studies


Recommended Reading: Cooper; Corcoran, ed.

8 Nov   9. The Human Person and the Focus of Christian Mission

Due: Reflection Paper #3.

Required Reading: Green, ed., pp. 133-44.
**Recommended Reading:** Joel B. Green, *Salvation* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2003).

Guest Presenter: Dr. Michael Rynkiewich

15 Nov 10. Mind-Brain Matters and Ethics at the Margins of Life

**Required Reading:** Brown et al., eds., pp. 195-212.

**Recommended Reading:** Kevin Corcoran, “The Constitution View of Persons” (available in the Course Center).

22 Nov No Class: Reading Week

29 Nov 11. Personhood, Psychology, and Pastoral Care

Guest Presenter: Dr. Stuart L. Palmer

**Required Reading:** Green, ed., pp. 145-70.

**Recommended Reading:** Jeeves

6 Dec 12. The Nature of Persons, Personal Identity, and Eschatology


**Recommended Reading:** Cooper, Corcoran.

13 Dec Due: Final Paper.