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BS 753 The Human Person: Multidisciplinary Perspectives

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BS/ST753
The Human Person: Multidisciplinary Perspectives

Final

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

Brown, Warren S., Nancey Murphy, and H. Newton Maloney, eds. *Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature*. Theology and the Sciences. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998.

Damasio, Antonio R. *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*. New York: Harcourt, 1999.

Green, Joel B., ed. *What about the Soul? Neuroscience and Christian Anthropology*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2004.

Jeeves, Malcolm A., ed. *From Cells to Souls: Changing Portraits of Human Nature*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 2004.

Course Reading (Recommended Texts)

- Cooper, John W. *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1989.
- Corcoran, Kevin, ed. *Soul, Body, and Survival: Essays on the Metaphysics of Human Persons*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Jeeves, Malcolm A. *Human Nature at the Millennium: Reflections on the Integration of Psychology and Christianity*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1997. (Copies are available from the instructor.)
- Russell, Robert John et al., eds. *Neuroscience and the Person*. Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action 4. Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory, 1999.
- Wright, John P. and Paul Potter, eds. *Psyche and Soma: Physicians and Metaphysicians on the Mind-Body Problem from Antiquity to Enlightenment*. Oxford: Clarendon, 2000.

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>

(an on-line dictionary devoted to philosophy of mind)

<http://psyche.cs.monash.edu.au/>

(an on-line, interdisciplinary journal devoted to the mind)

<http://aaai.org/Magazine/Editorial/magazine-contents.html>

(an on-line version of *AI*, a periodical concerned with artificial intelligence)

<http://www-psych.stanford.edu/cogsci/>

(an index of on-line, cognitive-science resources)

http://www.personal.kent.edu/~brosnait/aibib_gs.html

(an annotated bibliography on philosophy of mind, from Kent State faculty)

<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>

(web resources related to consciousness, philosophy of mind, et al.)

<http://www.u.arizona.edu/~chalmers/biblio.html>

(an annotated bibliography on consciousness, by David Chalmers)

<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).

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

- 13 Sept 1. What Is at Stake in Theological Anthropology? Ecclesiological, Ethical, Missional, and Psychological Ruminations. Body and Soul: A Historical and Contemporary Survey of Positions
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.

- 20 Sept **Recommended Reading:** Wright and Potter
 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.
- 27 Sept **Recommended Reading:** Jeeves; Russell et al., eds.
 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.
- 25 Oct 7. The Human Person in Biblical, Theological, and Scientific
 Perspective—Narrative #3: Theological Studies
Due: Reflection Paper #2.
Required Reading: Brown et al., eds., pp. 127-48, 175-94; Green, ed.,
 pp. 101-32; Jeeves, ed., pp. 165-78, 199-232.
Recommended Reading: Cooper.
- 1 Nov 8. The Human Person in Biblical, Theological, and Scientific
 Perspective—Narrative #3: Theological Studies
Required Reading: Brown et al., eds., pp. 127-48, 175-94; Green, ed.,
 pp. 101-32; Jeeves, ed., pp. 165-78, 199-232.
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
Required Reading: Nancey Murphy, “The Resurrection Body and Personal Identity: Possibilities and Limits of Eschatological Knowledge,” in *Resurrection: Theological and Scientific Assessments* (ed. Ted Peters et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 202-18 (available in the course center).
Recommended Reading: Cooper, Corcoran.
- 13 Dec Due: Final Paper.