Modern Problems of Belief Syllabus

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

Through reading, dialogue in Canvas Discussion, and weekly response papers students will gain an interdisciplinary understanding of the classical modern western worldview (objective, linear, mechanical, Cartesian, etc.) and will become knowledgeable about contemporary reinterpretations of and alternatives to that classical worldview. Students also will have developed the analytical skills required to make informed comparative judgments about the sufficiency of these new paradigms and reinterpretations. Finally, students will have gained a facility in working interdisciplinarily, and in writing and discussing perspectives from a variety of academic disciplines.

Required Texts


Jorgen Randers, 2052, White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2012. (chapters from Randers’ book will be made available in PDF on the Canvas course site)

General Description of Course Activities

Web link bibliography

NOTE: For full semester course only.

Over the course of the semester, students will develop as a group a bibliography of secondary sources and web links that support the primary text readings that we will be studying. Suggestions for secondary readings will be reviewed by the class. You should choose links that help to make the texts more useful to you and other students. By the end of the semester, the final bibliography will become part of the course website.

Discussion Forums

Students will be expected to participate regularly and in an informed way in Discussions on Canvas. Given that the class does not meet in-person, postings on Blackboard Discussion are crucial to evaluation of each student’s participation in the course.

Response Papers

Students will be required to post 2-3 page response papers at the end of each week and will be expected to review other students’ papers. These response papers should address substantive problems that you are having with the readings, insights into the readings, and an evaluation of the meaning and significance of the perspectives presented by the authors. Response papers should be posted to Canvas "Paper" section (see the Calendar for due dates).

Media (movies, videos, or other outside assignments)

NOTE: For full semester course only.

Brief introductions by the professor to each of the readings will be available on the course website for selected Units (currently being updated for the other Units).

Final Exam

NOTE: Final Exam is for full semester course only
There will be a final examination for this course that will be designed to assess the success of the class in meeting the course objectives outlined above. The final examinations will be posted. The examination will be given as a **one-week take-home exam**.

Final exams will be submitted to me as a word document attachment to an email.