

**TH5/754 - Hawking, Dawkins and God:
Engaging Christian theology with science for contemporary mission and ministry
May 27-June 3, 2022**

This course takes place in two locations: Calgary and Vancouver (*available in person or via Zoom*)

Instructor: The Rev Dr. David Wilkinson, Principal, St John's College, Durham University

This course will explore how Christian faith engages some of the big issues of modern science to enable theological reflection, effective apologetics and an exploration of science as gift. This will be done with particular attention to the origin and end of the universe, prayer and providence and the question of what it means to be human in areas such as neuroscience, AI and SETI. The way the media shapes the dialogue of science and faith will be taken seriously and all these questions will be worked out in terms of the implications for ministry and mission in the local church.

Competencies

- Students will learn about contemporary issues in the dialogue of science and Christian theology.
- Students will develop strategies of how to use science in apologetics, preaching, evangelism and in forming disciples
- Students will reflect on Christian theology to see how science questions, enriches, and illuminates scripture, tradition and experience.

Readings:

Texts for purchase and pre-reading:

Polkinghorne, J. (2008) *Theology in the Context of Science*, SPCK, London.

Brooke, J. H. (2014) *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives*, CUP, Cambridge

Pre-Readings posted through the student portal (Populi)

Wilkinson, D. (2017) *Science, Religion and the Search for Extraterrestrial life*, OUP

Wilkinson, D. & Hutchings, D. (2020) *God, Stephen Hawking and the multiverse: what Hawking said, and why it matters*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge

Wilkinson D, (2018), *When I pray what does God do?* Monarch

Elaine Howard Ecklund, David R. Johnson, Brandon Vaidyanathan, Kirstin R.W. Matthews, Steven W.

Lewis, Robert A. Thomson, and Di Di, [Secularity and Science: What Scientists Around the World Really Think About Religion](#), OUP, 2019

Assignments: (Further details to be provided at the class)

Reading and class participation: All Students including auditors are expected to do all the required readings and participate in class discussions. 100% attendance is encouraged for all and required of Certificate and Degree students.

Certificate students: Certificate students are required to hand in 4-6 pages of writing that demonstrates the ability to thoughtfully engage the material and reading for the class and gives a personal reflection on the reading and material covered. **Due no later than August 31**

Basic degree students (Diploma; MA; MDiv): are required to do any required oral assignments during the course itself and submit any combination of written assignments totaling approximately 1800-2400 words/6-8 pages. **Due no later than August 31**

Advanced degree students (ThM, GDS): are required to do any required oral assignments during the course itself and submit any combination of written assignments totaling approximately 3600-4000 words/12-15 pages. **Due no later than Sept 30**

Further details about assignments will be provided on the course syllabus posted on the classroom site in Populi (student portal) and handed out in class.

This course takes place in two locations: Calgary and Vancouver (available in person or via Zoom)

Students who take the course for credit (1.5) will be required to participate in the Friday night public lecture in Calgary, and then the 4 days in Vancouver. Either portion, or all of it, can be completed off-site via Zoom (synchronous only).

Below please find the itinerary for whole of Prof. Wilkinson's weekend engagement at Grace Presbyterian, Calgary. You are of course welcome to register for the whole of that event. It is however the Friday night lecture that is crucial to the course. It is the "fifth" day of the course to complete the required hours. You can register for the free Friday night lecture, and the whole event if you like here: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/preaching-grace-faith-in-a-science-dominated-world-with-david-wilkinson-tickets-194600704947>. You need to register to receive a link to the Friday night online event.

The VST portion of the course will be taught in a hybrid format and you can register for the whole course on our webpage <https://vst.edu/>.

Calgary Weekend

Friday, May 27

(Evening) Public Lecture – God, The Big Bang and Stephen Hawking: The Search for God in Cosmology

Saturday, May 28 (optional)

Workshop (Morning & Afternoon) - When I Pray, What Does God Do?

Sunday, May 29 (optional)

Worship leadership (sermon, and any other parts desired i.e. prayers, Scripture reading)

Scripture – Colossians 1:15-20

The Cosmic Christ: The Revelations and the Universe, Christ for the World

Vancouver at Vancouver School of Theology (Class time – 9am-12pm PST)

Tuesday, May 31

Pop Culture and the dialogue of science and religion: From new atheism to new apologetics

Wednesday, June 1

Christian hope and the futility of the future

Thursday, June 2

On being human: Neuroscience and the image of God

Friday, June 3

Preaching and worship in a science dominated world