



ADVANCED SEMINAR IN RELIGION AND SCIENCE 2011

PERSPECTIVES ON HUMANITY:

EVOLUTION, ENHANCEMENT, BIOTECHNOLOGY, AND THEOLOGY



Chaired by Lea F. Schweitz and Philip Hefner

Monday Evenings 6:30 PM – 9:30 PM, January 31 through May 2, 2011

Common Room 350, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1100 East 55th Street, Chicago, IL 60615

This seminar focuses on three areas of scientific research that promise to change our perspectives on humanity:

- Scientific and technological approaches to human enhancement, including “transhumanism”
- Bioengineering, synthetic biology, and nanotechnology, particularly as applied in medical science
- Investigations of hominid evolution and human pre-history, including recent interest in the relationships between Neandertals and modern humans and in the archeology of ancient Near Eastern civilizations

In each of these areas we will pose two central questions:

- What is the scientific and theological significance of this research?
- What does this research suggest about what it means to be human?

Offered by the Zygon Center for Religion and Science (ZCRS), the Advanced Seminar in Religion and Science is designed as a research seminar for faculty, graduate students, and other professionals. Course credit is available via registration through the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) or cross-registration through member schools of the Association of Chicago Theological Schools (ACTS); the course number is T-672. For more information about ZCRS, please visit www.zygoncenter.org, email zcrs@lstc.edu, or call 773-256-0670.

January 31	Perspectives on Humanity: Laying Out the Seminar Themes Lea F. Schweitz and Philip Hefner, <i>theology, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago</i>
February 7	The Quest for Immortality: Science at the Frontiers of Aging S. Jay Olshansky, <i>public health, epidemiology, and biostatistics, University of Illinois at Chicago</i>
February 14	Living Long and Dying Well: A Theological Response to Aubrey de Grey Ann Pederson, <i>theology, Augustana College, Sioux Falls</i>
February 21	The Animal that Aspires to Be an Angel: The Challenge of Transhumanism Philip Hefner, <i>theology, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago</i> Becoming <i>Homo sapiens</i> Anne Benvenuti, <i>psychology and philosophy, Cerro Coso College</i>
February 28	An African American Ethical Perspective on the Use of Genetic Technology Richard Perry, <i>social ethics, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago</i> Reality Genomics: The Therapeutic and Transformative Framing of DNA Ancestry Elonda Clay, <i>religion and science, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago</i>
March 7	No Seminar (Reading Week at LSTC)
March 14	Biology by Design: Opportunities and Challenges in Synthetic Biology Josh Leonard and Michael Jewett, <i>chemical and biological engineering / medical research, Northwestern University</i>
March 21	Nanotechnology: At the Biology/Inorganic Interface Gayle Woloschak, <i>molecular biology, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine</i>
March 28	To Be Announced
April 4	Neandertals: A Mirror for Modern Humans (and their Nature)? Fred Smith, <i>anthropology, Illinois State University</i>
April 11	Being Human in the Ancient Near East Leann Pace and Eudora Struble, <i>Near Eastern languages and civilizations, University of Chicago</i>
April 18	No Seminar (Holy Week at LSTC)
April 25	The Role of Science in Exploring Human Nature William Schweiker, <i>theology and ethics, University of Chicago Divinity School</i>
May 2	Perspectives on Humanity: Summarizing and Reflecting Lea F. Schweitz and Philip Hefner, <i>theology, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago</i>

About the Advanced Seminar

Since 1966, an advanced seminar on religion in the context of the sciences has been offered for faculty, students, and professionals in the Chicago area. The seminar was founded by Ralph Wendell Burhoe under the auspices of Meadville/Lombard Theological School and the Center for Advanced Study in Religion and Science CASIRAS traces its origins to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, of which Burhoe was Executive Officer. In 1970, CASIRAS affiliated with the Association of Chicago Theological Schools. In the 1970s, Philip Hefner, Professor of Systematic Theology at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC), joined Burhoe in directing the seminar. In 1988, the Zygon Center for Religion and Science (ZCRS) was founded by LSTC and CASIRAS and began sponsoring the Advanced Seminar. From this tradition, the Advanced Seminar takes its shape as a multidisciplinary network of persons seeking to understand how the sciences and the religions engage each other and to interpret the fundamental issues that are posed in this engagement. The goal is to gain insight into the import of the sciences for the critical function of religion in its role as a cultural vehicle of ultimate values and concerns.

Course Credit and Registration

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