

Global History of Creationism

History of Science 280 (Studies in Science, Technology, and Medicine)

Fall 2023

Monday 8:50-10:45am

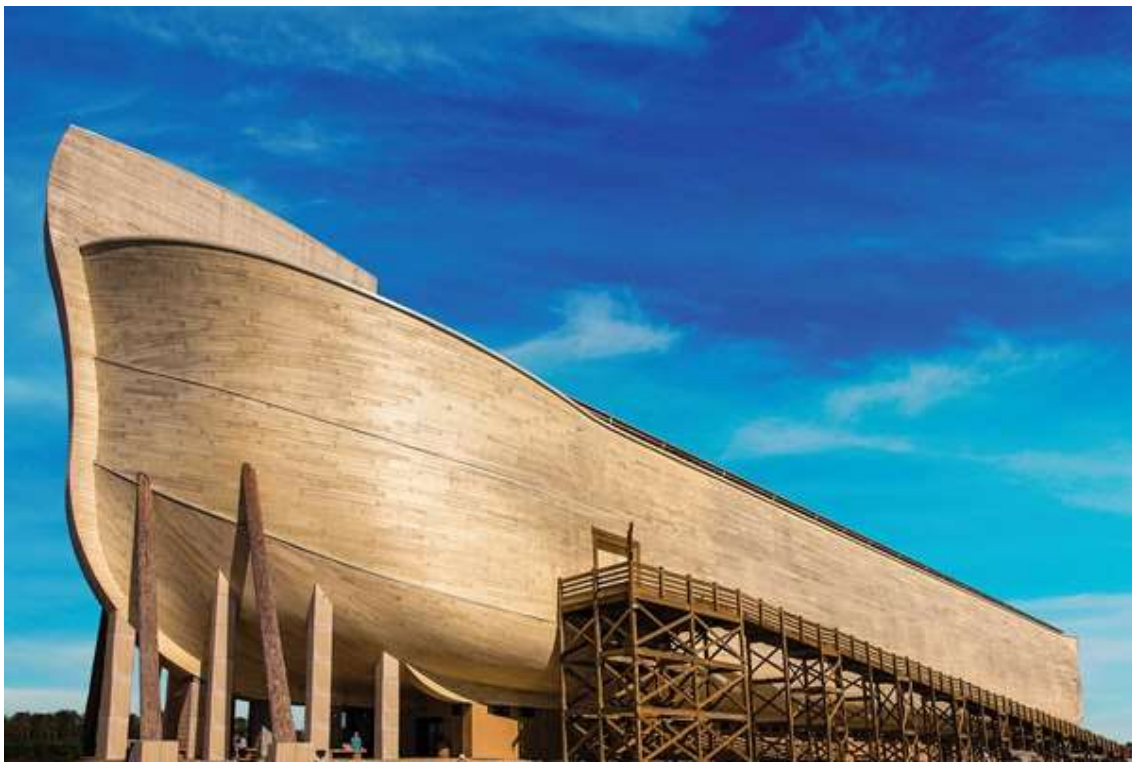
Mosse Humanities Bldg, Rm. 5255

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Office Hours Friday 9-11am (Zoom), in person by appointment.



The battle between advocates of Darwinian evolution and "creationists" has helped define the relationship between science, religion, public policy, and the law. For many of us, when we think of such controversies, we think of the American "Bible Belt," as in the Tennessee courtroom immortalized in the 1960 movie *Inherit the Wind*. But creationism has a global history, connecting teachers, politicians, religious activists, and scientists in the United States with counterparts across the world, and especially in the Middle East - another place where the public role of religion has been a topic of great controversy in recent decades. This course will explore the global history of creationism as a way of understanding how science and religion have come into conflict in specific times and places, and how different societies have addressed this controversy in terms of law and educational policy. The course makes extensive hands-on use of unique collections in Memorial Library's rare books department.

Overview

Learning Goals

Students completing this course should be able to:

- Analyze the relationship of science and religion in terms of historical context
- Explain the development of anti-evolutionist movements in multiple parts of the world, including their relationship to each other
- Analyze the argument of a work of historical scholarship
- Interpret the significance of a primary source in light of given historical context
- Write a short historical research paper based on primary as well as secondary sources
- Understand how to use Memorial Library's special collections

Explanation of Credit Hours

This 3-credit course meets as a group for 3 hours per week (according to UW-Madison's credit hour policy, each lecture counts as 1.5 hours). The course also carries the expectation that you will spend an average of at least 2 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of at least 6 hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and/or studying for quizzes and exams for this course.

Course Materials

This course has one required text, which is widely available for purchase as well as held on reserve in College Library:

Ronald L. Numbers, *The Creationists: From Scientific Creationism to Intelligent Design*, expanded edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006). ISBN 978-0-674-02339-0. **It is important that you use a copy of the expanded edition**, not earlier editions.

A variety of other readings, as well as films, will be available on Canvas.

This course is graded on an A, AB, B, BC, C, D, F scale:

- A = 93-100
- AB = 88-92
- B = 82-87
- BC = 77-81
- C = 72-76
- D = 67-71
- F = 66 or below.

Assessment

Class participation (20%)

This course is a seminar. You must participate in class discussions. Participation includes attendance, active listening, completion of short in-class writing activities and presentations, and voicing your own ideas and questions to advance the conversation.

Participation Rubric

Excellent (90-100)	Good (80-90)	Competent (70-80)	Inadequate (60-70)	Fail (0-60)
-Mastery over readings and previous discussion -Explores questions rigorously -Comes to class with interpretations and questions -Engages others	-Knows readings well -Consistent preparation and involvement -Offers analysis of texts in class	-Basic grasp of reading -Mostly offers facts or surface-level interpretations -Contributes when called upon but not actively engaged	-Insufficient command of reading -Attempts to contribute facts or interpretations when called but unable to offer substance	-Uninvolved -Unexcused -Disruptive

Discussion Board Participation (15%)

Participate weekly in the course discussion board (details on Canvas). Posts are due Fridays at 5pm.

Secondary source analysis (4 x 5% = 20%)

I will sometimes ask you to write a detailed analysis of one of the scholarly articles that we read. Please follow the prompt for these assignments carefully (details on Canvas). These assignments should be approximately 600 words long, and are due 9/29, 10/9, 10/30, and 11/6.

Mid-Term Paper (15%, due Friday 10.27): Analysis of a primary source from the Religion and Science collection in Memorial Library's special collections. You may use a source from a curated sample of books from the collection, or write about a source that you find in the collection yourself. The source should relate to a topic that we cover in the first three parts of this course (material through October 23). Length: 1,000 words.

Archives Assignment (10%, due Friday 12.1)

Analysis of primary sources to be examined during class on Nov. 20. 600 words.

Final Paper (20%, due Tuesday 12.19): Use sources in the Religion and Science collection to analyze an evolution-creation controversy not covered in this course, or add substantially to the analysis of a controversy that we did cover in this course. Length: 3,000 words.

Late Policy: Regular Assignments

I try to grant reasonable extensions when students experience emergencies during the semester. Please contact me as soon as possible with requests to reschedule an assignment due to serious illness, family emergency, or similar. Otherwise, late work will lose one half of a letter grade for each day past the deadline. Work submitted more than a week late will ordinarily receive no credit. However, you may submit ONE assignment late for “passing” (70%) credit until Wednesday, December 13th, at 11:59pm.

Late Policy: Final Assignment

The registrar has a very tight deadline for instructors to turn in course grades at the end of the semester. I cannot grant extensions on the final essay and still guarantee you an on-time course grade. If you experience an emergency at the end of the semester such that you are unable to complete the final essay, you may be eligible for an Incomplete.

Accommodations for Sick or Quarantined Students

If your semester is disrupted due to Covid or another health crisis, I will offer you reasonable accommodations to continue your progress in this course. This includes the possibility of arranging alternative days for you to visit the rare books room in Memorial Library, if you miss some of those meetings. I would always prefer you miss a day out of caution rather than take a risk with the health of the class. Please contact me ASAP to discuss accommodations.

Learning Needs

Accommodations

You are welcome to discuss your learning needs with me. If you plan to request disability accommodations in this course, please register with the McBurney Disability Resource Center as soon as possible.

Writing Resources

The History Lab is a resource center where experts (PhD students) will assist you with your history papers. No matter your stage in the writing process — choosing a topic, conducting research, composing a thesis, outlining your argument, revising your drafts — the History Lab staff can help you sharpen your skills and become a more successful writer. Drop by Humanities 4255 or schedule a one-on-one consultation at <http://go.wisc.edu/hlab>.

The Writing Center is a campus-wide resource offering help with any writing assignment in any course. They offer drop-in as well as by-appointment options, at eight different locations. Visit writing.wisc.edu to learn more.

Academic Integrity

I expect you to know and abide by the university’s policies on academic integrity. I follow the university’s policies for suspected violations.

For more information, see: <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/>

Schedule of Meetings and Readings

Part I: A Historical Approach to Science, Religion, and Creationism

M 9.11: Introductions and Overview

- Kenneth Chang, "Creationism, Minus a Young Earth, Emerges in the Islamic World," *New York Times*, 3 November 2009, p. D3, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- John Hedley Brooke, "Introduction," in *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 1-15.
- Bronislaw Szerszynski, "Understanding Creationism and Evolution in America and Europe," in *Science and Religion: New Historical Perspectives*, ed. T. Dixon, G. Cantor, and S. Pumfrey (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 153-160.

M 9.18: Before creationism: creation in scripture, exegesis, natural theology... and Darwin

- Genesis Ch. 1-8, focusing on creation and flood narratives. Use any common Bible translation available online, such as the Standard, Revised Standard, NRSV, Jewish Publication Society, etc.
- Qur'an 7:54-64, 41:9-12, and 22:39-48
- William Paley, *Natural Theology: Or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearance of Nature* (New York: E. Duyckinck, 1820), pp. 7-14. (The pagination of this edition is unreliable; just read the whole selection.)
- Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species: A Facsimile of the First Edition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 80-96, 101-30, 480-90.

Part II: Debating Evolution in Europe, the U.S., the Middle East, and Islamic South Asia, 1859-1900

Week of 9.25: Evolution in Anglo-American universities after Darwin

Class will not meet this Monday due to the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur. We will arrange an alternative way to discuss the material below.

- Ronald L. Numbers, "Creationism in the Age of Darwin," in *The Creationists* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 15-32
- Paul Croce, "Probabilistic Darwinism: Louis Agassiz vs. Asa Gray on Science, Religion, and Certainty," *Journal of Religious History* 22 (1998), pp. 35-58.
- Marwa Elshakry, "The Gospel of Science and American Evangelism in Late Ottoman Beirut," *Past and Present* 196 (Aug., 2007), 173-214.

Secondary Source Analysis Due Friday 9/29.

M 10.2 Darwin among the Muslim Reformers

- Martin Riexinger, "Responses of South Asian Muslims to the Theory of Evolution," *Die Welt des Islams* 49 (2009): 212-247.
- Sayyid Ahmad Khan, "Lecture on Islam," in *Modernist Islam, 1840-1940: A Sourcebook*, ed. Charles Kurzman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 291-303 (excerpts).
- Sarah Qidwai, "Darwin or Design: Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Views on Human Evolution," in *The Cambridge Companion to Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, ed. Yasmin Saikia and Raisur Rahim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018)

- Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, "The Refutation of the Materialists" (excerpts), in *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal al-Din "al-Afghani"* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983).

Part III: Creationism in the 20th-Century United States

M 10.9 Evolution and the Fundamentalist Controversy

- Read: Ronald Numbers, "Creationism in the Fundamentalist Controversy," in *The Creationists* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 51-68.
- T.T. Martin, *Hell and the High Schools* (Kansas City: Western Baptist Publishing, 1923), 147-59.
- Edward J. Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion* (New York: Basic Books, 1997). Excerpts, pp. 87-146.
- Jeffrey P. Moran, "Reading Race into the Scopes Trial: African American Elites, Science, and Fundamentalism," *Journal of American History* 90 (2003): 891-911.
- William Jennings Bryan, "God and Evolution," in *Creation-Evolution Debates*, vol. 2, ed. Ronald L. Numbers (New York: Garland, 1995), 1-9.

Secondary source analysis due

M 10.16 3.1 Library Visit I

Work with Religion and Science Collection in Rare Books Room: begin midterm assignment

M 10.23 Library Visit II

- The Scopes Trial Reinterpreted: Watch *Inherit the Wind* (dir. by Stanley Kramer, 1960)
- Continue to work on midterm assignment

Friday 10.27: Midterm assignment due on Canvas

M 10.30 Creation Science

- Ronald L. Numbers, "John C. Whitcomb, Jr., Henry M. Morris, and *The Genesis Flood*," in *The Creationists* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 208-38.
- Christopher Toumey, "Modern Creationism and Scientific Authority," *Social Studies of Science* 21 (1991): 681-99.
- John C. Whitcomb, and Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood: The Biblical Record and Its Scientific Implications* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1961), selections.

Secondary source analysis due

M 11.6 Creationism and the Museum in America

- Ronald L. Numbers, "Creation Research Institutes," in *The Creationists* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 312-28.
- Susan Trollinger and William Trollinger, Jr., "Museum," pp. 16-63 in *Righting America at the Creation Museum* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).
- Explore www.creationmuseum.org
- Visit to UW Geology Museum (Weeks Hall, 1215 W. Dayton St.)

Secondary source analysis due

M 11.13 The Legal History of Creationism in the U.S.

- Edward J. Larson, "Outlawing Creation, 1981-1990," pp. 156-184 in *Trial and Error: The American Controversy over Creation and Evolution*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
- Excerpts from opinions of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Epperson v. Arkansas* (1968) and *Edwards v. Aguillard* (1987).

M 11.20 Visit to Wisconsin Historical Society

- Work with archival materials from Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Part V: The Globalization of Creationism

M 11.27 Intelligent Design

- Watch *Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial* (on Canvas)
- Ronald L. Numbers, "Creationism Goes Global," in *The Creationists* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 399-431.
- Harun Yahya, *The Atlas of Creation* (excerpts)

Archives assignment due Friday 12/1.

M 12.4 Library Visit III

- Work with Religion and Science Collection in Rare Books: begin final assignment

M 12.11 Jewish and Indigenous Creationism

- Geoffrey Cantor and Marc Swelitz, eds., *Jewish Tradition and the Challenge of Darwinism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), excerpts.
- Robert Layton, "The Politics of Indigenous 'Creationism' in Australia," in *Cultures of Creationism: Anti-Evolutionism in English-Speaking Countries*, ed. Simon Coleman and Leslie Carlin (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 145-165.
- Vine Deloria, *Evolution, Creationism, and Other Modern Myths: A Critical Inquiry* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 2002), excerpts.

Final Paper Due Tuesday 12/19 at 5pm.