Physics and Religion

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— Aspects of religion with science/religion have been covered in
the pages of Physics Today and Physics News. They reflect wide student interest
in these topics. For a decade, two physicists and a campus minister have taught
a writing-intensive course “Issues in Science and Religion” Physics/Sociology 137.
Here we outline our course (open to all students), to encourage others contemplating
similar courses. Many students escape an exposure to the basics of science, and so
we capture them. We discuss inter alia relativity and uncertainties (both quantum
and classical, which fascinate students), including their controversial relationships
with religion. One of us (LF), as a biophysicist, was asked to cover evolution, which
topic has proved to be rather popular: Various scientific organizations have pub-
licly defended evolution against intelligent design and creationism. To keep the
quality of the course, we have restricted enrollment. Here we discuss only the sci-
ence/physics part of the course. Visiting speakers (covering the gamut from religious
to non-religious) have included a Vatican astronomer, a Sloan survey cosmologist,
the director of SETI, a neuropsychologist, a sociologist, historians of science and
theologians.

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