

Tuesdays at 1 pm:

Contact information:

Prof. Milton Saier

Division of Biological Sciences

Office: Room 4254 Muir Biology Bldg.

John Muir College, UCSD

Phone: 858-534-4084

E-mail: [msaier@ucsd.edu](mailto:msaier@ucsd.edu)

Times available: afternoons and early evenings

Office hours: Immediately preceding and following class, or by appointment

Topics to be discussed

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| (1) The Human Population<br>Vegetarian?             | (6) Why Eat |
| (2) Global Warming<br>Consciousness                 | (7) Social  |
| (3) The Ozone Layer<br>Ethics                       | (8) World   |
| (4) Our Oceans and Forests<br>Governmental Policies | (9)         |
| (5) Species Extinction                              |             |

## Grading policy

- There will be no exams or quizzes. Active participation is **STRONGLY** encouraged.

- Grading will be based on attendance and participation as follows:

(1) During the quarter, each student should attend at least two environmental seminars.

All will be announced in advance. Students will briefly report back to the class on the contents of each event attended and provide a personal critique of the material covered.

(2) Each student will write a “letter to the editor” ( $\leq 200$  words) about some environmental/social issue of interest and importance to her/him, read it to the class, and submit it signed to Dr. Saier as well as to one or more newspaper(s) for publication.

(3) Each student will write a letter to one or more of our governmental official(s) on an environmental/social/political issue, read it to the class, and submit it to Dr. Saier as well as the politician(s).

(4) All students who are eligible to vote in the U.S. should

have registered to vote. It is the responsibility of every citizen in a democratic country to become informed and vote. Only then can we hope to inspire the maintenance of a democratic way of life.

The second freshman seminar class is on Thursdays at 1 pm:

BILD87 (Freshman Seminar) The Philosophy of Science and the Science of the Supernatural

(1 unit/2 hrs per week)

Thursdays, 1:00-1:50; ; Room 1129 Muir Biology Building

Description: This seminar class will discuss the basics for the scientific method, and follow some of the most significant discoveries. It will also evaluate the scientific basics for beliefs in supernatural entities. Rationalism and Humanism will be considered in relationship to religious belief systems

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Professor Steve Baird

Department of Medicine UCSD

stephenbaird3@gmail.com

Topics to be discussed:

## Outline 1:

(1) Introduction and Overview

(2) Rationalism and Humanism

(3) The Creation Story in the Bible and its Sumerian, Babylonian, and Egyptian antecedents. This will introduce myths as a human tradition to explain the unknown.

(4) The Ptolemaic Universe with the Earth at the Center and the Sun, Planets and Stars Revolving around it. Early attempt at a model based on observations.

(5) Aquinas' proof of the existence of God, How to explain the supernatural.

(6) Copernicus and Galileo and the Heliocentric Solar System. The reaction of the Inquisition. Faith vs. Observation and Reason.

(7) Kepler's analysis of the data of Tycho Brahe. The Introduction of the idea of elliptical orbits of planets to explain the data better than Ptolemy did.

(8) Darwin and Evolution. A non-biblical explanation of the origin of species, including humans.

(9) Koch's Postulates for infectious diseases. Microbiology. Microscopes and culture methodology. Disease is due to bugs not devils. Jenner and vaccines to prevent disease.

(10) Mental Illness: possession by demons or cellular malfunction?

(11) Definition of the scientific method and definition of faith. The current state of antisemitic emotion in the faith community and growing atheism in the scientific community.

## Outline 2:

(1) The Scientific Method (The Empirical Approach)

- (2) The Natural World: From Atoms to the Universe
- (3) Darwin, Evolution and The Third Law of Biology
- (4) The Psychological Basis for a Belief in the Hereafter
- (5) World Mythology: Themes and Variations
- (6) The Dark Bible and Its Implications
- (7) The Biological Basis for Belief Systems
- (8) Richard Dawkins and “The God Delusion”
- (9) Science: the record of dead religions (Oscar Wilde)
- (10) Rationalism

Grading policy:

There will be no exams or quizzes. Active participation is **STRONGLY** encouraged.

Grading will be based on attendance and participation, additionally:

(1) Each student should write or organize a class discussion on one topic relevant to the class, to be approved in advance by the instructor.

(2) Each student will write a “letter to the editor” (≤200 words) about some philosophical/social issue of interest and importance to her/him, read it to the class, and submit it signed to Dr. Saier or Dr. Baird as well as to one or more newspaper(s) for publication.