Einstein and Religion

John F. Haught

February 8 10:15-11:45am Murray Room, Lauinger Library, Fifth Floor. (Registration limited.)

Since Einstein occasionally used the word "God," he is often cited as an example of an eminent scientist who sees no conflict between science and religion. However, it is not that simple. This lecture will examine, therefore, what he meant by "God," "faith" and "religion," and then place him in conversation with a couple of twentieth-century theologians.

John F. Haught is Professor of Theology, Emeritus, and Senior Fellow of the Woodstock Theological Center, in Georgetown University. His area of specialization is systematic theology, with a particular interest in issues pertaining to science, cosmology, evolution, and ecology. He is the author Making Sense of Evolution (2010), God and the New Atheism (2008), and other books. He lectures internationally on issues relating to science and religion.

American Short Story Masters: Annie Proulx and Tobias Wolff

Paul R. Lily

March 8, 15, 22 11:15-2:45pm Murray Room, Lauinger Library, Fifth Floor.

We will discuss stories from Proulx's Close Range (Scribners) and Wolff's Our Story Begins (Vintage), starting with Proulx's "The Mud Below" and "The Bunchgrass Edge of the World" and Wolff's "Chain" and "The Night in Question." Students must obtain these books and read the four stories assigned before the first meeting. Paul R. Lily is Professor of English, Emeritus in The State University of New York, Oneonta. He concentrates on modern and contemporary American literature.

Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Discussion with Three Historical Examples.

Clare Carey

March 10, 17, 24 10:15-11:45am College Dean's Conference Room, lower level, White-Gravenor (east entrance).

"War is too important to leave to the generals." Georges Clemenceau.

Clare Carey retired as Associate Dean of Georgetown College.

Genetic Diseases

Ellen J. Henderson

March 17, 24 1:15-2:45 pm Registrar’s Conference Room, Lower Level, White-Gravenor (enter from Red Square).

This class will be limited to ten participants.

"What is a "disease gene"? It is believed that there may be up to 8000 such genes. When is such a gene only one of many factors that may lead to a disease, and when is such a gene determinative? What is a "carrier" of such a gene? Why do such genes persist in the population? Are any of these genes "sex-linked" so that they cause a disease in (primarily) males? These questions will require a little basic coverage of genetics and inheritance patterns. We will then look at a number of these diseases. As examples, we may cover sickle cell disease (the gene maintained primarily in African-descendent populations because it confers some resistance to malaria in sickle cell gene carriers), Duchenne’s muscular dystrophy and hemophilia (both sex-linked and expressed in males), Huntington’s disease (a dominant determinative disease form of a gene), Tay-Sachs (an example of a recessive mutation in which parents carry the gene but do not have the disease), and several forms of cancer which is always due to (usually) multiple genetic changes. Can we avoid these diseases? In some cases, in vitro fertilization and embryo screening can identify embryos that do not have the disease gene and can then be implanted into the future mother (discarding embryos that do have the defect). Many scientists look to gene therapy and stem cell research to find preventions/cures for these diseases. There have been a few hopeful results but many obstacles remain to be overcome.

Ellen J. Henderson is Professor of Biology, Emerita in Georgetown University.

A History of Space Flight: A Major Aspect of the Cold War

John P. Sheahan

April 5, 12 19 10:15-11:45 am Murray Room, Lauinger Library, Fifth Floor.

This course will cover the Cold War competition in space between the United States and the Soviet Union, culminating in the “Space Race” of the 1950s and 1960s. It will also examine events, particularly in the USSR, leading up to this competition as well as the increasing cooperation between these two countries following the Apollo program. The final session will look at current Russian/American relationships in space, e.g. roles and missions on the International Space Station, as well as possible scenarios in a future far different from 50 years ago. John P. Sheahan is a former NASA Official.

Things Strange and Not So Strange in the Art World: Philosophizing about Art, Especially Contemporary Art

John B. Brough

John B. Brough is Professor of Philosophy, Emeritus in Georgetown University. He works chiefly in the areas of phenomenology, the philosophy of art, and the history of modern philosophy. He has written on themes in Husserlian phenomenology, including time, the experience of time, perception, memory, imagination, and picturing.

Preregistration required: http://emeriticourses.georgetown.edu. Fees: one course, $30; two or more, $50. (Exemptions apply.)