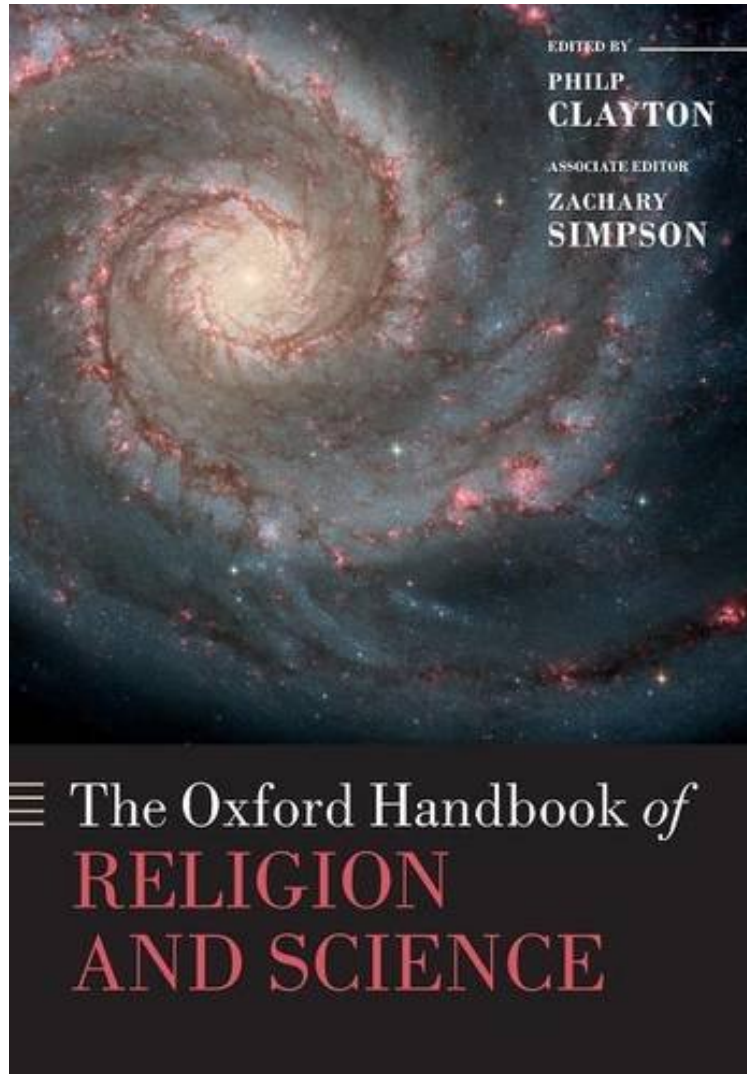


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## The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science (Oxford Handbooks)

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**From Philip Clayton : The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science (Oxford Handbooks)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science (Oxford Handbooks):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Clayton rocks. By Kim Edwards Very thorough yet accessible to those who are new to the subject. If this subject interests you, I'm betting this is a staple on the shelf, along with the Bible. Also, Anything Philip Clayton writes or edits is guaranteed to be among the very best. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By Kevin Stout In depth! Graduate level book. 51 of 52 people found the following review helpful. A tour de force By wolvie05 This massive, impeccably crafted edited volume represents the very best

thinking in science-and-religion so far, with two exceptions (which I shall come to in a moment). The original essays featured show that science-and-religion is a field of inquiry which has truly come of age and is of immense relevance to broader academic discussions. The first part consists of relatively brief introductions to the field as seen from the standpoint of particular religious traditions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, etc.). Especially interesting are those from a Buddhist and Hindu perspective, as they do not often feature in Western discussions. It is clear, however, that both religious traditions have sophisticated perspectives to offer and at least one impressive research program in the form of scientific studies of meditation. The second part deals with particular issues in science-and-religion, such as evolution, cosmology, etc. Here there are not many new reflections on offer, as they aim to provide a general map of different issues to take into consideration. The third part is considerably more interesting, as we examine the contributions which specific disciplines can make to the discussion, such as philosophy of science, history, systematic theology, etc. It is here where the interdisciplinarity of the field becomes most evident. Religion-and-science is truly all-encompassing, and the best work in the future will have to draw on all these different disciplines. Part four highlights some particular approaches to the discussion, including naturalism (a remarkable essay by Owen Flanagan), post-modernity (Nancey Murphy), etc. Part 5, by far the longest of the book, features extended debates over the more prominent ideas and positions in science-and-religion, including divine action, panentheism, emergentism, intelligent design, etc. The final part includes perspectives on value issues in religion and science. It will be clear from this whirlwind summary that one cannot possibly do justice to the rich arguments and scholarship presented in this volume. All the essays are well worth reading, except unfortunately for the two I mentioned above, by William Provine and Peter Atkins respectively. In stark contrast to the careful, wide-ranging research and nuanced discussion featured in the other essays, all Provine and Atkins can offer is the same old rhetoric dating back to Huxley and Haeckel about how science and religion are incompatible and how evolution has disproved God. These essays should never have made it into this volume. Surely more sophisticated proponents of atheism could have been summoned, such as Taner Edis whose book "The Ghost in the Universe" is one of the best defenses of the idea that modern science is most consonant with an atheistic worldview (though even he fails to make a persuasive case that theism is unlikely). Several individual essays stand out as *primus inter pares*. Philip H. Wiebe is undoubtedly the most articulate proponent of the evidential value of religious experience in contemporary philosophy of religion, and unlike many other authors he has read extensively in the neuroscientific and biological literature. His essay on "Religious experience, cognitive science and the future of religion" is worth the price of the book (which is admittedly a hefty \$160; thank heavens for research libraries!). Robin Collins' essay on contributions from the philosophy of science also stands out. He presents a novel argument against reductionism from quantum mechanics and defends a view of the religion-and-science relationship which he calls Theistic Non-Reductive Intelligibility (TNRI) which certainly merits further consideration. Owen Flanagan's essay on naturalism is very insightful, especially in his conclusion that the only tenet common to all varieties of naturalism is the rejection of super-naturalism. If this is the case it is hard to see how one could debunk, say, religious experience without begging important questions. At the same time it makes naturalism a much harder 'target' for theistic apologetics, which I see as a good thing. Theism would be better served, as John Haught and William Jaworski have pointed out, by providing a comprehensive, intellectually attractive and scientifically informed alternative to naturalism, rather than simply trying to refute naturalism *per se*. Finally, Michael Silberstein in his essay on emergentism makes extremely important points about the project of natural theology. All in all, then, a feast for the mind. For those who are interested in science-and-religion questions, either from long experience or for the first time (although the book presupposes a college education; the essays are rigorous and demanding), I cannot recommend it highly enough.

The field of "religion and science" is exploding in popularity among academics as well as the general reading public. Spawning an increasing number of conferences and courses, this field has shown an unprecedented rate of growth in recent years. Here for the first time is a single-volume introduction to the debate, written by the leading experts. Making no pretense to encyclopedic neutrality, each chapter defends a major intellectual position: at the heart of the book is a series of "pro" and "con" papers, covering each of the current "hot topics" (such as evolution versus creation, naturalism versus the supernatural). In addition to treatments of questions of methodology and implications for life and practice, the Handbook includes sections devoted to the major scientific disciplines, the major world religions, and the main sub-disciplines in this exciting and ever-expanding field of study.

This volume offers an impressive combination of breadth and clarity: breadth in the inclusion of experts from all the major world religions and scientific disciplines, and clarity in focusing attention on the similarities and differences among these diverse traditions and disciplines. Of particular interest is a section presenting pro and con views on eight issues currently debated in this burgeoning interdisciplinary field. Ian G. Barbour, Author of *When Science Meets Religion* About the Author Philip Clayton is Ingraham Professor at the Claremont School of Theology and a Professor of Philosophy and Religion at the Claremont Graduate University.