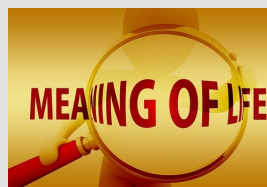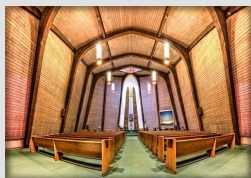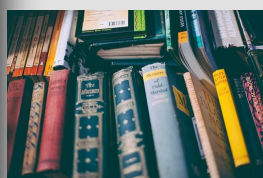## UQ Studies in Religion Seminar

Sam Hey. 'Finding Purpose amid Claims of a Purposeless Universe?' While humans appear to have an innate drive to find purpose in the universe, many scientific discoveries including those of physics and cosmology, the huge age and size of the universe, biological natural selection theories, and the rise of post-modern approaches to the social sciences have challenged traditional Christian claims that the universe was created by a personal God who has an interest in and purpose for the creation. At the same time, the writings of many philosophers from the time of Plato to Aquinas, and more recent scholars like George Ellis, point to the sense of order and beauty in mathematical, ethical, and relational realities that appear to predate a material universe. Many contend this offers support for Christian claims of the involvement of a personal, purposeful God in a providential universe.

Dean Smith & Rob Fringer. 'Exploring the Nexus between Academic Freedom and Ecclesial Expectations'. Most denominational ministry training today is carried out in a higher education context. Such a context requires college leaders to adhere to a policy on academic freedom. Faculty and students must be able to enjoy the freedom to explore ideas even if those ideas do not align with a denomination's confessional stance. While the idea of academic freedom is mostly encouraged in theological colleges, anecdotal evidence suggests that there can be points of tension where the desire to uphold academic freedom clashes with ecclesial expectations that candidates for ministry be strongly formed in a confessional ethos. In this paper, we suggest that confessional formation and training need not be at odds with a policy of academic freedom. Rather, this tension, if embraced, can provide a space for deeper formation and commitment to one's denominational distinctives.

Friday May 12, 2017, 2pm-4pm
Room W349 in Forgan Smith
Building (No. 1)