
Phil 226

Philosophy of Religion

Time & Place: MW 2.45-4.00, 220 Lawrence Hall

Instructor: Nate Bulthuis

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Office: 206 Hascall Hall

Website: philosophy.natebulthuis.com/religion

Website password: apb

Course Description

This course takes as its starting place the position—dominant in many world religions—that God is an **absolutely perfect being**. But what do we (or ought we) mean when we make that claim? Must God have a mind, or be able to enter into relationships with you or I? Do we have any reason to think that all of the attributes typically assigned to God could consistently be had by one being? Moreover, having filled out that picture, what reasons do we have, or lack, for thinking that a being of that sort exists? What counts as a reason in this context? And, finally, what bearing would (or should) the existence of such a being have on our lives if it were to exist? Would it, for example, matter to us as moral creatures? In this course, we will engage questions of these sorts, informed by the tools of philosophical inquiry and through readings drawn from both historical and contemporary philosophical discussion.

Readings

You need to purchase the following textbooks for this course, available at the Colgate bookstore:

Williams, T. (tr.) (2001). *Anselm: Prologion* (Indianapolis: Hackett)

Peterson, Michael, et al. (eds.) (2014). *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings*, 5th edn (Oxford: OUP)

All course readings not in the textbooks will be made available on the course website.

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation: Attendance at and participation in all class lectures is expected. Do be sure to come to class ready to discuss; the best way to develop one's philosophical skills is to exercise one's philosophical capacities on a regular basis. Active discussion is perhaps the most important exercise in this regard.

Weekly Assignments: This course will require a series of six "short analysis essays," in which you analyze a piece of writing or an argument. The best five will count towards your final grade. Prompts for these will be posted to the course website.

Exams: There will be two exams in this course: a mid-term exam and a final exam.

Term Paper: There will be an end-of-term paper in this course. You should think of this paper as the next stage after your short analysis essays. Extensions are at my discretion, but typically will only be granted for university-approved reasons.

Grading

Grading will be determined by a combination of attendance and participation, weekly assignments, three essays, and two exams. Below is a tentative breakdown of the weight of the factors which go into your grade, though evidence of improvement throughout the semester may be considered in the final grade assessment.

Attendance and Participation	15
Short Analysis Essays	25
Term Paper	20
Mid-Term Exam	15
Final Exam	25

Website

This course utilizes a website: philosophy.natebulthuis.com/religion. It is password-protected. The password for the site is **apb**. Please consult the website for the reading schedule, for access to readings not in the assigned textbooks, for journal and essay prompts, and for anything else provided during the course of the semester.

The Writing and Speaking Center

The Writing and Speaking Center in 208 Lathrop Hall offers assistance with essays for any course. Experienced writing consultants can help native and non-native speakers alike with a written paper's focus, development, organization, clarity, citations, or grammar. Details about all meetings will remain private. To make an appointment, see <http://www.colgate.edu/writingcenter> or call [\(315\) 228-6085](tel:3152286085).

Course Accommodations

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors, resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services) by visiting CLTR (101A Lathrop Hall) or by going to www.colgate.edu/cltr.

Students who believe that, due to a special need, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to visit Academic Support and Disability Services at 101A Lathrop Hall. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Academic Dishonesty

A word about academic dishonesty: Don't. It is immoral (it's a form of theft). It also doesn't pass the risk-reward test. It's incredibly easy for us to catch, and the penalties are severe – up to and including expulsion from the university. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please feel free to talk to me. Consult the Academic Honor Code for a more detailed discussion of academic dishonesty.

Date	Notes	Reading	Topics
Week 1 8.25		None	<i>Introduction</i> Introduction
Week 2 8.29 8.31		1-4 5-6	<i>Philosophical Theology</i> Our Project: Philosophical Theology The APB
Week 3 9.5 9.7		7 8	<i>Omnipotence</i> Problems for Omnipotence Solutions?
Week 4 9.12 9.14		9-11 12-13	<i>Omniscience</i> Omniscience and Immutability Omniscience and Human Freedom
Week 5 9.19 9.21		14-15 16-17	<i>Omniscience and Eternity</i> Eternity How Eternity Can Help
Week 6 9.26 9.28		18-19 20-21	<i>Perfect Goodness</i> God and Morality The Doctrine of Simplicity
Week 7 10.3 10.5	Mid-Term	22-23	<i>Perfect Goodness</i> The Problem of Evil
Week 8 10.10 10.12	Fall Break	24-25	<i>Perfect Goodness</i> The Free Will Theodicy
Week 9 10.17 10.19		26-27 28-29	<i>Perfect Goodness</i> The Problem of Evil Reconsidered Dealing with Horrendous Evils
Week 10 10.24 10.26		30-31 32-33	<i>Perfect Goodness</i> Problems of Creation Creation and Perfection
Week 11 10.31 11.2		34 35-36	<i>Theistic Arguments</i> Preliminaries The Ontological Argument
Week 12 11.7 11.9		38-39 40-42	<i>Arguments Science and Religion</i> Cosmological Arguments Teleological Arguments
Week 13 11.14 11.16		43-46 47-48	<i>Science Religious Experience</i> Science and Religion Religious Experience
Week 15 11.28 11.30		49-50 51-52	<i>Religious Belief and Evidence</i> The Ethics of Belief Rationality and Evidence
Week 16 12.5 12.7		53 54	<i>Evidence Faith</i> Rationality and Evidence, cont. The Nature of Faith

References

1. MacDonald, "Natural Theology"
2. Aquinas, "The Harmony of Reason and Revelation" (PR: 96-99)
3. Ibn Rushd, The Harmony of Philosophy and the Qur'an
4. Morris, "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Anselm"
5. Aquinas, "God is Omnipotent" (PR: 244-246)
6. Mavrodes, "Some Puzzles Concerning Omnipotence" (PR: 247-249)
7. Savage, "The Paradox of the Stone"
8. Hasker, "Foreknowledge and Necessity"
9. Kretzmann, "Omniscience and Immutability"
10. Pike, "Divine Omniscience and Voluntary Action" (PR: 250-255)
11. Helm, "Providence — Risky or Risk-Free" (PR: 274-282)
12. Adams, "An Objection to Middle Knowledge" (PR: 290-293)
13. Fischer, "Freedom and Knowledge"
14. Basinger, "Middle Knowledge and Classical Christian Thought" (PR: 283-289)
15. Stump & Kretzmann, "Eternity"
16. Boethius, "God is Timeless" (PR: 256-258)
17. Wolterstorff, "God is Everlasting" (PR: 259-265)
18. Rachels, "God and Human Attitudes"
19. MacIntyre, "Which God Ought We to Obey?" (PR: 631-637)
20. Kretzmann, "Abraham, Isaac, and Euthyphro"
21. Morris, "Metaphysical Dependence, Independence, and Perfection"
22. Hume, "Evil Makes a Strong Case Against God's Existence" (PR: 317-322)
23. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence" (PR: 329-337)
24. Plantinga, "The Free Will Defense" (PR: 338-356)
25. Hick, "Soul-Making Theodicy" (PR: 357-364)
26. Stump, "Aquinas on the Sufferings of Job"
27. Rowe, "The Evidential Argument from Evil" (PR: 365-373)
28. Adams, "Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God" (PR: 374-382)
29. Aquinas, "On the Good in General"
30. Kretzmann, "A General Problem of Creation"
31. Kretzmann, "A Particular Problem of Creation"
32. Rowe, "The Problem of Divine Perfection and Freedom"
33. Mann, "The Best of All Possible Worlds"
34. St. Anselm, "The Ontological Argument" (A)
35. Gaunilo, "On Behalf of the Fool" (A)
36. St. Anselm, "Reply to Gaunilo" (A)
37. Plantinga, "A Contemporary Modal Version of the Ontological Argument" (PR: 138-147)
38. Craig, "The Kalam Cosmological Argument" (PR: 161-169)
39. Mackie, "Critique of the Cosmological Argument" (PR: 170-176)
40. Paley, "The Analogical Teleological Argument" (PR: 171-179)
41. Hume, "Critique of the Analogical Teleological Argument" (PR: 180-186)
42. Collins, "Anthropic Teleological Argument" (PR: 187-196)
43. Gould, "Two Separate Domains" (PR: 538-545)
44. Polkinghorne, "The Universe as Creation" (PR: 580-587)
45. Dawkins, "Science Discredits Religion" (PR: 546-549)
46. Plantinga, 'Naturalism and Science are Incompatible' (PR: 574-579)
47. Alston, "Religious Experience as Perception of God" (PR: 52-58)
48. Martin, "Critique of Religious Experience" (PR: 68-78)
49. Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief" (PR: 103-108)
50. James, "The Will to Believe" (PR: 109-115)
51. Plantinga, "The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology" (PR: 207-216)
52. Pargetter, "Experience, Proper Basicity, and Belief in God" (PR: 217-222)
53. Wolterstorff, 'Can Belief in God Be Rational?'
54. MacDonald, "Christian Faith"