



## **PHIL 134 - Philosophy of Religion Course Outline**

**Approval Date:** 01/12/2017

**Effective Date:** 06/10/2017

### **SECTION A**

**Unique ID Number** CCC000264841

**Discipline(s)** Philosophy

Philosophy

**Division** Arts and Humanities

**Subject Area** Philosophy

**Subject Code** PHIL

**Course Number** 134

**Course Title** Philosophy of Religion

**TOP Code/SAM Code** 1509.00 - Philosophy / E - Non-Occupational

**Rationale for adding this course to the curriculum** Textbook update.

**Units** 3

**Cross List** N/A

**Typical Course Weeks** 18

### **Total Instructional Hours**

#### **Contact Hours**

**Lecture** 54.00

**Lab** 0.00

**Activity** 0.00

**Work Experience** 0.00

**Outside of Class Hours** 108.00

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**Total Contact Hours** 54

**Total Student Hours** 162

**Open Entry/Open Exit** No

**Maximum Enrollment**

**Grading Option** Letter Grade or P/NP

**Distance Education Mode of Instruction**

## SECTION B

### General Education Information:

## SECTION C

### Course Description

**Repeatability** May be repeated 0 times

**Catalog Description** Introduces the student to major themes such as the existence of God, faith and reason, evil, death, fate, mysticism and the role of logic in religious language. The course develops the students' critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.

### Schedule Description

## SECTION D

### Condition on Enrollment

**1a. Prerequisite(s):** *None*

**1b. Corequisite(s):** *None*

**1c. Recommended**

- ENGL 120 or above

**1d. Limitation on Enrollment:** *None*

## SECTION E

### Course Outline Information

#### 1. Student Learning Outcomes:

- Examine and evaluate various themes in the philosophy of religion including the arguments for the existence God, notions of faith, reason, belief, knowledge, religious language, fate, mysticism, human destiny and religious experience.
- Critically analyze divergent viewpoints on topics found in the philosophy of religion.

#### 2. Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Define, identify and give examples of the following: a.) deductive and inductive reasoning and the use of syllogisms b.) the major logical fallacies, errors and remedies c.) metaphor, simile and analogy d.) cognitive and emotive meaning e.) extended arguments f.) analytic a priori and synthetic a posteriori propositions.
- List, define and give examples of the major argumentative methods for coming to a logical conclusion on a given philosophical question.
- Develop critical, logical, philosophical thought by assimilating and applying all of the above listed skills to the subject matter.
- Apply the logical tools of critical thinking listed above to each argument presented in class.
- Read and interpret original philosophical texts.
- Develop her/his own judgments on the basis of a critical- thinking approach to the issues of the philosophy of religion.
- Sharpen the intellect and find material from which to construct guidelines for a healthy, joyful lifestyle.
- List and identify the major philosophers and briefly state their respective positions.
- Define and give examples for the following terms: religious experience, arguments for God's existence, faith and reason, opinion, belief, knowledge, religious language, the problem of evil, fate and human destiny, mysticism, life and death.
- List and describe each major philosophical theme covered in class.
- Identify author, title and major theme of each essay read in the textbook.

- L. Compare and contrast the logical and experiential merits of the diverse philosophical viewpoints of the world philosophers on any given topic.
- M. Integrate the arguments from the culturally-diverse philosophers of religion demonstrating knowledge and understanding of each argument and identifying the universal truths inherent in each argument.
- N. Evaluate the significance of those universal truths expressed in divergent ways.
- O.

### 3. Course Content

- A. INTRODUCTION
  - a. The Role of Religion in Human History
  - b. Rationality
    - a. Deductive Reasoning
    - b. Inductive Reasoning
    - c. Abductive Reasoning
- B. COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS
  - a. Traditional Arguments for the Existence of God
  - b. The Cosmological Argument
  - c. The Argument from Contingency
- C. TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS
  - a. Paley's Argument
  - b. Hume's Critique
  - c. The Darwinian Objection
- D. ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS
  - a. An Analysis of Anselm's Argument
  - b. The Modal Version of the Ontological Argument - Plantinga
- E. THE ARGUMENT FROM RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE
  - a. Encounters with God
  - b. An Analysis of Religious Experience
  - c. A Critique of the Strong-Justification Thesis
  - d. Religious Experience is Amorphous and Varied
  - e. The Argument from Religious Experience is Circular
  - f. Religious Experience Cannot be Confirmed
- F. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL
  - a. The Mystery of Evil
  - b. The Argument from Evil
  - c. The Free-Will Defense
  - d. The Theodicy Defense
  - e. Problems with the Theodicy Defense
  - f. Evolution and Evil
- G. MIRACLES
  - a. What are Miracles?
  - b. Hume's Critique of Miracles
  - c. Replies to Hume
- H. PERSONAL IDENTITY AND IMMORTALITY
  - a. PART ONE: PERSONAL IDENTITY
    - a. What Is It to Be a Person?
    - b. What is Identity?
    - c. What is Personal Identity?
  - b. PART TWO: IS THERE LIFE AFTER DEATH?
    - a. Life After Death

- b. Reincarnation
- I. FAITH AND RELIGION
  - a. The Classic Positions
  - b. Pragmatic Justification of Religious Belief
    - a. Pascal's Wager
    - b. W.K. Clifford and the Ethics of Belief
    - c. William James: The Will to Believe
  - c. Fideism: Faith Without/Against Reason
  - d. Reformed Epistemology: Alvin Plantinga
  - e. Critique of Plantinga's Reformed Epistemology
- J. FAITH, HOPE, AND DOUBT
  - a. Is Belief a Necessary Condition for Saving Faith?
  - b. The Phenomenology of Belief
    - a. Beliefs Are Not Chosen
    - b. Logic of Belief of Argument Against Volitionalism
  - c. The Ethics of Belief
  - d. Hope as the Proper Religious Propositional Attitude for Doubters
- K. RELIGION AND ETHICS
  - a. Does Morality Depend on Religion?
  - b. Are Religious Ethics Essentially Different from Secular Ethics?
  - c. Is Religion Irrelevant or Even Inimical to Morality?
  - d. Does Religion Enhance the Moral Life?
  - e.

#### 4. Methods of Instruction:

##### Lecture:

**Other:** Lecture/discussion/films/podcasts. Lectures will be given on the course content followed by reinforcement using image and video and podcast presentations augmenting the lectures. Class and/or group discussion will follow for 10 -15 minutes.

**5. Methods of Evaluation:** Describe the general types of evaluations for this course and provide at least two, specific examples.

Additional assessment information:

GRADE WILL BE BASED UPON:

1. 3 Midterms (objective and/or essay), 1 every four to five weeks.

SAMPLE OBJECTIVE QUESTIONS: 1.) Restate in your own words St. Anselm's Ontological Proof for the Existence of God. 2.) Restate in your own words Plantinga's Modal Argument. 3.) Show where Richard Dawkins' explanation of the Modal Argument is disingenuous. Dawkins' argues that a belief in God is delusional; explain why his conception of God refutes his theory.

2. 1 Comprehensive Final Exam (objective and essay)

SAMPLE QUESTION: 1.) Explain why it is incorrect to say that God exists. List and explain at least two other examples of semantic equivocation that obstruct an expansive notion of the Divine. How can we avoid the reductionism attendant upon semantic equivocation?

3. Other written work. EXAMPLE: Write a short paragraph explaining the free will defense.

Letter Grade or P/NP

**6. Assignments:** State the general types of assignments for this course under the following categories and provide at least two specific examples for each section.

- A. Reading Assignments

Entire textbook by the end of the semester.

B. Writing Assignments

1. Read the entire textbook, The Philosophy of Religion, Chapters 1-7.
2. Read original texts by the major philosophers studied in class.
3. Write at least two, 10-15 pages essays (typed, double-spaced) demonstrating application of critical thinking skills to an analysis of the subject matter. Examples: a) Compare and contrast the problem of evil from an Eastern and Western viewpoint; b) Choose two religions of diverse regions, describe their view of death and provide a phenomenological analysis.

C. Other Assignments

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**7. Required Materials**

**A. EXAMPLES of typical college-level textbooks (for degree-applicable courses) or other print materials.**

Book #1:

Author: Yandell, K.  
Title: Philosophy of Religion: A Contemporary Introduction  
Publisher: Philosophy of Religion: A Contemporary Introduction  
Date of Publication: 2016  
Edition:

**B. Other required materials/supplies.**