

Philosophy of religion: God and philosophy

Dr. Jacob Archambault

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the philosophy of religion. After a preliminary examination of the question of what religion is, we examine in turn:

- the existence of God;
- the plausibility of religious faith;
- the relation between God and philosophy.

Through the course, the student shall have achieved: an acquaintance with the central philosophical texts on God's existence and attributes; a clearer recognition of the indebtedness of contemporary attitudes towards religion to past philosophical developments; and an understanding of how religious questions are engaged in philosophy today.

Texts

All texts will be provided.

Course Requirements

Homework (50%) - Each class reading is associated with a homework assignment asking for, e.g., a reconstruction of an argument given in the text, an exegesis of a selection from a text, etc. Homework will be collected intermittently at the start of class.

Participation (10%) - Students learn best when actively engaged in class discussion, and are encouraged to participate in each class session.

Midterm exam (20%) - administered in class.

Final paper (20%) - The student shall write a paper on a topic of his/her interest of no more than 5000 words, to be approved by the instructor. Due at the end of the semester.

Class policies

Attendance - Attendance shall be taken at the start of each class. Each student shall be allowed four absences for the totality of the semester. Each absence thereafter shall result in the loss of 1/3 of a letter grade on the student's final grade.

Tardiness - shall count for ½ an absence.

Electronics - In order to foster an environment of active participation free from distraction, electronic devices may not be used in the classroom. Students caught violating this policy will be marked absent for the day.

Syllabus

Week 1	Introduction	Hudson, W. D. (1977). 'What Makes Religious Beliefs	Anselm of Canterbury. <i>Proslogion</i> , 1-4.
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		Religious?' <i>Religious Studies</i> 13:2, pp. 221-242.	
Week 2	Anselm of Canterbury. <i>Proslogion</i> , 5-13.	Anselm of Canterbury. <i>Proslogion</i> , 14-22.	Anselm of Canterbury. <i>Proslogion</i> , 23-26.
Week 3	Gaunilo. <i>On Behalf of the Fool</i> .	Anselm of Canterbury. <i>Reply to Gaunilo</i> .	Thomas Aquinas. <i>Summa Theologiae</i> Ia, q. 1, art. 1.
Week 4	Thomas Aquinas. <i>Summa Theologiae</i> Ia, q. 2, art. 7.	Thomas Aquinas. <i>Summa Theologiae</i> Ia, q. 1, art. 7.	Thomas Aquinas. <i>Summa Theologiae</i> Ia, q. 2, art. 2.
Week 5	Thomas Aquinas. <i>Summa Theologiae</i> Ia, q. 2, art. 3.	Thomas Aquinas. <i>Summa Theologiae</i> Ia, q. 2, art. 3.	Thomas Aquinas. <i>Summa Theologiae</i> Ia, q. 2, art. 3.
Week 6	Descartes, René. <i>Meditations</i> III, par. 1-12.	Descartes, René. <i>Meditations</i> III, par. 13-21.	Descartes, René. <i>Meditations</i> III, par. 22-39.
Week 7	Pascal, Blaise. <i>Thoughts</i> , sec. 3: 'Of the Necessity of the Wager'.	Kant, Immanuel. <i>Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone</i> , Bk. 1	Kant, Immanuel. <i>Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone</i> , Bk. 2
Week 8	Kant, Immanuel. <i>Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone</i> , Bk. 3	<i>John</i> , 13-14. Kierkegaard, Søren. <i>Practice in Christianity</i> , pp. 151-166.	<i>John</i> , 18-19. Kierkegaard, Søren. <i>Practice in Christianity</i> , pp. 167-180.
Week 9	<i>John</i> 20. Kierkegaard, Søren. <i>Practice in Christianity</i> , pp. 181-200.	Kierkegaard, Søren. <i>Practice in Christianity</i> , pp. 201-232.	Kierkegaard, Søren. <i>Practice in Christianity</i> , pp. 233-262.
Week 10	Heidegger, Martin. 'Nietzsche's Word: 'God is Dead''. In <i>Off the Beaten Track</i> , pp. 157-166.	Heidegger, Martin. 'Nietzsche's Word: 'God is Dead''. In <i>Off the Beaten Track</i> , pp. 167-177.	Heidegger, Martin. 'Nietzsche's Word: 'God is Dead''. In <i>Off the Beaten Track</i> , pp. 178-188.
Week 11	Heidegger, Martin. 'Nietzsche's Word: 'God is Dead''. In <i>Off the Beaten Track</i> , pp. 189-199.	Levinas, Emmanuel. 'God and Philosophy', sec. 1-4.	Levinas, Emmanuel. 'God and Philosophy', sec. 5-9.
Week 12	Levinas, Emmanuel. 'God and Philosophy', sec. 10-11	Levinas, Emmanuel. 'God and Philosophy', sec. 12-14.	Levinas, Emmanuel. 'God and Philosophy', sec. 15-17.
Week 13	Levinas, Emmanuel. 'God and Philosophy', sec. 18-19.	Schmemmann, Alexander. 'Worship in a Secular Age'. In <i>For the Life of the World</i> , pp. 117-134.	Semester wrap-up