

# Philosophy of Religion: worship and practice

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:

- creation;
- evil;
- redemption;
- the religious life.

Through the course, the student shall have achieved: a grasp of the central concepts animating different religions; an acquaintance with both primary religious texts and central texts in the history of philosophical thinking on religion; and understanding of how these religious traditions relate to and are engaged in philosophy today.

## Texts

Ricoeur, Paul (1967). *The Symbolism of Evil*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Additional 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	St. Patrick's breastplate Griffiths, Paul J. (1999). 'Religion' in <i>Religious Reading: The Place of Reading in the Practice of Religion</i> .	Schmemmann, Alexander. 'Worship in a Secular Age'. In <i>For the Life of the World</i> , pp. 117-134.
Week 2	Heidegger, Martin. 'Phenomenology and Theology' In <i>Pathmarks</i> , pp. 39-62.	<i>Genesis</i> 1-2 Ricoeur, Paul. 'The Drama of Creation and the 'Ritual' Vision of the World. In <i>The Symbolism of Evil</i> , part 2, ch. 1, pp. 175-197.
Week 3	Hesiod, <i>Works and Days</i> Ricoeur, Paul. 'The Drama of Creation and the 'Ritual' Vision of the World. In <i>The Symbolism of Evil</i> , part 2, ch. 1, pp. 198-210.	Augustine of Hippo. <i>Confessions</i> , bk. 11.
Week 4	Augustine of Hippo. <i>Confessions</i> , bk. 12.	Augustine of Hippo. <i>Confessions</i> , bk. 13.
Week 5	<i>Genesis</i> 4 Ricoeur, Paul. <i>The Symbolism of Evil</i> , part 1, ch. 1, 'Defilement' pp. 25-46.	<i>Genesis</i> 3 Ricoeur, Paul. <i>The Symbolism of Evil</i> , part 1, ch. 2: 'Sin', pp. 47-69.
Week 6	Ricoeur, Paul. <i>The Symbolism of Evil</i> , part 1, ch. 2: 'Sin', pp. 70-99.	Dostoyevsky, Fyodor. <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> , pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 5: 'The Grand Inquisitor', pp. 309-332.
Week 7	Lao Tzu. <i>Tao Te Ching</i> , 2-3.	<i>Samyutta Nikaya</i> 56.11: 'Setting in Motion the Wheel of Dhamma'.
Week 8	<i>Exodus</i> 12-15. Scholem, Gershom. 'Towards an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism', in <i>The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays</i> , pp. 1-17.	<i>Psalms</i> 78. Scholem, Gershom. 'Towards an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism', in <i>The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays</i> , pp. 17-36.
Week 9	Marx, Karl. <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> .	Nietzsche, Friedrich. <i>The Gay Science</i> , sec. 125: 'The Madman'.
Week 10	MacKendrick, Karmen. <i>Fragmentation and Memory</i> , ch. 2: 'The Sin of Origin', pp. 32-54.	MacKendrick, Karmen. <i>Fragmentation and Memory</i> , ch. 3: 'From Trauma to Revelation: Forgiveness', pp. 55-83.
Week 11	MacKendrick, Karmen. <i>Fragmentation and Memory</i> , ch. 4: 'Poppies and Rosemary: Love', pp. 84-104.	Meister Eckhart. <i>Sermons</i> , sermon 7.
Week 12	Lao Tzu. <i>Tao Te Ching</i> , 1, 4, 14.	Alexander Schmemmann. 'Sacrament and Symbol', in <i>For the Life of the World</i> , pp. 135-153.
Week 13	Dostoyevsky, Fyodor. <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> , pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 3: 'Conversations and Exhortations of Father Zossima', pp. 397-413.	Semester wrap-up.