

PHIL 0010 - PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Catalog Description

Advisory: Eligibility for ENGL 1A

Hours: 54 lecture

Description: Analysis of the major philosophical issues raised by, but not limited to traditional Western religion. Includes an examination of the arguments for God's existence and nature, immortality, the problem of evil, miracles, rationality of religious belief, the relation of faith to reason, and theories on the meaning of the religious language. (CSU, UC)

Course Student Learning Outcomes

- CSLO #1: Identify and describe problems associated with knowledge claims about the Divine.
- CSLO #2: Describe and evaluate arguments for God's existence in terms of their strengths and weaknesses.
- CSLO #3: Summarize and critically evaluate philosophical positions concerning the problem of evil.
- CSLO #4: Communicate effectively orally or in writing on a topic in philosophy of religion.

Effective Term

Fall 2022

Course Type

Credit - Degree-applicable

Contact Hours

54

Outside of Class Hours

108

Total Student Learning Hours

162

Course Objectives

1. Describe and evaluate philosophical problems associated with claims about the nature of the Divine.
2. Evaluate whether God's omniscience is compatible with human free will.
3. Explain traditional arguments for the existence of God and compare and contrast their weaknesses and strengths.
4. Explain and evaluate arguments that claim evil is problematic for the existence of God.
5. Illustrate either in writing or with a visual representation an explanation of both sides of the issue of immortality and miracles, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each position.
6. Distinguish religious claims from scientific claims.
7. Describe the moral implications associated with faith claims.
8. Describe and evaluate arguments that assert that belief in God is properly basic.

General Education Information

- Approved College Associate Degree GE Applicability
 - AA/AS - Literature & Language
- CSU GE Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU approval)
 - CSUGE - C2 Humanities
- Cal-GETC Applicability (Recommended - Requires External Approval)
- IGETC Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU/UC approval)
 - IGETC - 3B Humanities

Articulation Information

- CSU Transferable
- UC Transferable

Methods of Evaluation

- Classroom Discussions
 - Example: In an instructor led discussion prompt students to identify the difference between physical and logical possibilities/impossibilities. Have students describe: (a) three things that are physically impossible. (b) three things that are logically impossible. After the instructor determines that students have sufficiently mastered the above concepts and distinctions, an instructor will lead a discussion prompted by the following scenario: How would you respond? You are a math teacher and a student has made the mistake of thinking that $2+3=6$. The student defends this answer by saying that while it might be humanly wrong, it might be correct according to God because in God's math anything is possible. The student adds that it could be right (i.e. correct) in God's mind.
- Essay Examinations
 - Example: Select one of the following questions (a, b, or c) and write a three page, typed, double spaced, size 12 font essay thoroughly responding to your chosen question. (a) Explain Anselm's classical ontological argument and how it is said to establish that God exists. Identify one or more potentially controversial premises of the argument and explain how it could be said to undermine the ontological argument's strength. (b) If God's omniscience entails knowledge by acquaintance of all things knowable such as lust and envy, explain how could it be said that God's moral perfection contradicts the characteristic of omniscience? (c) Attorney for the defense in the Kitzmiller v. Dover case, Patrick Gillen, said, "Does science education have to be so narrow, so technical, so deferential to the existing paradigm that we can't even introduce students to what may be the next great theory?" Explain why the existing criteria of testability and falsifiability are important for demarcating whether a proposed causal hypothesis is scientific or not. Student essays will be assessed based upon a rubric that includes criteria such as correctness of response, thoroughness of explanation, relevance of quotes provided, and demonstration of "justification" by way of quote selection.
- Objective Examinations
 - Example: Students will take a multiple-choice examination on their ability to recognize and differentiate between scientific claims and religious claims with respect to causal reasoning. Example: The Problem of Evil (PEO) can be addressed by way of a defense or a theodicy. What statement below describes the accurate difference between a defense and a theodicy? A. a defense tells us why God permits evil. B. a defense does not attempt to solve the POE, it only blocks the POE as a defeater of

theism. C. a defense justifies why God does, in fact, permit certain types of evil. D. a defense explains why freedom does, in fact, add value to the world even if it permits evil.

- Projects
 - Example: Working in student pairs, write a conversational dialogue based on Mackie's and Plantinga's arguments concerning the logical problem of evil. (1) In conversational language convey your evaluation on whether Plantinga refutes Mackie's claim that God could have prevented suffering by creating free creatures who always act morally. (2) Clarifying what exactly Plantinga's Free Will Defense needs to show to adequately refute the logical problem of evil.

Repeatable

No

Methods of Instruction

- Lecture/Discussion
- Distance Learning

Lecture:

1. Instructor will lead students in a classroom or online discussion on the apparent conflict between free will, moral responsibility, and God's omniscience. Students will learn to evaluate whether the characteristic of Divine omniscience is compatible with human free will and determine whether Divine omniscience affects the concept of moral responsibility.
2. Students will read J.L. Mackie's article, "Evil and Omnipotence," and the instructor will lead students in small in-person or online discussion group and (a) make a list of relevant concepts and define those concepts for clarity, then summarize one section of Mackie's critique of "fallacious solutions" to the problem of evil.

Distance Learning

1. Students will watch the documentary, "Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial" and the instructor will lead students in an in-person or online discussion about how the idea of Intelligent Design relates to the Aquinas' argument for God's existence based on evidence of design. Students will learn to distinguish religious claims from scientific claims. Instructor will have students attempt to use the scientific method of testing and falsifying claims that assert a supernatural cause. Students will learn to recognize and differentiate between scientific claims and religious claims with respect to causation.

Typical Out of Class Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read Anselm's Classical Ontological Argument for God's existence, and come to class with a list of Anselm's premises. 2. Read Michael Martin's "Conflicts Between the Divine Attributes," and come to class prepared to describe and evaluate how Martin sees the existence of an omniscient being impossible. 3. Read Alvin Plantinga's "Free will Defense," and come to class prepared to summarize how he attempts to refute J.L. Mackie's claim about God's omnipotence.

Writing, Problem Solving or Performance

1. Formal Paper: write a 3 page minimum length essay answering all parts of the question prompt that is typed, double-spaced, size 12 font paper.

Explain (a) how the stone paradox could be said to undermine the God's omnipotence, and (b) whether the apparent paradox does, in fact, cause a problem for God's omniscience. (c) If yes, explain how so; and if no, explain why not. 2. Formal Paper: write a 3 page minimum length essay answering all parts of the question prompt that is typed, double-spaced, size 12 font paper. (a) Summarize Aquinas' argument from design for the existence of God. (b) Determine the argument's form and type, and (c) evaluate it in terms of its strength and weaknesses.

Other (Term projects, research papers, portfolios, etc.)

Required Materials

- Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings
 - Author: Michael Peterson, et al.
 - Publisher: Oxford University Press
 - Publication Date: 2014
 - Text Edition: 5th
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- Reason and Religious Belief: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion
 - Author: Michael Peterson, et al.
 - Publisher: Oxford University Press
 - Publication Date: 2014
 - Text Edition: 5th
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology
 - Author: Louis Pojman and Michael Rea
 - Publisher: Cengage Learning
 - Publication Date: 2014
 - Text Edition: 1st
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion
 - Author: Brian Davies
 - Publisher: Oxford University Press
 - Publication Date: 2020
 - Text Edition: 4th
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:

Other materials and-or supplies required of students that contribute to the cost of the course.