

Department of Philosophy
University of Toronto, Mississauga Campus
Fall 2016
PHL235H5F
Philosophy of Religion

Lecture Time: Wednesday 6:00–9:00pm

Lecture Location: CC 2130

Lecturer: Chris Dragos

Office Hours: Wednesdays 4:00–5:30pm (starting wk.2)

Office Location: Academic Annex (AX) 219

Grading Assistant: Doug Campbell

Course Webpage: on Blackboard (<https://portal.utoronto.ca>)

Email address for this course: **philreligion235@gmail.com**

Course Description:

Is the existence of evil logically incompatible with theism? Does evil constitute evidence against theism, making it less likely? What is the philosophical significance of religious diversity, or of religious disagreement? If theism is correct, should it be reasonable to believe otherwise?

In Units 1 and 2, we will consider and evaluate some of the main historical and contemporary arguments for and against theism. In Unit 3, we will explore other questions. It's widely believed that science and religion are fundamentally at odds. Is this correct, or are a growing number of philosophers and historians correct to disparage what they call the conflict myth? It's also widely believed by theists, atheists, and agnostics alike that the only adequate grounds for objective morality is a hypothesis like theism. If so, then atheism implies moral skepticism, the idea that there are no objective moral truths. Is this correct, or can we understand objective morality as being independent of theism? Last, while philosophers, theologians, and many others have been debating for centuries about whether theism is correct, few have considered whether we should want theism to be correct. Time permitting, we will close this course by considering this recent and intriguing question.

Course Objectives:

To continue to develop the critical thinking skills of students; to investigate some primary issues and debates in the philosophy of religion; to consider the implications of individual issues within the philosophy of religion for further developing a worldview.

Required Texts:

- (1) Peterson, Hasker, *et. al.* (2014). *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings* (5th Edition). Oxford University Press.
- (2) Additional readings on Blackboard.

Evaluation:

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|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| (1) Paper #1 (2-4 pages)..... | 20% | Due Oct. 3 (11:59pm) |
| (2) Test #1..... | 20% | Nov. 2, In Class |
| (3) Paper #2 (4-6 pages)..... | 30% | Due Nov. 18 (11:59pm) |
| (4) Test #2..... | 20% | Nov. 30, In Class |
| (5) Participation..... | 10% | |

Papers: Paper #1 will primarily be *expository* in nature. The required length is 2-4 pages. Paper #2 will primarily be *analytical* in nature. The required length is 4-6 pages.

Participation: Roughly 30 minutes at the end of each class will be devoted to tutorial-style discussions. Your participation grade is determined by your participation in this section and in lectures.

Blackboard: Materials for the course (including the assignments and lecture slides) will be available on Blackboard, and all announcements will take place through Blackboard. It is your responsibility to check the Blackboard page on a regular basis and to keep up-to-date with the course. It is also your responsibility to ensure that you are receiving email that is sent out through Blackboard.

Email Policy: All emails for this course should be directed to **philreligion235@gmail.com** and should be sent from your University of Toronto email account. Emails will generally be answered within 48 hours. They will **not** be answered, however, if (1) the relevant information is available on the course webpage or syllabus, or (2) if the question is best addressed during class or office hours (e.g. a detailed philosophical question).

Turnitin.com: Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the turnitin.com service are described on the turnitin.com website.

Extensions and Late Assignment submissions: Late submissions will be penalized 5% per day, unless (a) prior arrangements have been made **by email** with the instructor for an extension or (b) there is a medical or family emergency (in which case documentation may be required). **Plan ahead:** you may request extensions **by email up until 48 hours** before assignments are due; after that, extensions will be granted only for illness or family emergencies.

Accessibility: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the *AccessAbility* Services Office as soon as possible. I will work with you and *AccessAbility* Services to ensure you can achieve your learning goals in this course. Enquiries are confidential. *AccessAbility* Services staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations: located at 2037 Davis Building; phone 905-569-4699; email access.utm@utoronto.ca.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or

appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources (see <http://www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/>).

Copyright in Instructional Settings: If a student wishes to record, photograph, or otherwise reproduce lecture presentations, course notes, or other similar materials provided by the instructor, the student must obtain the instructor's written consent beforehand. Otherwise all such reproduction is an infringement of copyright and is absolutely prohibited. In the case of private use by students with disabilities, the instructor's consent will not be unreasonably withheld.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings:

NOTES:

- (1) **This schedule may change.** Any changes will be announced on Blackboard.
- (2) You are expected to have the readings completed **prior** to the lecture.
- (3) Readings marked with an asterisk * will be available on Blackboard.

Sept. 7: Introduction, Overview, and Argumentation

Introduction, Overview, & Housekeeping

Reading: None.

Arguments: How to Construct, Interpret, and Evaluate Them

Reading: None.

Unit 1: Arguments for Theism

Sept. 13: The Cosmological Argument

The Classical Cosmological Argument

Reading: Aquinas, 148-150.

The Kalam Cosmological Argument

Reading: Craig, 161-169.

Critique of the Cosmological Argument

Reading: Mackie, 170-176.

Sept. 21: The Teleological Argument

The Analogical Teleological Argument

Reading: Paley, 177-179.

Critique of the Analogical Teleological Argument

Reading: Hume, 180-186.

The Anthropic Teleological Argument

Reading: Collins, 187-196.

Sept. 28: The Ontological Argument

The Classical Ontological Argument

Reading: Anselm, 133-134.

Critique of the Classical Ontological Argument

Reading: Gaunilo, 135-137.

A Contemporary Modal Ontological Argument

Reading: Plantinga, 138-147.

[Oct. 3: Paper #1 (2-4 pages) Due @11:59pm]

Unit 2: Arguments for Atheism

Oct. 5: The Logical Problem of Evil

The Logical Problem of Evil

Reading: Mackie, 329-337.

The Free Will Defence

Reading: Plantinga, 338-356.

Oct. 12: Fall Reading Break—No Class

Oct. 19: The Evidential Problem of Evil

The Evidential Argument from Evil & a Critique of Premise 1

Reading: *Rowe, Howard-Snyder, Bergmann, “Does Make Atheism More Reasonable than Theism?”

Oct. 26: In-Class Test #1

[Nov. 9: Drop Deadline.]

Nov. 2: Divine Hiddenness

The Argument from Divine Hiddenness

Reading: *Schellenberg, “Divine Hiddenness Justifies Atheism.”

Critique of the Argument from Divine Hiddenness

Reading: *Cullison, “Two Solutions to the Problem of Divine Hiddenness.”

[Nov. 15: Paper #2 (4-6 pages) Due @11:59pm]

Unit 3: Theism, Religion, Science, & Morality

Nov. 9: Science & Religion

The Conflict Hypothesis

Reading: Dawkins, 546-549.

The Conflict Myth

Reading: *Osler, “Religion and the Changing Historiography of the Scientific Revolution.”

Nov. 16: Theism & Morality

A: Morality & God

Reading: Shafer-Landau, *Whatever Happened to Good and Evil?* Ch.15, “Does Ethical Objectivity Require God?”

B: Morality & God (continued)

Reading: *Zagzebski, “Perfect Goodness and Divine Motivation Theory”

Nov. 23: Pro-Theism & Anti-Theism

An Argument for Anti-theism

Reading: *Kahane, “Should we Want God to Exist?”

Nov. 30: In-Class Test #2 (on everything after test #1)