

Ryerson University, Fall 2019  
**PHL709—Science, Religion, & Philosophy**

Class Time: Mon. 1:00-2:00pm; Wed. 12:00-2:00pm  
Class Location: Mon. KHS 251; Wed. KHE 225

Instructor: I. Chris Dragos  
Instructor Email: idragos@ryerson.ca  
Office Location: POD375  
Office Hours: Mon. 11:15am-12:00pm; Thurs. 2:00-3:00pm

**Course Description:**

The sciences have contributed to philosophical debates regarding the apparent conflict between religious and scientific outlooks. Many contend that religion and science offer opposing accounts of human nature, the universe, and our place in it. This course is concerned with issues such as: the basis for religious and scientific claims, nature and intelligent design, and the historical relationship between scientific and theological ideas.

**Course Objective:**

To further develop a sophisticated worldview.

**Required Texts:**

Readings provided through the course page.

**Evaluation:**

- (1) In-Class Writing Assignment #1..... **25%**..... **Sept. 25, In Class**
- (2) In-Class Writing Assignment #2..... **25%**..... **Nov. 6, In Class**
- (3) Term Paper (1200 words)..... **40%**..... **Due Dec. 2 (10:00pm)**
- (4) Participation..... **10%**

In-Class Writing Assignment #1: Students will be given a text and 90 minutes to write a concise and organized synopsis of that text. What is the main claim of the text, and what are the main reasons offered in support?

In-Class Writing Assignment #2: Students will be presented with four essay questions and will answer two within 90 minutes. Questions may be on any topic unit 2 topic.

Term Paper: Students will choose from a set of essay topics and write a ~1200-word argumentative essay. If a student wishes to write on their own topic, permission must be granted by the instructor *via* email.

Participation: Participation is mainly based on two factors. (1) Attendance will be taken each class. (2) During the longer period of each week, there will be short peer workshops during which students will break into small groups and answer a question posed by the instructor. Thoughtful questions and contributions during lectures will also be considered.

**Course Page:** Materials for the course will be available on the course page, and all announcements will be delivered through the course page. *It is your responsibility to check the course page on a regular basis and keep up-to-date with the course.* It is also your responsibility to ensure that you are receiving emails sent out through the course page.

**Email Policy:** All emails should be sent *from your university email account*. Emails will generally be answered within 48 hours. They may 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).

**Extensions and Late Assignment submissions:** Late submissions will be penalized 5%/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 deadlines; 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 Ryerson's accessibility services as soon as possible (<https://www.ryerson.ca/studentlearningsupport/academic-accommodation-support/>). We will work together to ensure you can achieve your learning goals in this course. Enquiries are confidential.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from Ryerson University is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. Ryerson University's Academic Integrity Office (<https://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/students/penalties-and-consequences/>) 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 the Academic Integrity Office.

## **Schedule of Lectures and Readings:**

### **NOTES:**

- (1) *This schedule may change.* Any changes will be announced on the course page.
- (2) You are expected to have the readings completed *prior* to the lecture.

Wed. Sept. 4: Introduction and Overview

### **Unit 1: Philosophy, Theology, & Science Historically**

Mon. Sept. 9: Conflict Hypothesis/Myth

*Readings:* Dawkins, "Science Discredits Religion."

Osler, "Religion and the Changing Historiography of the Scientific Revolution."

Newton, "General Scholium to the *Principia Mathematica*."

Wed. Sept. 11: Theology in the Aristotelian-Medieval Worldview

*Reading:* DeWitt, chs.9-10.

Mon. Sept. 16: Theology in the Cartesian Worldview

*Reading:* Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, meditations I-IV.

Wed. Sept. 18: Theology in the Cartesian Worldview (cont'd)  
*Reading*: Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*

Mon. Sept. 23: Theology in the Newtonian Worldview  
*Readings*: DeWitt, ch.20.  
*Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence.*

Wed. Sept. 25: **In-Class Writing Assignment #1**

Mon. Sept. 30: Contemporary Worldview  
*Reading*: DeWitt, "Contemporary Worldview" (OPTIONAL)

## **Unit 2: Meaning & Arguments**

Wed. Oct. 2: Science & Values  
*Reading*: Gorham, "Science and Values."

**Fri. Oct. 4: DROP DEADLINE—GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING—50% REFUND**

Mon. Oct. 7: Verificationism  
*Reading*: Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic* (excerpts).

Wed. Oct. 9: Religious Disagreement (Guest Lecture by Sawyer Bullock)  
*Reading*: <https://www.iep.utm.edu/rel-disa/#H2> (read the Introduction & Parts 1, 2, & 7).

**Mon. Oct. 14: NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING**

**Wed. Oct. 16: NO CLASS—READING WEEK**

Mon. Oct. 21: The Cosmological Argument I  
*Readings*: Aquinas, "The Classical Cosmological Argument."  
Mackie, "Critique of the Cosmological Argument."

Wed. Oct. 23: The Cosmological Argument II  
*Readings*: Kragh, "What's in a Name: History and Meanings of the Term 'Big Bang'."  
Craig, "The Kalam Cosmological Argument."

Mon. Oct. 28: The Teleological Argument I  
*Readings*: Paley, "The Analogical Teleological Argument."  
Hume, "Critique of the Analogical Teleological Argument."

Wed. Oct. 30: The Teleological Argument II  
*Reading*: Collins, "The Anthropic Teleological Argument."

**Mon. Nov. 4: NO CLASS**

Wed. Nov. 6: **In-Class Writing Assignment #2**

Mon. Nov. 11: The Problem of No-Best-World & the Multiverse I  
*Reading:* Kraay, “Theism, Possible Worlds, and the Multiverse.”

Wed. Nov. 13: The Problem of No-Best-World & the Multiverse II  
*Reading:* Johnson, “The Failure of the Multiverse Hypothesis as a Solution to the Problem of No Best World.”

**Fri. Nov. 15: DROP DEADLINE—GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING—NO REFUND**

### **Unit 3: God, Science, & Morality**

Mon. Nov. 18: Science & Morality II  
*Reading:* Shafer-Landau, chs.5,8.

Wed. Nov. 20: Science & Morality II  
*Reading:* Shafer-Landau, ch.6.

Mon. Nov. 25: God & Morality I  
*Readings:* Plato, *Euthyphro*.  
Shafer-Landau ch.4

Wed. Nov. 27: God & Morality II  
*Reading:* Zagzebski, “Divine Motivation Theory and Exemplarism.”

**Mon. Dec. 2: NO CLASS TERM PAPER DUE (10:00pm)**