



AMBROSE

PH 203 Philosophy of Religion Fall 2011

Time: Tuesday & Thursday 2:30 – 3:45
Location: L2100

Instructor Information:
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a philosophical examination of religious topics and issues including but not limited to knowledge of God's existence, the problem of evil, the occurrence of miracles, the nature of revelation, the legitimacy of religious experience, and the place of religion in morality.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students should hone their skills in philosophical analysis and writing, improving their ability to think and write clearly, critically, and precisely.
2. Students should learn and understand the classical and enduring problems that have arisen as philosophers have grappled with the ideas of God's existence and God's relationships to the world and to human experience.
3. Students should become conversant with many of the religious and theological debates, arguments, and criticisms that persist at the intersection of faith and reason.
4. Students should develop a more refined appreciation of the significance of religious knowledge and experience.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Reynolds, Terrence (Ed.). (2005). *The Phenomenon of Religious Faith*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson - Prentice Hall. (hereafter **PRF**)

Timpe, Kevin (Ed.). (2009). *Arguing About Religion*. New York, NY: Routledge. (hereafter **AAR**)

Recommended Textbook

Vaughn, Lewis, & McIntosh, Jillian Scott (2009). *Writing Philosophy: A Guide for Canadian Students*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Attendance and Participation** 10%
 - Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Students are expected to attend each class session **with assigned text material and an engaged frame of mind**. Students should be prepared to contribute meaningful conversation to the topics under discussion. **Absence from class merits a deduction half a mark (.5) for the first three absences and one (1) full mark for all subsequent absences.** Class participation is assessed on the balance. For example, if a student misses four classes and generally participates excellently in class he or she *generally* cannot achieve more than 7.5 out of 10 for this portion of his or her grade. **Students in class without text material and otherwise engaged in non-class activities are simply in the same room and may be assessed as absent.** Students who arrive late or leave early may be marked as absent. As a general rule **two late arrivals or early departures** will amount to one absence.

2. **First Research Paper** 15%
 - Due: October 6th @ 2:30
 - A separate handout regarding topics, format guidelines, and late policy will be provided.

3. **Seminar Presentation** 10%
 - See bolded topics in course outline for potential topics

4. **Second Research Paper** 25%
 - Due: December 1st @ 2:30
 - A separate handout regarding topics, format guidelines, and late policy will be provided.

5. Final Exam

40%

- Date: Thursday, December 15th @ 1:00 PM
- Students must pass the final exam to ensure a passing grade in the course. A student who performs well during the term but fails the final exam may fail the course.
- Students should not schedule flights or travel of any sort that will conflict with the final examination schedule. Final examinations will not be rescheduled to accommodate travel arrangements.

GRADING: The available letters for course grades are as follows:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>GPA</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
A+	4.0		90-100 %
A	4.0	Exceptional	85-89 %
A-	3.7		80-84 %
B+	3.3		77-79 %
B	3.0	Exceeds Expectations	73-76 %
B-	2.7		70-72 %
C+	2.3		67-69 %
C	2.0	Meets Expectations	63-66 %
C-	1.7		60-62 %
D+	1.3		55-59 %
D	1.0	Minimal Pass	50-54 %
F	0.0	Failure	49 < %

Important Dates

- Last day to enter a course without permission, withdraw from course and receive tuition refund, and change from credit to audit is September 18th.
- Last day to withdraw from courses or change to audit without academic penalty is November 14th.
- Last day to request revised time for a final examination is November 28th.

Important Notes

- Students are responsible to check their Ambrose e-mail account regularly. E-mail may be used to notify students of cancelled classes or other important details relating to the course.
- Use of cell phones, recording devices, head phones, and all other non-essential technology is **prohibited**. **Text messaging and other use of handheld devices** during class is **absolutely prohibited**.
- **Lap top computers are prohibited** from general use during class. Exceptions may be made on a case by case basis for students with relevant disabilities. Lap tops used for purposes unrelated to taking lecture notes are prohibited.
- Students are expected to respect the learning environment of the classroom.
- Make every attempt to be on time and to remain seated until the class session ends. Keep unnecessary conversations to a minimum as they are distracting to both the instructor and fellow classmates.

- *Ambrose is committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar and the Student Handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean.*
- *Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.*
- *Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a "Course Extension." Alternative times for final examinations cannot be scheduled without prior approval. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar's Office by the appropriate deadline. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise "due to circumstances beyond the student's control."*
- *Students are advised to retain a copy of this syllabus for their records.*

PH 203 COURSE OUTLINE¹

Sept 8	Introduction
Sept 13 Sept 15	Theology and Falsification ... <i>etc.</i> Part I: <i>PRF</i> Rousseau, Russell, Ayer ... <i>PRF</i>
Sept 20 Sept 22	Methodological Issues – Part I: <i>AAR</i> Pluralism, Inclusivism, and Exclusivism: Hick, Ward, O'Connor, (& Plantinga handout)
Sept 27 Sept 29	Arguments for God's Existence -- Part II: <i>PRF</i> ; Part II: <i>AAR</i> Community Days – No Class
Oct 4 Oct 6	Rationality and Religious Faith: Part IV: <i>PRF</i>
Oct 11 Oct 13	Divine Foreknowledge: Part IV: <i>AAR</i>
Oct 18 Oct 20	David Hume: <i>Of Miracles</i> (handout)
Oct 25 Oct 27	Problem of Evil and Divine Hiddenness: Part III: <i>AAR</i>
Nov 1 Nov 3	Soren Kierkegaard: Faith and Subjectivity – Part III(C) <i>PRF</i>
Nov 8 Nov 10	Pascal's Wager: Pascal, Cargile, Morris (<i>PRF</i>) The Will to Believe: James & Jaeger (<i>PRF</i>)
Nov 15 Nov 17	Mysticism & Religious Experience: James, Merton, Alston (<i>PRF</i>) Against Mysticism: Proudfoot, Gail (<i>PRF</i>)
Nov 22 Nov 24	The Problem of Survival: Corcoran, Baker, Ames (<i>AAR</i>) The Problem of Hell: Lewis, Talbot, Stump (<i>AAR</i>)
Nov 29 Dec 1	Creation vs. Evolution: Kitcher, Johnson, Pennock, Plantinga (<i>AAR</i>) "The God Delusion": Dennett, Dawkins, McGrath (<i>AAR</i>)
Dec 6 Dec 8	

¹ This course outline is provisional and may, at the discretion of the instructor, require revision over the course of the term. The instructor reserves the right to deviate from the outline to accommodate, amongst other things, timely issues or pressing concerns.