



A M B R O S E

PH 203 Philosophy of Religion (3) Fall 2013

Time: Wednesday & Friday 8:15 – 9:30
Location: L2100

Instructor Information:
Kenneth M. Nickel (MAR, MSc, PhD ABD)
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a philosophical examination of religious and theological issues including but not limited to: God's existence, justified belief in God, justified belief in God and evil, the nature of divine interaction with/in the world, the relationship between religion/theology and science, morality, and law.

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 people have grappled with metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological claims about God's existence and God's relationships to the world and to human experience.
3. Students should become conversant with many of the current religious, theological, and scientific debates, arguments, and criticisms that persist at the intersections of both faith and reason, Church and society.

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** 15%
 - 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. Each absence from class merits **1 mark deduction** and class participation is assessed on the balance. For example, if a student misses two classes and generally participates well in class he or she generally cannot achieve more than 13/15 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 regularly arrive late, depart early, or leave in the middle may be marked as absent. As a general rule **two late arrivals or early departures** will amount to one absence.
 - Students may enhance their participation grades by contributing to regular **Moodle discussion forums**.

2. **First Research Paper** 17.5%
 - Due: Wednesday, October 9th @ 4:00 PM
 - A separate handout regarding topics, format guidelines, submission guidelines, and late policy will be provided.

3. **Second Research Paper** 27.5%
 - Due: Monday, December 9th @ 4:00 PM
 - A separate handout regarding topics, format guidelines, submission guidelines, and late policy will be provided.

4. **Final Exam** 40%
 - Date: Friday, December 13th @ 9:00 AM

- 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:

Letter Grade	GPA	Description	Percentage
A+	4.0		96-100 %
A	4.0	Exceptional	91-95 %
A-	3.7		86-90 %
B+	3.3		82-85 %
B	3.0	Exceeds Expectations	75-81 %
B-	2.7		72-74 %
C+	2.3		68-71 %
C	2.0	Meets Expectations	63-67 %
C-	1.7		60-62 %
D+	1.3		56-59 %
D	1.0	Minimal Pass	50-55 %
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 15th @ 11:59 PM.
- Last day to request revised time for a final examination is October 28th.
- Last day to withdraw from courses without academic penalty is November 12th.

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.
- 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.
- 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 **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.
- Important Notice Related to Writing Assignments: All papers will be submitted to "Turnitin" for originality assessment. Personal privacy is protected.

- *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 4	Introduction
Sept 6	<i>PRF</i> Part I: Theology and Falsification ... etc.: (Flew, Mitchell, Hare)
Sept 11	<i>PRF</i> Part I: Literature and Philosophy of Religion (Rousseau, Russell, Ayer)
Sept 13	AAR Part 1: Methodological Issues (Kretzman, MacDonald)
Sept 18	<i>PRF</i> : Part 2: (Paley); Part 3A: (St. Thomas Aquinas): The Problem of Natural Theology
Sept 20	<u>The Problem of Religious Rationality</u> : <i>PRF</i> : Part 3B “ <i>The Wager</i> ” (Blaise Pascal) “ <i>The Ethics of Belief</i> ” (William Kingdon Clifford) –
Sept 25	Community Days – No Class
Sept 27	AAR: Part 1: “ <i>The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology</i> ” (Al Plantinga)
Oct 2	<i>PRF</i> Part 4: Objections to Reformed Epistemology (Van Hook, Martin)
Oct 4	

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 timely issues or pressing pedagogical concerns.

Oct 9 *PRF* Part 3C: **Christian Existentialism: Søren Kierkegaard**: Faith and Subjectivity

Oct 11

Oct 16 *PRF* Part 6: **Experience of the Divine**: (James, Merton, Alston, Proudfoot, Gail)

Oct 18 No Class

Oct 23 **Arguments for God's Existence** *PRF* Part 2 (Taylor, Anselm, Hume); *AAR* Part 2: (Pruss, Morrision, Collins)

Oct 25 *AAR* Part 3: **Evil and Divine Hiddenness**: (van Inwagen, Swinburne, Alston, van Inwagen, Murray, Lovering)

Oct 30

Nov 1 *AAR* Part 4: **Providence and Interaction**: (Pereboom, Craig, Hasker, Sanders)

Nov 6

Nov 8 *AAR* Part 1: **Pluralism, Inclusivism, and Exclusivism**: (Hick, Ward, O'Connor, [& Plantinga handout]); *PRF* Part 5 (Hick)

Nov 13

Nov 15

Nov 20 *AAR* Part 5: **The Problem of Survival**: (Corcoran, Baker, Ames)

Nov 22 *AAR* Part 5: **The Problem of Hell**: (Lewis, Talbot, Stump)

Nov 27 *AAR* Part 6: **The Problem of (new) Atheism**: (Dennett, Dawkins, McGrath)

Nov 29 *AAR* Part 6: **Creation vs. Evolution**: (Kitcher, Johnson, Pennock, Plantinga)

Dec 4

Dec 6

Dec 13 Final Exam @ 9:00 AM