

<b>Course ID:</b>	<b>Course Title:</b>	<b>Fall 2020</b>
<b>PH 203</b>	<b>Philosophy of Religion</b>	<b>Prerequisite: PH 125</b>
		<b>Credits: 3</b>

Class Information		Instructor Information		Important Dates	
<b>Days:</b>	W & F	<b>Instructor:</b>	Ken Nickel, PhD	<b>First day of classes:</b>	Wed, Sep 9
<b>Time:</b>	8:15 - 9:30	<b>Email:</b>	knickel@ambrose.edu	<b>Last day to add/drop, or change to audit:</b>	Sun, Sep 20
<b>Room:</b>	L2084	<b>Phone:</b>	403-410-2000 ext 6903	<b>Last day to request revised exam:</b>	Mon, Nov 2
<b>Lab/ Tutorial:</b>		<b>Office:</b>	2103	<b>Last day to withdraw from course:</b>	Fri, Nov 20
		<b>Office Hours:</b>	Drop-in or upon request	<b>Last day to apply for coursework extension:</b>	Mon, Nov 23
<b>Final Exam:</b>	Fri, Dec 18 @ 1:00 PM in Airhart			<b>Last day of classes:</b>	Mon, Dec 14

## 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, psychology, social psychology, morality, and law.

## Expected Learning Outcomes

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 faith and reason, faith and desire, Church and society.

## Textbooks

Reynolds, Terrence, ed. *The Phenomenon of Religious Faith*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson - Prentice Hall, 2005.

### Recommended:

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

Vaughn, Lewis, and Jillian Scott McIntosh. *Writing Philosophy: A Guide for Canadian Students*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013.

**Online Resource:** *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (SEP)

<http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>

## Course Schedule

**The Historical Project:** How has the history of Philosophy changed 'Philosophy of Religion'? What is Religion? What is Philosophy? What is Apologetics? Does 'history' matter? (\*Falsification Debate, \*Nickel)

SEP 9

SEP 11

SEP 16

SEP 18

SEP 23

SEP 25

**The Metaphysical Project:** Arguments for God's existence

Natural Theology, Cosmology, Teleology, and Evolution: Can Being and Becoming be reconciled?

SEP 30

OCT 2

OCT 7            NO CLASS

OCT 9            First Assignment Due

OCT 14

OCT 16

**The Epistemological Project:** Evidentialism vs Reformed Epistemology/Existentialism/Fideism/Mysticism: AAR Part 1 (Plantinga, \*Clifford, \*James, \*Kierkegaard, \*Plantinga, \*Nickel, \*Merton)

OCT 21

OCT 23

OCT 28

OCT 30

NOV 4

NOV 6 Second Assignment Due

NOV 11 READING WEEK

NOV 13 READING WEEK

**The Moral Project:** *The Coherence of Divine Attributes, Miracles, Prayer, and Justice* (AAR Part 4 (Pereboom, Craig, Hasker, Sanders, \*Hume)

NOV 18

NOV 20

*The Problem of Evil and Divine Hiddenness:* AAR Part 3 (van Inwagen, Swinburne, Alston, Murray, Lovering)

NOV 25

NOV 27

DEC 2

DEC 4

*The Problem of Religious Exclusivism:* AAR Part 1 (Hick, Ward, O'Connor, \*Plantinga, \*van Inwagen, \*Hick)

DEC 9

DEC 11 Third Assignment Due

## Requirements:<sup>1</sup>

- Attendance, Participation, and Weekly Check-ins** 10%
  - Please make every effort to be seated and prepared for class by **8:15**. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of ALL classes for the purposes of contact-tracing on campus. Students are expected to attend each class session with an engaged frame of mind. Students should be prepared to contribute thoughtful conversation to the topics under discussion.
  - Students are required to give evidence of 'attendance' on a weekly basis either through in-class participation, Moodle discussion forums, office/zoom face-to-face meetings, or e-mail chats. Students lose 1 mark each week they are AWOL (absent without leave). Students who lose 10 marks (10 weeks) automatically FAIL the course and will not be permitted to write the Final Exam.
  - Students whose 'attendance' is perfect but whose quality of engagement is minimal should anticipate nothing better than C+ (7/10) for this portion of their grade.

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<sup>1</sup> The Professor reserves the right to modify requirements, assignments, and exams in the event of any permanent transition to online delivery. The current requirements assume the semester will proceed as planned.

2. **First Writing Assignment (1200-1400 words)** 15%
- Due: **October 9 @ 8:14 AM** before class (electronic and paper submissions)
  - A separate document regarding topics, format and submission guidelines, and late policy will be available on Moodle. Papers will be submitted by the Instructor to “Turnitin” for originality assessment. Personal privacy is protected.
  - Students must submit this assignment to be eligible to write the Final Exam.
3. **Second Writing Assignment (1200-1400 words)** 15%
- Due: **November 6 @ 8:14 AM** before class (electronic and paper submissions)
  - A separate document regarding topics, format and submission guidelines, and late policy will be available on Moodle. Papers will be submitted by the Instructor to “Turnitin” for originality assessment. Personal privacy is protected.
  - Students must submit this assignment to be eligible to write the Final Exam.
4. **Third Writing Assignment (2800-3000 words)** 25%
- Due: **December 11 @ 4:00 PM** (electronic only - no paper submission required)
  - A separate document regarding topics, format and submission guidelines, and late policy will be available on Moodle. Papers will be submitted by the instructor to “Turnitin” for originality assessment. Personal privacy is protected.
  - Students who have not submitted all assignments will not be permitted to write the Final Exam.
5. **Comprehensive / Cumulative Final Exam** 35%
- Date: Friday, December 18 @ 1:00 in Airhart
  - Students must pass the Final Exam to ensure a passing grade in the course. Even if a student’s accumulated grades are above 50%, the Professor reserves the right to withhold a passing grade for the course if the student fails the Final Exam.
  - Students should refrain from scheduling all other commitments (e.g., flights or travel of any sort) that will conflict with the Final Examination schedule. Final examinations will not be rescheduled to accommodate travel arrangements.

**Attendance:**

(See requirements)

**Grade Summary:**

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 %
<b>C+</b>	<b>2.3</b>		<b>68-71 %</b>
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 %

Because of the nature of the Alpha 4.00 system, there can be no uniform University-wide conversion scale. The relationship between raw scores (e.g. percentages) and the resultant letter grade will depend on the nature of the course and the instructor's assessment of the level of each class, compared to similar classes taught previously.

Please note that final grades will be available on student registration system. Printed grade sheets are not mailed out.

### Other: (On a more personal note)

- ✓ **Classrooms are not public spaces.** When you pay tuition you become temporarily entitled to a private audience with me, your Professor. That audience occurs in a classroom only because my office isn't big enough. Therefore, please behave in *my* class as you would if you came to *my* office for the same instruction. You are free throughout the semester to (strongly!) disagree with me and your fellow students on the condition that you do so with civility and an appropriate degree of respect. Due to Covid-19 protocols, guests are not welcome in class this semester.
- ✓ **Students are responsible to check the Moodle course site and their Ambrose e-mail accounts regularly.** I like to use Moodle and/or e-mail to remind students of upcoming topics and readings, or to pose questions in light of readings or lecture topics. E-mail and Moodle may be used to notify you of cancelled classes or other important and immediate details relating to the course.
- ✓ Please, **put cell phones away during class.** Please try to avoid cell use (text messaging) during class

### Ambrose University Academic Policies:

#### Communication

All students have received an Ambrose e-mail account upon registration. It is the student's responsibility to check this account regularly as the Ambrose email system will be the professor's instrument for notifying students of important matters (cancelled class sessions, extensions, requested appointments, etc.) between class sessions. If students do not wish to use their Ambrose accounts, they will need to forward all messages from the Ambrose account to another personal account.

#### Registration

During the **Registration Revision Period** students may enter a course without permission, change the designation of any class from credit to audit and /or voluntary withdraw from a course without financial or academic penalty or record. Courses should be added or dropped on the student portal by the deadline date; please consult the List of Important Dates. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees.

Students intending to withdraw from a course after the Registration Revision Period must apply to the Office of the Registrar by submitting a "Request to Withdraw from a Course" form or by sending an email to the Registrar's Office by the **Withdrawal Deadline**; please consult the List of Important Dates on the my.ambrose.edu website. Students will not receive a tuition refund for courses from which they withdraw after the Registration Revision period. A grade of "W" will appear on their transcript.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after

the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

#### Exam Scheduling

Students, who find a conflict in their exam schedule must submit a Revised Examination Request form to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date; please consult the List of Important Dates. Requests will be considered for the following reasons only: 1) the scheduled final examination slot conflicts with another exam; 2) the student has three final exams within three consecutive exam time blocks; 3) the scheduled final exam slot conflicts with an exam at another institution; 4) extenuating circumstances. Travel is not considered a valid excuse for re-scheduling or missing a final exam.

#### Electronic Etiquette

Students are expected to treat their instructor, guest speakers, and fellow students with respect. It is disruptive to the learning goals of a course or seminar and disrespectful to fellow students and the instructor to use electronics for purposes unrelated to the course during a class session. Turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during class. Laptops should be used for class-related purposes only. Do not use iPods, MP3 players, or headphones. Do not text, read, or send personal emails, go on Facebook or other social networks, search the internet, or play computer games during class. Some professors will not allow the use of any electronic devices in class. The professor has the right to disallow the student to use a laptop in future lectures and/or to ask a student to withdraw from the session if s/he does not comply with this policy. Repeat offenders will be directed to the Dean. If you are expecting communication due to

an emergency, please speak with the professor before the class begins.

### **Academic Policies**

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Academic Calendar. Personal information (information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual) may be required 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](mailto:privacy@ambrose.edu).

### **Extensions**

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 from the Registrar's Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date; please consult the List of Important Dates. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise "due to circumstances beyond the student's control."

### **Appeal of Grade**

An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Registrar's Office in writing and providing the basis for appeal within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

### **Academic Integrity**

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's ideas, words, or work as one's own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to acknowledge to another person's ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar 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 and become part of the student's permanent record.

**Note:** Students are strongly advised to retain this syllabus for their records.