Spring 2018

Philosophy of Religion

Philosophy 320—001

Class Time: 9:30am—10:45am

Monday, Wednesday

CCC 126

**Instructor:**

Charles Joshua Horn, Ph.D.

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Office Location: CCC 418

Office Phone: (715) 346-2849

Office Hours: MW, 1:00pm—2:00pm

**Course Description:**

 This course will survey some of the most central topics in the philosophy of religion, including the nature and existence of God, the relationship between faith and reason, paradoxes of fate and foreknowledge, religion and morality, and the problem of evil. Readings will primarily focus on western theism and come from both historical and contemporary authors. The final part of the course will be a sustained study of a recent monograph dealing with the nature of divine freedom, *Can God Be Free?* by William L. Rowe.

 Some of the questions to be considered in this course will be:

1. Is it possible to prove the existence of God without appeal to divine revelation?
2. Is faith necessarily opposed to reason?
3. Does God’s omniscience and foreknowledge entail that our future actions cannot be free?
4. Can we reconcile the existence of a perfectly benevolent, powerful, and wise God with instances of evil?
5. If God is necessarily perfect, can God choose to do otherwise?
6. Does God’s providence limit human freedom?

**Text:**

Purchase:

1. [RWI] *Reason for the Hope Within*, Ed. Michael Murray

Eerdmans

ISBN: 978-0-8028-4437-8

1. [CGBF] *Can God Be Free?*, William L. Rowe

Oxford University Press

ISBN: 978-0-19-920412-0

Rental:

1. [PRSR] *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings*, Peterson, Hasker, Reichenbach, Basinger

Oxford University Press

ISBN: 978-0-19-930344-1

1. [PRHI] *Philosophy of Religion*, Linda Zagzebski

Blackwell

ISBN: 978-1-4051-1872-9

**Course Goals:**

* Demonstrate an ability to read carefully, speak clearly, think critically, or write persuasively about cultures and cultural works/artifacts (including texts, images, performances, and technologies, as well as other expressions of the human condition).
* Identify and analyze how beliefs, values, languages, theories, or laws shape cultures and cultural works/artifacts.
* Engage a variety of ideas and worldviews critically by formulating reflective and informed moral, ethical, or aesthetic evaluations of cultures and cultural works/artifacts.

**Expectations:**

Students are expected to attend every class and remain for the entire time. Do not come late or leave early. Students must complete the necessary readings prior to class and be prepared for discussion and participation. Students will treat other students with respect. This means, turning off all electrical equipment, including cell phones, laptops, and tablets. Students must also address their peers in a respectful tone. It is important to note that the nature of this class will inevitably result in disagreements among colleagues; however, it is essential to maintain respect toward one another despite disagreement.

Additionally, this course will utilize the Desire2Learn online system to facilitate certain aspects of the class. It is required that you check in with D2L regularly to find class updates, submit work, check grades, etc.

**Grading Criteria:**

Final grades will be based upon (1) *three in-class exams* worth 20% each, (2) *one class introduction* worth 20% (3) *one final essay* worth 20%. Assignments turned in late will *not* be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the professor.

(1) Exams will be composed of a series of multiple choice and short answer questions.

(2) Each student must individually introduce a reading from the course schedule. Each presentation should last around 10-15 minutes. The presentation is *not* a summary of the material. Instead, it is a way to offer your own analysis about the reading. Presentations will be chosen on the first day of class.

(3) The final essay will be between 5—7 pages and will be a critical response to Rowe’s monograph, *Can God Be Free?* Additional details will be provided on a separate prompt. The final essay will be due by 12:00pm on May 16, 2018. A copy must be submitted to the DropBox on D2L in order to receive credit.

Regular attendance is *highly* recommended in this class, but there is no attendance policy. However, if you have two or fewer unexcused absences over the course of the semester, I will add 5% to your overall grade as a bonus at the end of the semester. Please note that attendance is taken at the beginning of class, NOT throughout the entire class; so, if you show up late, you will not be counted as present for the day.

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| **A Range (90—100%)** | **B Range** **(80—89%)** | **C Range** **(70—79%)** | **D Range** **(64—69%)** | **F Range** **(0—63%)** |
|  | B+ (87—89) | C+ (77—79) | D+ (67—69) | F (<63) |
| A (94—100) | B (84—86) | C (74—76) | D (64—66) |  |
| A- (90—93) | B- (80—83) | C- (70—73) |  |  |

**Academic Integrity:**

Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism or helping others to commit these acts will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty will result in severe disciplinary action including, but not limited to, failure of the student assessment item or course, and/or dismissal from the University. Additional information can be found at:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap14.pdf>

**Disability Information:**

Students with disabilities should register with the ADA coordinator on campus and let me know at the beginning of the semester. I would be happy to accommodate you in any way that I can. Just let me know. More information can be found at:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf>

**Course Schedule:**

January 22 Syllabus/Course Introduction

 **Unit I: God’s Existence**

January 24 Davis Theistic Arguments RHW, 20—46

January 29 Zagzebski Classical Arguments for the Existence of God PRHI, 25—55

January 31 Anselm Classical Ontological Argument PRSR, 133—134

 Gaunilo Critique of Anselm’s Argument PRSR, 135—137

February 5 Aquinas Classical Cosmological Argument PRSR, 148—150

 Mackie Critique of the Cosmological Argument PRSR, 170—176

February 7 Collins Scientific Argument for the Existence of God RHW, 47—75

 Paley Analogical Teleological Argument PRSR, 177—179

 Hume Critique of the Analogical Teleological Argument PRSR, 180—186

February 12 Pascal The Wager PRSR, 100—102

 James The Will to Believe PRSR, 109—115

February 14 Exam I

 **The Divine Attributes and Divine Action**

February 19 Hick God’s Necessary Existence PRSR, 234—238

February 21 Maimonides Negative Theology PRSR, 239—243

February 26 Aquinas God is Omnipotent PRSR, 244—246

 Mavrodes Some Puzzles Concerning Omnipotence PRSR, 247—249

February 28 No Class

March 5 Pike Divine Omniscience and Voluntary Action PRSR, 250—255

Zagzebski Fate, Freedom, and Foreknowledge PRHI, 100—121

 Basinger Middle Knowledge and Classical Christian Thought PRSR, 283—289

March 7 Davison Divine Providence and Human Freedom RHW, 217—237

March 12 Adams An Objection to Middle Knowledge PRSR, 290—293

March 14 Exam II

**Unit III: Problem of Evil**

March 19 Zagzebski The Problem of Evil PRHI, 143—167

March 21 Howard-Snyder God, Evil, and Suffering RHW, 76—115

March 26 No Class—Spring Break

March 28 No Class—Spring Break

April 2 Hume Evil Makes a Strong Case against God’s Existence PRSR, 317—322

 Leibniz Best of All Possible Worlds Theodicy PRSR, 323—328

April 4 Mackie Evil and Omnipotence PRSR, 329—337

 Plantinga Free Will Defense PRSR, 338—356

April 9 Hick Soul-Making Theodicy PRSR, 357—364

April 11 Rowe Evidential Argument from Evil PRSR, 365—373

April 16 Exam III

 **Unit IV: Divine Freedom**

April 18 Rowe Leibniz on Divine Perfection and Freedom CGBF, 8—22

April 23 Rowe Clarke on Divine Perfection and Freedom CGBF, 23—35

April 25 Rowe Aquinas and the Infinity of Possible Worlds CGBF, 36—53

April 30 Rowe Jonathan Edwards on Divine and Human Freedom CGBF, 54—73

May 2 Rowe Must God Create the Best World? CGBF, 74—87

May 7 Rowe Divine Perfection and Freedom CGBF, 88—150

May 9 Rowe Can God Be the Cause of His Own Nature? CGBF, 151—166

By the way, if you find that this class speaks to you and are interested in adding Philosophy as a major or minor, then please come and talk to me in my office. Studying philosophy is one *excellent* way to prepare for graduate school or law school and, when paired with another major or minor, has a tendency to significantly increase performance in other classes too.