

Philosophy 11: Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion

MWF 11-12, 105 North Gate

UC Berkeley, Spring 2015

Instructor: Professor Lara Buchak, buchak@berkeley.edu

Office Hours: Friday 2-4, or alternative times by appointment.

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Course Description

This course addresses basic questions in the philosophy of religion, primarily but not exclusively from the western philosophical tradition. For example, does God exist? Should we believe in God? Is God's foreknowledge compatible with human free will? How should a just God punish us for our moral wrongdoing? What is forgiveness? The course will examine both historical and contemporary readings, and material will be arranged topically, rather than historically. The course is divided into four sections: arguments for and against the existence of God, epistemology, metaphysics, and morality.

Readings are not long, but they are dense; I suggest you read each text at least twice.

Prerequisites

This course is intended as a beginning philosophy course; no prior exposure to philosophy is required or expected.

Required Texts

Course reader, available at Copy Central.

Assignments and Grading Breakdown

Papers: Each student will write three 4-page papers. [15%, 25%, 25%] Four papers will be assigned, and each student will choose which three of these to write; however, everyone must write the first paper.

PAPERS ARE DUE FEBRUARY 27, MARCH 20, APRIL 17, and MAY 8.

Final exam: The student will identify passages and give short answers to questions about them; and respond to essay questions provided by the instructor. [25%]

THE FINAL EXAM IS ON TUESDAY, MAY 12, 7-10 PM

Participation: Includes short paragraphs responding to the reading, as well as participation in section. [10%]

Late Work Policy

NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT A MEDICAL EXCUSE.

Electronics Policy

Please do not use laptops, cell phones, iPads, or any other electronic device during class.

Conflict Policy

If you have a conflict that will keep you from attending a class, you must let your GSI know in the first two weeks of class, so that you can make arrangements to make up the class time and hand in the assignment for the day.

Statement of Academic Integrity

“Any test, paper or report submitted by you and that bears your name is presumed to be your own original work that has not previously been submitted for credit in another course unless you obtain prior written approval to do so from your instructor.

In all of your assignments, including your homework or drafts of papers, you may use words or ideas written by other individuals in publications, web sites, or other sources, but only with proper attribution. "Proper attribution" means that you have fully identified the original source and extent of your use of the words or ideas of others that you reproduce in your work for this course, usually in the form of a footnote or parenthesis.

As a general rule, if you are citing from a published source or from a web site and the quotation is short (up to a sentence or two) place it in quotation marks; if you employ a longer passage from a publication or web site, please indent it and use single spacing. In both cases, be sure to cite the original source in a footnote or in parentheses.

If you are not clear about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or examination, be sure to seek clarification from your instructor or GSI beforehand.

Finally, you should keep in mind that as a member of the campus community, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors and will be evaluated on your own merits. So be proud of your academic accomplishments and help to protect and promote academic integrity at Berkeley. The consequences of cheating and academic dishonesty—including a formal discipline file, possible loss of future internship, scholarship, or employment opportunities, and denial of admission to graduate school—are simply not worth it.”

--From the Report of the Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism Subcommittee (June 18, 2004)

Cheating or plagiarism may result in an automatic F for the course.

SCHEDULE OF READINGSIntroduction (1/21)

What is Philosophy?

What is Philosophy of Religion?

Part I. Arguments For and Against the Existence of God (1/23 – 2/13)The Ontological Argument (1/23)

Anselm of Canterbury, "The Ontological Argument."

Gaunilo, "On Behalf of the Fool."

Optional: Immanuel Kant, "A Critique of the Ontological Argument."

Optional: William L. Rowe, "The Ontological Argument."

The Cosmological Argument (1/26)

Samuel Clarke, "A Modern Formulation of the Cosmological Argument."

William L. Rowe, "The Cosmological Argument."

Optional: Thomas Aquinas, "The Five Ways."

The Design Argument (1/28)

William Paley, "The Argument from Design."

The Fine-Tuning Argument (1/30)

Robin Collins, "The Fine-Tuning Argument."

Science and Religion (2/2)

Stephen Jay Gould, "Nonoverlapping Magisteria."

Optional: Pope John Paul II, "Faith and Science: Lessons from the Galileo Case."

Optional: Michael J. Murray, "Science and Religion in Constructive Engagement."

The Problem of Evil I (2/4)

B.C. Johnson, "God and the Problem of Evil."

Optional: David Hume, "The Argument from Evil."

2/6: NO CLASS

The Problem of Evil II (2/9)

Richard Swinburne, "Why God Allows Evil."

Optional: Gottfried Leibniz, "Theodicy: A Defense of Theism."

The Problem of Evil III (2/11 & 2/13)

William L. Rowe, "Evil Is Evidence against Theistic Belief."

Daniel Howard-Snyder and Michael Bergmann, "Evil Does Not Make Atheism More Reasonable than Theism." (Section 4 is optional)

Optional: Rowe, "Reply to Howard-Snyder and Bergmann." Howard-Snyder, "Reply to Rowe."

--FIRST PAPER ASSIGNED 2/13, due 2/27

2/16: NO CLASS (academic holiday)

Part II. Epistemology (2/18 – 3/6)Miracles (2/18)

David Hume, "Of Miracles."

Optional: Simon Blackburn, "Miracles and Testimony."

Optional: Peter van Inwagen, "Of 'Of Miracles.'"

Religious Experience (2/20 & 2/23)

William P. Alston, "Religious Experience Justifies Religious Belief."

Evan Fales, "Do Mystics See God?"

Optional: Alston, "Reply to Fales." Fales, "Reply to Alston."

The Presumption of Atheism (2/25)

Anthony Flew, "The Presumption of Atheism."

Reformed Epistemology (2/27)

Michael Bergmann, "Rational Religious Belief without Arguments."

Belief and Choice (3/2)

William Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief."

William James, "The Will to Believe."

Pascal's Wager (3/4)

Blaise Pascal, "The Wager."

The Role of Uncertainty and Contradiction (3/6 & 3/9)

Robert Adams, "Kierkegaard's Arguments Against Objective Reasoning in Religion."

Maimonides. Guide for the Perplexed. "Introductory Remarks."

--SECOND PAPER ASSIGNED 3/6, due 3/20

Part III. Metaphysics and Language (3/11 – 4/8)

Free Will and Foreknowledge I (3/11)

Augustine, "God's Foreknowledge and Free Will." (excerpt)

Levi Gersonides, "God's Omniscience and Contingent Events." (excerpt)

Steven M. Cahn, "Does God Know the Future?" (excerpt)

Free Will and Foreknowledge II (3/13 & 3/16)

Nelson Pike, "God's Foreknowledge and Human Free Will are Incompatible."

William Hasker, "Divine Knowledge and Human Freedom."

Personal Identity and Death (3/18, 3/30, 4/1)

Bertrand Russell, "The Finality of Death."

Jeffrey Olen, "Personal Identity and Life after Death."

Lynne Rudder Baker, "Death and the Afterlife."

Prasannatma Das, "A Hindu Theory of Life, Death, and Reincarnation."

Christopher W. Gowans, "An Interpretation of the Not-Self Doctrine."

Christopher W. Gowans, "Some Philosophical Issues: Are we Substance-Selves or Process-Selves?"

Optional: Plato, "Immortality of the Soul."

3/20: NO CLASS

3/23 – 3/27: SPRING RECESS

Personal Identity and Death continued (3/30 & 4/1)

(see above readings)

Religious Language and Falsification (4/3)

Anthony Flew, R.M. Hare, and Basil Mitchell, "Theology and Falsification."

--THIRD PAPER ASSIGNED

Religious Language, Negative Attributes, and Analogy (4/6)

Moses Maimonides, "Negative Attributes" (excerpt)

Levi Gersonides, "Positive Attributes" (excerpt)

Thomas Aquinas, "The Use of Analogy" (excerpt)

F.C. Copleston, "The Inadequacy of Analogy" (excerpt)

Unsayability (4/8)

Chris Mortensen, "Zen and the Unsayable."

--THIRD PAPER ASSIGNED 4/3, due 4/17

Part IV. Morality (4/10 – 4/27)

Punishment (4/10)

Ted Sider, "Hell and Vagueness."

Atonement (4/13)

David Lewis, "Do We Believe in Penal Substitution?"

Forgiveness I (4/15)

Class discussion – no reading

Forgiveness II (4/17)

Adams, Marilyn. "Forgiveness: A Christian Model."

Optional: Anne Minas. "God and Forgiveness."

Patience (4/20)

Nic Bommarito, "Patience and Perspective."

Worship (4/22)

Rachels, James. "God and Human Attitudes."

Adams, Robert Merrihew. "Autonomy and Theological Ethics."

Reductionism and and Morality (4/24)

Mark Siderits, "Buddhist Ethics."

--FOURTH PAPER ASSIGNED

Master and Slave Morality (4/27)

Friedrich Nietzsche, "Master and Slave Morality."

Neighbor-Love (4/29)

Soren Kierkegaard, "You Shall Love Your *Neighbor*."

Optional: Soren Kierkegaard, "You Shall Love Your Neighbor."

--FOURTH PAPER ASSIGNED 4/24, due 5/8

Review and Overview (5/1)