Course Guide: Philosophy of Religion

Instructor: Dr. Patrick Todd  
Office: DSB 4.04a  
Office Hour: Office hours will be held on Teams; time TBC (on Learn)

Course Secretary: Ann-Marie Cowe; philinfo@ed.ac.uk

Assessment:

Midterm essay, 40%.  
1500 word limit.  
Final essay, 55%.  
2500 word limit.  
Participation, 5%.

Participation will be assessed on the basis of one's contributions to the course discussion board (on Learn).

Course description:

In this course, we will cover some of the major developments within the philosophy of religion over the last 50 years. The focus of this course is on (1) the concept of God, (2) divine attributes, (3) arguments for the existence of God, together with small sections on (4) God and morality and (5) religious belief, and (6) the problem of evil.

Schedule: (readings are all required [except 'background readings'], but are listed roughly in order of importance)

**Week 1. The Concept of God [no tutorials this week!]**


**Week 2. Omnipotence**

Week 3. Omniscience and Human Freedom


Background reading:

Linda Zagzebski (2017), Section 2.2. of SEP, “Foreknowledge and Free Will”, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/free-will-foreknowledge/

Patrick Todd and John Martin Fischer, “Introduction” to *Freedom, Fatalism, and Foreknowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2015). Sections 2 and 3 only, i.e. “Theological Fatalism” and “The Problem of Future Contingents”. However, Section 1 will certainly help, and may be of interest to many of you. Preprint available here: https://philpapers.org/rec/TODI-3

Week 4. Theistic Arguments I: Ontological Arguments

Anselm, Chapter 2 of *Proslogion* (This is just one page; it is widely available via Google search.)


**Yujin Nagasawa (2010).** *The Ontological Argument and the Devil*, *Philosophical Quarterly* 60 (238):72-91.

Background reading: SEP, Ontological Arguments: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ontological-arguments/

Week 5. Cosmological Arguments and the Principle of Sufficient Reason


Background reading: SEP, Cosmological Arguments. (Skip Section 5.)
https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/cosmological-argument/#TypoCosmArgu

**Week 6. God and Morality**


Background reading: SEP, Moral Arguments for the Existence of God.
https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-arguments-god/

**Week 7. Religious Belief**


**Week 8: The Problem of Evil I**


**Week 9: The Problem of Evil II**


**Week 10: Providence, Evil, and Divine Standing to Blame**


**Week 11: Revision**