MSc in Philosophy, Science, and Religion

Philosophy of Religion

PHIL11159
Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to the course! The teaching and support staff here at the University of Edinburgh are thrilled to be working with you this year. Do familiarise yourself with the contents of the course guide, and always feel free to contact the course organiser or teaching assistant if we can be of help.

People

**Course Organiser:**
Name: Dr. Tripp Fuller  
Email: tripp.fuller@ed.ac.uk  
Office hours: On Request (or feel free to request a Skype meeting)

**Teaching Assistant:**
Name: Nicole Graham  
Email: ng338@kent.ac.uk

**Course Secretary:**
Name: Becky Verdon  
Email: Rebecca.Verdon@ed.ac.uk

**Course Librarian:**
Name: Ishbel Leggat  
Email: Ishbel.Leggat@ed.ac.uk

**Office hours:**
Please email Dr Tripp Fuller or Nicole Graham to make an appointment if you need to discuss material covered in the course or essay topics.
Course aims and objectives
This is a level 11 course for students seeking an advanced introduction to contemporary issues in the philosophy of religion. Students will gain an up-to-date, in-depth and detailed instruction in topics such as: the concept of God, arguments for the existence of God, the nature of and relationship between faith and reason, arguments against the existence of religious epistemology, and the nature of religious language. The aim is to cultivate a deep understanding of some of the most fundamental questions in philosophy.

Intended learning objectives
On completion of this course, the student will:

- Be able to demonstrate a good understanding of key areas in the current science/religion interface and to engage with them philosophically.
- Be able to demonstrate strong analytical skills and philosophical acumen in approaching debates between science and theology.
- Be able to engage critically with key textual sources in the field.
- Be able to engage constructively in cross-disciplinary conversations.
- Have demonstrated an openness to personal growth through a commitment to dialogue across intellectual and cultural boundaries.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Syllabus
Schedule of lectures, seminars, tutorials and assessments

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<td>The Idea of God</td>
<td>Dr Harriet Harris</td>
<td>Engage discussion board</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>The Ontological Argument</td>
<td>Dr Jamie Collin</td>
<td>Engage discussion board</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
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<td>Engage discussion board &amp; video post</td>
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<td>Scientific Naturalism(s) &amp; the Philosophy of Religion</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
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<td>Theism and Ultimate Explanation</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>23 November</td>
<td>Feminist &amp; Eco-Feminist Philosophies of Religion</td>
<td>Dr Tripp Fuller</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>30 November</td>
<td>Religion After God: Theism, Non-Theism, &amp; Pluralisms</td>
<td>Dr Tripp Fuller</td>
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Topics and reading

Week 1 – The Idea of God

**Essential Readings**


**Further Readings**


Week 2 – The Ontological Argument

**Essential Readings**

**Further Readings**

Week 3 – Introduction to Continental Philosophy of Religion

**Essential Readings**

**Further Readings**
Williamson, Clark, “Tillich’s Two Types of Philosophy of Religion” in Journal of Religion Vol. 52 No. 3 Jul, 1972
Week 4 – The Masters of Suspicion’

**Essential Readings**
Paul Ricoeur, “The Critique of Religion” in *The Union Quarterly* Vol. XXVIII No. 3 Spring, 1973

**Further Readings**

Week 5 – Epistemic Disagreement, Diversity, and Relativism

**Essential Readings**
Paul Ricoeur, “The Language of Faith” in *The Union Quarterly* Vol. XXVIII No. 3 Spring, 1973

**Further Reading**

Week 6 – Scientific Naturalisms and Philosophy of Religion

**Essential Readings**
David Ray Griffin, *Reenchantment without Supernaturalism* [intro, 1, 4]

**Further Reading**


**Week 7 – The Problem of Evil**

*Essential Readings*


*Further Readings*


David Ray Griffin, *Reenchantment without Supernaturalism* 6


**Week 8 – God and Morality**

*Essential Readings*


*Further Readings*


David Ray Griffin, *Reenchantment without Supernaturalism* 8

Week 9 – Theism and Ultimate Explanation

Essential Readings

Further Readings

Week 10 – Feminist and Ecofeminist Philosophies of Religion

Essential Reading
Rosemary Radford Ruether, Ecofeminism: First and Third World. Ecotheology 2 (1997), 72-83
Further Reading


Week 11 – Religion After God: Theism, Non-Theism, and Pluralisms

Essential Readings


Further Reading


David Ray Griffin, Reenchantment without Supernaturalism 7


Resources
Reading list materials are available via the course LEARN site. Please ensure you have completed the library induction tutorial. Should you have any problems accessing any of the materials for the course please contact the course librarian, Ishbel Leggat.

Assessment

Coursework (85 %)
This course will primarily be assessed through the submission of an essay of no more than 3000 words on a selected prompt. Possible prompts will be distributed by in Learn. essay will account for 85% of the student’s course mark. The essay is due on Tuesday, 15 December, 2020 at 12 noon UK time.

Formative Essay
Students have the opportunity to submit a formative essay of 2000-2500 words by October 22, 12 noon, for feedback. This essay will not count towards the final grade and must not be a draft of the final essay. It can be on a related topic, though.

Participation (15%)
The remaining 15% of the final course mark will be determined by the student’s video post on a specific assigned reading and successful participation in the on-line course discussion board. The video post will be on a single selected reading from the assigned week. It should introduce the text, highlight its major themes, and solicit class engagement. The grading rubric and ‘how to post’ info for the video can be found on Learn. We will discuss in detail during our first class meeting.
The requirements and guidance for the video post and discussion board engagement are as follows:

Video Post
- What to post?
Each student will submit one video post to the course Video Blog section (found under Course Activities).
Each video post should discuss one of the further readings provided in this course guide.
The post should be about 10 – 12 minutes long.
- When to post?
Depending on the reading / topic you choose to post on, you should post your video blog on the Monday that topic is due to begin.
For example if you choose to create a video post on the reading Evans, C.S. (2014) Moral Arguments for the Existence of God (Week 8), then your blog post should be posted at the start of Week 8, on or before Monday 08 November.

- When can I choose my topic?

During the first week of the course we will make a schedule available for students to select when they would like to submit their video post.

**PLEASE NOTE, ONLY TWO STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO SUBMIT EACH WEEK, SO SPACES WILL BE ALLOCATED ON A FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVED BASIS.**

Summary:
1. Choose a reading from the further readings provided in this course guide, that you would like to prepare a video post about.
2. Check which topic / week that reading belongs to.
3. When the scheduler is opened, reserve your place on the Monday that topic / week begins.
4. The Course Organiser will confirm the dates that each student should prepare their video post.

**Discussions**
Discussing ideas with others is an essential part of philosophy, and in weeks where there is no seminar you will have to contribute at least two max 300-word posts on the discussion board. Your first post must be up by midnight on Wednesday of the relevant week: your second post must be up by midnight on Sunday of the same week. The posts are mandatory but not graded. You will, however, lose marks from your overall grade for each week you miss (you may miss one week without penalty). If you miss participation for a good reason, please inform us as soon as possible.

**Live Seminars**
There will be four live seminars held throughout the semester. Dates and times will be made available on Learn. While these seminars are optional, they are strongly encouraged as an essential part of the overall learning experience.

**How to submit assessments**
Instructions for online essay submission will be made available on Learn.

**Marking and feedback**
Each essay is marked by two members of the academic staff, who will also provide feedback on the content and quality of the essay. Essays are marked within 21 working days of their submission.

**External examiners**

Professor Michael Reiss