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 Sarah Lane Ritchie
Email: sarah.laneritchie@ed.ac.uk
Office: New College Room 2.05
Office hours: On Request (or feel free to request a Skype meeting)

Teaching Assistant:
Name: Nicola Whyte
Email: nicola.whyte@ptsem.edu

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

Course Librarian:
Name: Anne Donnelly
Email: anne.donnelly@ed.ac.uk

Office hours:
Please email Dr Sarah Lane Ritchie or Nicola Whyte 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:

- 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>The Idea of God</td>
<td>Dr Harriet Harris</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 September</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>The Ontological Argument</td>
<td>Dr Jamie Collin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 September</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Evolutionary Religion</td>
<td>Dr John Schellenberg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 September</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Religious Epistemology</td>
<td>Dr Duncan Pritchard</td>
<td>Assessed Discussion Board Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07 October</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Epistemic Disagreement, Diversity and Relativism</td>
<td>Dr Adam Carter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 October</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Pascal’s Wager</td>
<td>Dr Alasdair Richmond</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 October</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>The Problem of Evil</td>
<td>Dr Harriet Harris</td>
<td>Assessed Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 October</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Board Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>God and Morality</td>
<td>Dr Harriet Harris</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04 November</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Theism and Ultimate Explanation</td>
<td>Dr Jamie Collin</td>
<td>Assessed Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 November</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Board Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Divine Foreknowledge and Freedom</td>
<td>Dr Patrick Todd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 November</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Is God Beyond the Limits of Thought?</td>
<td>Dr Jamie Collin</td>
<td>Assessed Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 November</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Board Activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Topics and reading**

**Week 1 – The Idea of God**

**Essential Readings**


**Further Readings**


**Week 2 – The Ontological Argument**

**Essential Readings**

Further Readings


Week 3 – Evolutionary Religion

Essential Readings


Further Readings


Week 4 – Religious Epistemology

Essential Readings


Week 5 – Epistemic Disagreement, Diversity, and Relativism

Essential Readings

Further Readings

Week 6 – Pascal's Wager

Essential Readings

Further Readings
Jordan, J. (2006) Pragmatic Arguments and Belief in God. Pragmatic Arguments and Belief in God. OUP.

Week 7 – The Problem of Evil

Essential Readings

Further Readings
Week 8 – God and Morality

Essential Readings


Further Readings


Week 9 – Theism and Ultimate Explanation

Essential Readings


Further Readings


**Week 10 – Divine Foreknowledge and Freedom**

**Essential Readings**


**Further Readings**


**Week 11 – Is God Beyond the Limits of Thought?**

**Essential Readings**


**Further Readings**


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, Mrs Anne Donnelly: anne.donnelly@ed.ac.uk

Assessment

Coursework (85%)

This course will primarily be assessed through the submission of an essay of no more than 2500 words on a topic chosen by the student. The student must consult with the course organiser on the chosen topic. This essay will account for 85% of the student’s course mark. The essay is due on Tuesday, 17 December, 2019 at 12pm UK time.

Participation (15%)

The remaining 15% of the final course mark will be determined by the student’s successful participation in the on-line course discussion board. The requirements and guidance for discussion board postings can be found on Learn.

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