

Philosophy of Religion PHIL 185

Course Content

Philosophers have not been shy about weighing in on topics pertaining to God's existence (or non-existence); the nature of God's existence; the nature of evil and its ramifications for the existence or (non-existence) of God; the character of faith and its relation to rational belief; and the problems and perplexities posed by the attributes traditionally associated with God. The attention offered by philosophers has resulted in a rich body of literature investigating topics of interest to the theist and the non-theist alike. We will explore several of these topics, including:

- Does God exist? What are the best reasons for supposing so? What are the best reasons for supposing not?
- Are we ever justified in believing in God (or anything else for that matter) on the basis of faith? What exactly is faith, and what is it to believe in something on that basis?
- Some religions are given to making peculiar-sounding claims, e.g. that a single individual is both God and human, that God is both three and one, that an all-loving God is none the less given to wrathful acts of destruction. What sense, if any, can be given to these claims? Does it matter if in the end we must regard them as irrational?
- One might legitimately presume that the march of science has obviated many traditional motivations for theism, and thus has undermined a theistic world view altogether. Is this presumption ultimately defensible? Asking this question will perforce involve us in some deeper, more difficult questions about the nature and scope of rationality and its relation to the wellsprings of belief, both inside and outside of theistic contexts.

These questions will inevitably give way to some broader issues in metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of mind. While these will not be our focus in this class, we will inevitably be drawn into reflection on them.

Required Text:

- Rea, M. and Pojman, L. ed., *Philosophy of Religion: an Anthology* 7th ed. (Cengage: 2015)

Required Work and Protocol:

- Two examinations, one at mid-term and one at the end of term.
- One essay:
 - an expository essay of approximately 2000 words, on a theme investigated in this course. I will offer essay prompts approximately two weeks in advance of the due date.

Dates for the examinations:

First Examination: **Monday 3 February at 10.00**, in our regularly scheduled classroom.

Second Examination: **Friday 14 March at 10.00**, in our regularly scheduled classroom.

Due date for the expository essay

Essay: **Friday 14 March**

Written work is to be submitted electronically in a main-stream word-processing format or (if you use something non-standard) as .pdf documents, to our Canvas site. Assignments will be accepted until **23.59 on 14 March**.

Due to the extreme compression of the term, late assignments cannot be accepted; exceptions to this policy will be made only in cases of documented emergencies.

Attendance is required at all class meetings: you will lose one letter grade for each three unexcused absences.

Office Hours and Contact Information:

Office: Arts & Humanities Building 447

Office hours: W 13.00-14.00 and by appt.

e-mail: CJShields@ucsd.edu

website: cjshields.com

N.b. I prefer e-mail to telephone as a manner of student contact. I make an effort to answer student e-mails promptly, but please be aware that I measure promptness in this domain in days rather than hours or minutes.

IV. Topics and Reading Schedule

I. Traditional Arguments for the Existence of God

Week One:

- *PRA* (= *Philosophy of Religion: an Anthology*) II.B.1: Aquinas, 'The Five Ways'
- *PRA* II.B.2: Clarke, 'The Argument from Contingency'
- *PRA* II.B. 3: Rowe, 'An Examination of the Cosmological Argument'
- *PRA* II.B.4: Craig and Moreland, 'The Kalām Cosmological Argument'
- *PRA* II.B.5: Draper, 'A Critique of the Kalām Cosmological Argument'

Week Two:

- *PRA* II.C.1: Paley, 'The Watch and the Watchmaker'
- *PRA* II.C.2: Hume, 'A Critique of the Argument from Design'
- *PRA* II.C.3: Swinburne, 'Arguments from Design'
- *PRA* II.A.1: Anselm, 'The Ontological Argument'

- *PRA II.A.2: Kant, 'A Critique of the Ontological Argument'*

II. Evil and God Withheld

Week Three:

- *PRA III.A.1: Hume, 'The Argument from Evil'*
- *PRA III.A.3: Dostoevsky, 'Rebellion'*
- *PRA III.B.1: Mackie, 'Evil and Omnipotence'*
- *PRA III.B.2: Rowe, 'The Inductive Argument from Evil against the Existence of God'*
- *PRA III.B.5: Schellenberg, 'Divine Hidden Justifies Atheism'*

Week Four:

- *PRA II.A.2: Leibniz, 'Theodicy: A Defense of Theism'*
- *PRA III.C.1: Plantinga, 'The Free Will Defense'*
- *PRA III.C.3: Howard-Snyder, 'Epistemic Humility, Arguments from Evil, and Moral Skepticism'*
- *PRA III.C.4: Stump, 'The Problem of Evil and the Desires of the Heart'*
- *PRA III.C.5: McCord Adams, 'Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God'*
- *PRA III.C: Rea, 'Divine Hiddenness, Divine Silence'*

III. Faith, Reason, and Science

Week Five:

- *PRA V.B.2*: Clifford, 'The Ethics of Belief'
- *PRA V.B.3*: James, 'The Will to Believe'

Week Six:

- *PRA V.A.1*: Swinburne, 'The Nature of Faith'
- *PRA V.A.2*: Buchack, 'Can It Be Rational to Have Faith?'
- *PRA V.A.3*: Howard-Snyder, 'Propositional Faith: What It Is and What It Is Not'

Week Seven:

- *PRA V.C.1*: Hick, 'Rational Theistic Belief without Proof.'
- *PRA V.C.2*: Flew, 'The Presumption of Atheism'
- *PRA V.C.3*: Bergmann, 'Rational Religious Belief without Arguments'
- *PRA V.C.4*: Zagzebski, 'Intellectual Virtue in Religious Epistemology'

Week Eight:

- *PRA II.C.4*: Collins, 'A Scientific Argument for the Existence of God'
- *PRA IV.C.1*: Dawkins, 'Is Science a Religion?'
- *PRA IV.C.2*: Gould, 'Nonoverlapping Magisteria'
- *PRA IV.C.3*: Pope John Paul II, 'Faith and Science: Lessons from the Galileo Case and Message on Evolution'

IV. Classical Theistic Attributes and the Problems they Pose

Week Nine:

- *PRA I.B.1: Davis, 'Temporal Eternity'*
- *PRA I.B.2: McCann, 'The God Beyond Time'*
- *PRA I.B.6: Augustine, 'Divine Foreknowledge and Human Free Will'*
- *PRA I.B.7: Pike, 'Divine Foreknowledge and Human Free Will are Incompatible'*
- *PRA I.B.8: Plantinga, 'Divine Foreknowledge and Human Free Will are Compatible'*

V. Quodlibetal and Review

Week Ten:

- Open