

Philosophy of Religion
PHIL 390-001 (CRN 22046)
RELG 390-001 (CRN 22047)
Spring 2014
T 5:00-6:15
Kinard 205

Professor Information

- Dr. William P. Kiblinger
- Office: Kinard 326
- Office Hours: Thurs. - Fri. 12:00-2:00 and by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The primary purpose of this course is to expose students to the major questions in the philosophy of religion. Students will analyze a family of problems within the field by engaging with major representatives of various schools of thought. Topics encountered in these works will include the nature of religion and religious experience, the relation of reason and faith, the problem of divine attributes, the arguments for the existence of God, religious epistemology, religious language, the problem of evil, the relation of religion and science, and the relation of religion and morality. Students will be encouraged to engage in debate as we analyze and compare these different views.

This course will emphasize improvement in critical thinking and effective communication, two of Winthrop's University-Level Competencies that all graduates are to attain. To that end, several assignments will be designed to participate in our department's Critical Thinking Initiative (CTI) and our Effective Communication Initiative (ECI). These assignments along with the final research project will be so designated on the syllabus. The course participates in the Global Learning Initiative (GLI) by comparing differing belief systems and addressing the issue of pluralism.

The course is worth three (3) credit hours and counts towards the Humanities and Arts Touchstone requirement. Any subsequent changes to this syllabus will be announced in class if minor (and on Blackboard), or else distributed in writing.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND METHODS IN PHIL/RELG 390

SLO 1: Engage in reasoned inquiry and self-reflection regarding the various values, beliefs, attitudes, and habits that define the nature and quality of life.

Method: Read material thoroughly and think critically in order to make connections between the material and your own understanding of religious life.

SLO 2: Model reflective participation in a learning community by learning to communicate with others effectively in speech and writing.

Method: Share your reactions and understanding of religious issues with your classmates and learn to understand other perspectives by listening carefully and communicating clearly in class discussion and written assignments.

SLO 3: Recognize the constructed nature of knowledge, i.e., the way in which knowledge arises from a diversity of perspectives.

Method: Learn to identify multiple perspectives on religious issues and then engage this diversity of perspectives by dialectically taking ownership of them as possible viewpoints within yourself.

SLO 4: Recognize and appreciate human diversity (both past and present) as well as the diversity of ideas, institutions, philosophies, moral codes, and ethical principles.

Method: Read and discuss the research relating to the diversity of religious beliefs and practices and consider their impact on the values informing our lives.

PHIL/RELG 390 AND UNIVERSITY-LEVEL COMPETENCIES: PHIL/RELG 390 is completed as part of the Touchstone Program, Winthrop University's distinctive approach to general education. Thus, PHIL/RELG 390 helps students make progress toward the following University-Level Competencies.

Competency 1: Winthrop graduates think critically and solve problems.

Winthrop University graduates reason logically, evaluate and use evidence, and solve problems. They seek out and assess relevant information from multiple viewpoints to form well-reasoned conclusions. Winthrop graduates consider the full context and consequences of their decisions and continually reexamine their own critical thinking process, including the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments.

Method: Students work through challenging philosophical problems such as the relation of reason and faith, the problem of divine attributes, the arguments for the existence of God, religious epistemology, religious language, the problem of evil, the relation of religion and science, and the relation of religion and morality. These topics require thoughtful engagement with prominent philosophical texts, and students are required to assess critically the positions argued in them.

Competency 3: Winthrop graduates understand the interconnected nature of the world and the time in which they live.

Winthrop University graduates comprehend the historical, social, and global contexts of their disciplines and their lives. They also recognize how their chosen area of study is inextricably linked to other fields. Winthrop graduates collaborate with members of diverse academic, professional, and cultural communities as informed and engaged citizens.

Method: Students examine competing religious assumptions from various viewpoints.

Competency 4: Winthrop graduates communicate effectively.

Winthrop University graduates communicate in a manner appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience. They create texts – including but not limited to written, oral, and visual presentations – that convey content effectively. Mindful of their voice and the impact of their communication, Winthrop graduates successfully express and exchange ideas.

Method: Students write three evaluated papers and participate in class discussions. The instructor makes comments and suggestions regarding the effectiveness of their communication in all of these endeavors.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE STUDENT

1. Class Attendance and Participation: Because this class is largely based on discussion and much of the critical “action” occurs in the classroom, your attendance is imperative. Attendance will be taken and is a factor in your class participation grade. Solid participation in discussion will also factor into this portion of your grade. Absence for a valid reason given in advance is excusable but inadvisable. More than **one** unexcused absences will lower your grade. No unexcused absences may improve your grade. Together attendance and participation will amount to 200 points of your grade.

3. Reading/Writing Assignments: There will be weekly assignments of one kind or another on the readings of the week. Some of these assignments will be expository and analytical, others will be more evaluative. The total amount of writing involved in these assignments will exceed eight pages. These will occur on Blackboard. Cumulatively they will amount to 600 points.

4. Final Exam: The final exam will be a 7-8 page term paper worth 200 points.

GRADING

		<u>Grading scale:</u>		
Class Participation:	200 points	930-1000: A	900-929: A-	
Writing Assignments:	600 points	870-899: B+	830-869: B	800-829: B-
<u>Final Exam:</u>	<u>200 points</u>	770-799: C+	730-769: C	700-729: C-
TOTAL	1000 points	670-699: D+	630-669: D	600-629: D-
		0-599: F		

PLAGIARISM: Students in this course should be aware of the strong sanctions against plagiarism (misrepresentation of another person’s work as one’s own) stated in the Student Conduct Code. (See section V. Student Academic Misconduct of the Student Conduct Code in the Student Handbook.) If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic "F" in the course and possible expulsion. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials and the works of others, be sure to consult the instructor. Proper citation procedures are provided in all standard writing manuals. For more information, see the Student Handbook at www.winthrop.edu/studentaffairs.

TEXTS (in order of appearance on the schedule)

1. William Rowe, "The Problem of Evil"
2. Immanuel Kant, "On the Miscarriage of All Philosophical Trials in Theodicy"
3. Alvin Plantinga, "The Free Will Defense"
4. William Paley, *Natural Theology* (excerpt)
5. David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (<http://goo.gl/ZZ2nD>)
6. William Rowe, "The Cosmological Argument"
7. Thomas Aquinas, "The Five Ways" (excerpt from *Summa Theologiae*)
8. Richard Taylor, *Metaphysics* (excerpt)
9. John Hick, *Philosophy of Religion* (excerpt "The Cosmological Argument: An Assessment")
10. William Rowe, "The Ontological Argument"
11. Anselm, *Proslogion* (excerpt)
12. René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (excerpt)
13. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (excerpt)
14. John Hick, *Philosophy of Religion* (excerpt "The Ontological Argument: An Assessment")
15. Alvin Plantinga, "A Contemporary Modal Version of the Ontological Argument"
16. William Rowe, "Predestination, Divine Foreknowledge, and Human Freedom"
17. William Hasker, excerpts from *God, Time, and Knowledge*
18. Thomas Aquinas, "The Doctrine of Analogy" (from *Summa Theologica*)
19. Antony Flew & Basil Mitchell, "The Falsification Debate"
20. Paul Tillich, "Symbols of Faith"
21. Ludwig Wittgenstein, "Lectures on Religious Belief"
22. Blaise Pascal, "The Wager" (from *Pensées*)
23. William Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief"
24. William James, "The Will to Believe"
25. Peterson et al., "Religion and Science: Compatible or Incompatible?" from *Reason and Religious Belief*
26. Ian Barbour, "God and Nature" in *When Science Meets Religion*

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Winthrop University is dedicated to providing access to education. If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact Gena Smith, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities, at 323-3290, as soon as possible. Once you have your Professor Notification Form, please tell me so that I am aware of your accommodations well before the first {test/paper/assignment}.

SAFE ZONE: Regardless of sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion, age and ability, you will be treated and respected as a human being. Your continued presence in this course signals your commitment to act likewise.

DATE	READING SCHEDULE
WEEK 1	The Philosophy of Religion
Tues., Jan. 14	Introduction
WEEK 2	The Problem of Evil
Tues., Jan. 21	Rowe, "The Problem of Evil" Kant, "On the Miscarriage of All Philosophical Trials in Theodicy" All students: do Rowe & Kant Reading Quiz on Blackboard
WEEK 3	The Problem of Evil
Tues., Jan. 28	Plantinga, "The Free Will Defense"
WEEK 4	Existence of God: Argument from Design (Teleological)
Tues., Feb. 4	Paley & Hume
WEEK 5	Existence of God: Cosmological Argument
Tues., Feb. 11	Rowe, "The Cosmological Argument" Aquinas, Taylor, Hick
WEEK 6	Existence of God: Ontological Argument
Tues., Feb. 18	Rowe, "The Ontological Argument" Anselm, Descartes, Kant, Hick
WEEK 7	Existence of God: Ontological Argument
Tues., Feb. 25	Plantinga, "A Contemporary Modal Version of the Ontological Argument"
WEEK 8	Predestination and Divine Foreknowledge
Tues., March 4	Rowe, "Predestination, Divine Foreknowledge, and Human Freedom"
WEEK 9	Predestination and Divine Foreknowledge
Tues., March 11	Hasker, excerpts from <i>God, Time, and Knowledge</i>
WEEK 10	Religious Language
Tues., March 25	Flew, Hare, & Mitchell Tillich
WEEK 11	Religious Language
Tues., April 1	Wittgenstein
WEEK 12	Faith and Reason
Tues., April 8	Pascal, Clifford, James, & Plantinga Supplementary reading: Peterson et al. on Science and Religion
WEEK 13	Whitehead's Cosmology
Tues., April 15	Barbour, "God and Nature"
WEEK 14	Whitehead's Cosmology
Tues., April 22	To be announced
FINAL EXAM	Sat., May 3 11:30 AM