

## **PHIL/RELG495: Methods and Research Seminar**

Section 001 (CRN21106/21107), 3 hours

Winthrop University

Spring, 2012

Wednesdays, 2pm-4:45pm, KINA312

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### **Course Description**

This course is an advanced research seminar for students who have already developed a solid background in their philosophy studies, in particular, majors in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies. The course emphasizes a detailed examination of selected topics and issues in philosophy and religious studies. The course will include an assessment of the core skills and knowledge from the major, and will improve reading, research, and writing skills as students develop their own research projects.

Intensive Writing course; Senior Capstone course.

Prerequisites: PHIL 101 and PHIL 301 or 302 and RELG 101 and RELG 300 and 6 additional hours in PHIL or RELG.

More specifically, we will begin with some discussion of issues relating to God and things divine. The student will develop his/her own research project as derived from discussion of issues encountered. Research, the development of findings, and the presentation of both will occur in several stages over the course of the semester, culminating in an essay of substance and oral presentation and defense of that work.

### **Course Goals**

This course intends meeting Goals 1 and 2 of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies Mission Statement, located here:

<http://www2.winthrop.edu/philrelg/goals.htm>

### **Expected Outcomes**

PHIL/RELG495 is the Departmental senior capstone seminar. Students must pass this seminar in order to graduate with a PHIL or RELG degree. The goals of this course are, as stated above, to complete student mastery of fundamental skills appropriate to the major. More specifically, here follow the primary outcomes to be demonstrated by students completing the course, along with the means of their assessment:

- Graduating majors will have superior ability successfully to analyze complex intellectual problems.
  - The student will report confidence in his/her capacity for analysis.
  - The student will demonstrate logical rigor in his/her final research essay.
  - The student will demonstrate the capacity for analysis and evaluation of philosophical and religious texts.
- Graduating majors will be capable of scholarly research, and of effective written and oral presentation of same.
  - The student will report confidence in his/her ability for scholarly research.
  - The student will demonstrate the capacity for scholarly research.
  - The student will demonstrate the capacity for oral presentation of his/her research.
  - The student will demonstrate the capacity for written presentation of his/her research.
- Graduating majors understand the fundamental concepts of philosophy and religious studies and are familiar with major representatives of key positions on central issues.
  - The student will compose a satisfactory essay on the historical dimensions of a significant philosophical or religious issue.
  - The student will compose a satisfactory essay on the contemporary dimensions of a significant philosophical or religious issue.
  - The student will compose a satisfactory comprehensive essay on a significant philosophical or religious issue.

### Required Texts

Robinson, T., ed. *God* 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Hackett Publishing Co., 2002  
 William Strunk and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style* 3e or 4e (Macmillan, 1989, 1999)  
 Muriel Harris, *Prentice Hall Reference Guide* 6e (Pearson Education , 2006)

### Course Requirements

#### In Brief

- Attending and Preparing for Class
- Writing and Research Exercises
- Several Oral Presentations
- Two Shorter Essays (5-10pp)
- A Full Research Paper (15-30pp)

Grading (see assignments for further break-down; 90-100% is an A, etc.)

Preliminary Exercises	15%
History Essay	
Draft One	10%
Draft Two	10%

Contemporary Essay	15%
Research Essay	
Draft One	10%
Final Draft	25%
Commentary	5%
Oral Presentation	10%

### Other Matters

- Assessment: The Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies uses this, the senior capstone course for the degree program, to assess student learning in the program.
- Disabilities: Students with medical or other recognized disability must contact Gena Smith, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities, at 323-2233, as soon as possible. Once you have your professor notification letter, please notify me immediately (and prior to the first test or assignment) so that I am aware of your accommodations. If your accommodations affect every assignment, please remind me prior to each one.
- Athletics and other University sponsored activities: I am happy to support your school-sponsored event. If you must miss class such activities, you must provide appropriate documentation prior to each instance. It will be your responsibility to ensure that you meet course requirements on or before the date/s of your absence/s.
- Attendance: required as per above; see the university catalog for university policy.
- Student code of conduct: As noted in the Student Conduct Code: “Responsibility for good conduct rests with students as adult individuals.” The policy on student academic misconduct is outlined in the “Student Conduct Code Academic Misconduct Policy” in the online *Student Handbook* (<http://www2.winthrop.edu/studentaffairs/handbook/StudentHandbook.pdf>).
- Plagiarism: It is your responsibility to understand the University’s policy on plagiarism. See [www.winthrop.edu/english/plagiarism.htm](http://www.winthrop.edu/english/plagiarism.htm). If you are found guilty of plagiarism in this course, you will receive *an F for the course* **and** *I will report you to the Dean of Students for academic misconduct*. If you are unsure of whether your use of borrowed information counts as plagiarism, consult with me, your English instructor, or the staff in the writing center.

### Schedule

(Subject to Change; students are responsible for in-class announcements of changes)

Date	In Class	Prepare for Class
1/11	Course Introduction Discussion of PHIL/RELG Program and Capstone Bibliographies and Note-taking	Readings selection (to Oakes by Friday, 1/13)

1/18	Discussion of Readings 1 and 2	Analysis and Evaluation of readings 1 and 2; Selector Presentations
1/25	Discussion of Readings 3 and 4	Analysis and Evaluation of readings 3 and 4; Selector Presentations
2/1	Discussion of Readings 5 and 6	Analysis and Evaluation of readings 5 and 6; Selector Presentations
2/8	Discussion of Research Projects – student interests; instruction on general form of research paper; Oral Presentation Instruction	Meet in Dacus 018
2/15	Focus Group	<b>Research Proposal Due</b> ; Oral Presentation
2/22	Individual Meetings with Students	
2/29	Classroom Updates on Research	
3/7	Contemporary Research	<b>History Research Essay Due</b>
3/14	Spring Break	
3/21	Classroom Updates on Research	
3/28	Classroom Updates on Research	
4/4	Writing Instruction: Full Essay	<b>Contemporary Research Essay Due</b>
4/11	Individual Meetings with Students	
4/18	Commentary Instruction Exit Survey, Course Evaluation	<b>Rough Draft Due</b>

Monday, April 23, 5pm: Final Essay Due

Monday, April 30, 8am: Commentaries due to authors

Tuesday, May 1, 11:30am: Final Oral Presentation