PHILOSOPHY 2730 (A01) – PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION
COURSE SYLLABUS
1330-1420 MWF
SJC 114

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UC 468
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Course Description:
In the eighteenth century Kant described ‘religious immaturity’ as ‘the most pernicious and dishonourable variety of all.’ In the
nineteenth century Marx characterized religion as ‘the opiate of the masses’ and Nietzsche proclaimed that ‘God is dead.’ Such
pronouncements aside, the majority of persons the world over continue to profess some religious belief and, if anything, the role
played by religion in contemporary affairs has increased. In this course we will take a philosophical look at religion. In the first
section of the course we will review the traditional arguments for the existence of God. We will then turn to an examination of
some ‘classic’ problems arising from the alleged properties of God. In the latter half of the course we will turn to the issues of
more practical significance: the place of faith, religious pluralism/exclusivity, religion and ethics and the role of religion in
political discourse.

Required Text:
None, all course readings will be posted to UM Learn

Student Evaluation:
Attendance & Participation 10%
In-Class Test 20%
Term Essay 25%
Final Examination 45%

Important Note: Final course grades are subject to the approval of the Faculty of Arts and may be subject to change in order to
fall within the parameters set by this Faculty, or in order to meet any new policies implemented by the Faculty.

Evaluation Explanations:
Attendance: Regular attendance is advisable and a sign-in sheet will be distributed each class. The student’s attendance grade will
be drawn from the proportion of classes the student attends. This element comprises 10% of the student’s course grade.

Tests: There will be one in class test worth 20% of the final course grade on Wednesday October 16th. The test will be ‘closed
book’ and will consist of short answer questions regarding the material covered up to Thanksgiving.

Essay: Students will be required to submit one short (1500 words; about 6 typed pages) essay for submission on Monday
November 18th. This essay is worth 25% of the student’s course grade. Topics will be distributed in mid-October.

Final Examination: There will be a ‘closed book’ final examination worth 45% of the student’s course grade. It will be scheduled
in the regular end-of-term exam period and will be 2 hours long. The final examination will consist of short answer questions
concerning the last half of the course material and one essay from a selection of topic questions relating to the last half of the
course.

Late Policy: Overdue work will only be accepted with a documented medical excuse or on the basis of a serious personal crisis.
Note that failing to manage one’s time is not a ‘serious personal crisis.’

Academic Dishonesty: Students should acquaint themselves with the University’s policy on plagiarism, cheating and examination
impersonation (see the University of Manitoba Academic Regulations, Undergraduate Calendar, 2019-20). Please note that the
Philosophy Department possesses a ‘no tolerance’ policy with regard to exam offences.

Approximate Grade Scale:
A+ 93%+
A 87-92%
B+ 80-86%
B 74-79%
C+ 68-73%
C 62-67%
D 55-61%
F <55%
APPROXIMATE SCHEDULE

Sep 4_________________ Course Syllabus & Expectations

Traditional Arguments for the Existence of God

Sep 11, 13, 16________Aquinas, excerpt from *Summa Theologica*; Craig and Moreland, “The Kalām Cosmological Argument,” and Draper, “A Critique of the Kalām Cosmological Argument”
Sep 18, 20, 23, 25____Paley, excerpt from *Natural Theology*; Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* Parts 2 & 5; Swinburne, R., “Arguments from Design”
Sep 27, 30, Oct 2, 4____Anselm, excerpt from *Prosolgium*; Gaunilo, excerpt from *On Behalf of the Fool*; Kant, excerpt from *Critique of Pure Reason*; Rauhut, “The Ontological Argument”
Oct 7, 9_______________Trueblood, “The Evidential Value of Religious Experience”
Oct 11_________________Finish Trueblood; Tips for the Test
Oct 14_________________Thanksgiving, no class
Oct 16_________________In-Class Test

Puzzles Concerning the Properties of God

Oct 18, 21, 23________Mackie, J.L., “Evil and Omnipotence;” Plantinga, A., excerpt from *God, Freedom, and Evil*
Oct 25, 28___________Rowe, W., “The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism”

Faith and Reason

Nov 6, 8_______________Pascal, excerpt from *Thoughts*; Clifford, W.K., “The Ethics of Belief”
Nov 11_______________Remembrance Day, no class
Nov 12-15_____________Fall Break, no classes
Nov 18________________Nov 18 VW Date, finish Clifford; James, W., except from *The Will to Believe*; Essay Due Date

Religious Pluralism & Exclusivism

Dec 6___________________Tips for the Final Exam
Dec 9-20________________Final Exam Period