

PHIL/REL 3570-001: PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION
Fall Semester 2003: 14403 001 LEC MWF 10-10:50 RH 1541

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DESCRIPTION

Augustine asked in his *Confessions* “what do I love when I love God?” We will pursue this question in this course by exploring what love of God and God can be conceived as. We will investigate classic arguments about God in medieval and early modern European philosophy such as whether God’s existence can be proven, how God is compatible with human freedom, and how a good and all-powerful God can allow evil. We will then focus on the debate between reason and faith by examining Kant’s justification of religion on the basis of and within the limits of moral reason and Kierkegaard’s arguments for the priority of faith over ethics and rationality. The 19th and 20th Centuries also produced radical critiques of religion as social or psychological illusion. Why then do people believe in religion? Why do you believe or not? Is it through faith, logical and/or scientific argument, ethical responsibility and hope, social influence and authority, psychological need, suicidal fanaticism, or some combination thereof? In the last third of the course, we will consider the “return to religion” in recent “postmodern” thought as well as questions of the relation of theology, religious belief, and gender.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. 20% of the Final Grade will depend on ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION, and WRITTEN IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS. In-class assignments will consist of a single question asked about the reading and class-discussion. It will require a short answer written in class on the day it is assigned.
2. 60% of Final Grade: FOUR QUIZZES.
3. 20% of Final Grade: FINAL EXAMINATION. This exam will cover the entire course.

GRADING POLICY

The grade of “A” will be given only to excellent answers that show you understand and can work with the question in your own voice. Answers should be accurate, clear, consistent, complete, and involve a thoughtful response to the readings and class-discussion.

Plagiarism, cheating, and all other forms of academic dishonesty are considered a serious violation of personal and educational integrity and will result in failure of the course.

Please note:

If you have a disability that will present a difficulty in this class or experience problems that will interfere with success in this class, please discuss this with me immediately.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Timothy A. Robinson (ed), *God: 2nd edition* (Hackett Readings in Philosophy). (Hackett, 2003). ISBN: 0872202224. **G2**
2. Immanuel Kant: *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason: And Other Writings*. (Cambridge University Press, 1999). ISBN: 0521599644.
3. Soren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*. (Penguin Classics, 1986) ISBN: 0140444491.
4. Graham Ward (Editor), *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader*. (Blackwell Publishers, 1997) ISBN: 0631201416. **PG**

SCHEDULE

1. August 25: Introduction. What is the Philosophy of Religion and why study it?

I. Evil, Freedom, and the Existence of God

2. August 27: Augustine, "God above Reason" (G2, 2-16)
3. August 29: Augustine, "Concerning the Nature of Good" (G2, 213-223)
- *. September 1: Labor Day—NO CLASS!
4. September 3: Boethius, "Omniscience and Human Freedom" (G2, 183-195)
5. September 5: Anselm and Gaunilo, "The Ontological Argument" (G2, 18-29)
6. September 8: Thomas Aquinas, "The Five Ways" (G2, 31-36)
7. September 10: Blaise Pascal, "The Wager" (G2, 364-368)
8. September 12: David Hume, "Anthropomorphism" (G2, 121-133)
- 9. September 15: QUIZ 1!**

II. The Critique of Theodicy and the Possibility of Rational Religion:

Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*

10. September 17: On the miscarriage of all philosophical trials in theodicy (17-30)
11. September 19: Prefaces to the first and second editions (33-41)
12. September 22: Part One (45-61)
13. September 24: Part One (61-73)
14. September 26: Part Two (77-87)
15. September 29: Part Two (88-102)
16. October 1: Part Three (105-117)
17. October 3: Part Three (118-129)
- 18. October 6: QUIZ 2!**

III. The Primacy of Faith: Soren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*

19. October 8: Preface, Attunement, Speech in Praise of Abraham (41-56)
20. October 10: Preamble from the Heart (57-82)
21. October 13: Problema I (83-95)

- 22. October 16: Problema II (96-108)
- 23. October 18: Problema III (109-144)
- *. October 20-21: Fall Break—NO CLASS!

IV. Modern and Postmodern Critiques of Religion

- 24. October 22: Friedrich Nietzsche, “Religion and Power” (G2, 254-261)
- 25. October 24: Sigmund Freud, “The Psychological Origins of Religion” (G2, 263-276)
- 26. October 27: Jean-Paul Sartre, “Atheistic Existentialism” (G2, 309-316)
- 27. October 29: Georges Bataille, From *Theory of Religion* (PG, 15-24)
- 28. October 31: Jacques Lacan, *The Death of God* (PG, 35-43)
- 29. November 3: Michel Foucault, From *The History of Sexuality* (PG, 123-134)

30. November 5: QUIZ 3!

V. Reevaluating Religion

- 31. November 7: Emmanuel Levinas, *God and Philosophy* (PG, 52-60)
- 32. November 10: Emmanuel Levinas, *God and Philosophy* (PG, 60-71)
- 33. November 12: Jacques Derrida, From *How to Avoid Speaking* (PG, 167-178)
- 34. November 14: Jacques Derrida, From *How to Avoid Speaking* (PG, 178-186)
- 35. November 17: Jean-Luc Marion, *Metaphysics and Phenomenology* (PG, 279-287)
- 36. November 19: Jean-Luc Marion, *Metaphysics and Phenomenology* (PG, 287-294)
- 37. November 21: Michel de Certeau, *How is Christianity Thinkable Today?* (PG, 142-155)
- 38. November 24: John Milbank, *Postmodern Critical Augustinianism* (PG, 265-278)
- *. THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASSES!

VI. Gender and Religion

- 39. December 1: Luce Irigaray, *Equal to Whom?* (PG, 198-213)
- 40. December 3: Julia Kristeva, From *In the Beginning was Love* (PG, 223-232)
- 41. December 5: Rebecca S. Chopp, From *Patriarchy into Freedom* (PG, 235-246)
- 42. December 8: Edith Wyschogrod, *Saintliness and Some Aporias of Postmodernism* (341-354)
- 43. December 10: Review for Quiz 4 and Final Examination; Evaluations.**
- 44. December 12: QUIZ 4!**
- 45. Final Examination: 10:15--12:15.on DECEMBER 17, 2003.**