

# PHIL 3600: Philosophy of Religion

Fall 2013

MWF 2:00-2:50pm, HLMS 229

## Syllabus

### Instructor

Chad Vance  
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Office Hours: MW noon-1:30pm  
Buchanan's Coffee (on the hill)

### What Is This Class About?

This is a philosophy course, designed to give you a basic understanding of the central issues in the philosophy of religion, regarding the nature and existence of God, and what the implications of these are for human beings. At the same time, the course should give you some of the tools that you will need in order to think critically, be rational, better argue for what you believe, and further investigate questions about religion. The course is divided into three sections:

*First Unit: Belief in the Existence of God.* We'll begin by looking at various arguments in favor of God's existence. Should I believe in God just in case there is a hell? Is God's existence knowable a priori? Does the universe require an external cause? Is the complexity of our universe evidence of an intelligent designer? Is naturalism even intelligible? You're about to find out.

*Second Unit: God, Morality, and Evil.* In this unit, we'll look at the relationship between God and morality, and ask the following sorts of questions: Can morality exist if God does not? If God is good, why does He allow so many bad things to happen? If God wants us to love Him, then why is He so silent? Did God command morally abhorrent things in the Bible? Does God send non-believers to a place of eternal suffering? Stay tuned.

*Third Unit: Puzzles for Theism.* In the final unit, we'll look at several puzzles that should be of interest to theists. For instance, is an afterlife even possible? If God knows everything, is this knowledge compatible with human free will? If God can do anything, can He create a rock so heavy that He can't lift it? Can there ever be evidence in favor of a miracle? Can life have meaning or value if there is no God? We'll explore these issues and more.

### Required Text

*Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, edited by Louis P. Pojman and Michael Rea, 2011, Wadsworth Publishing. ISBN: 9781111305444

Required readings not found in our textbook, *Philosophy of Religion*, will be posted under "Assigned Readings" as .pdf files on the course website, here:

<http://rintintin.colorado.edu/~vancecd/phil3600/phil3600.html>

## Course Requirements

1. *Exams (40%)*. You will take a mid-term exam (15%) and a final exam (25%).
2. *Papers (30%)*. You will write two papers. The first (10%) will be a short diagnostic paper, 600-900 words in length (i.e., 2 - 3 pages), and the second (20%) will be a longer paper, 1200-1800 words in length (i.e., 4 - 6 pages). *Topics and more info: TBA.*
3. *In-Class Debate (10%)*. You will participate in an in-class debate. *More info: TBA.*
4. *Quizzes (10%)*. You will take a total of 11 short reading quizzes. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped; i.e., your 10 best scores will constitute your quiz grade (1% each).
5. *Participation (10%)*. A portion of your grade will depend on your ability to come to class (on time and prepared), participate in class discussion, and refrain from being disruptive, falling asleep, sending text messages, or surfing the internet.

## Course Policies

### Academic Integrity

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu); 303-725-2273). More information on the Honor Code can be found at: [honorcode.colorado.edu/about-honor-code/definitions](http://honorcode.colorado.edu/about-honor-code/definitions)

NOTE: *Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member (i.e., you will automatically receive an F for the course) as well as non-academic sanctions (e.g., academic probation, suspension, or expulsion).*

### Disability Services

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, and [colorado.edu/disabilityservices](http://colorado.edu/disabilityservices).

### Religious Observances

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. Please let me know well in advance about any such conflicts, so we can resolve them. For more information, see [colorado.edu/policies/fac\\_relig.html](http://colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html).

### Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. See policies at [colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html](http://colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html).

### Discrimination and Harassment

The University of Colorado at Boulder policies on Discrimination and Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff, and faculty. Any student, staff, or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at [colorado.edu/odh](http://colorado.edu/odh).

Below is a schedule of the topics that we will cover, along with which reading(s) you should complete for each class meeting. There are page numbers next to the readings found in our textbook. Readings not found in the text are marked: (pdf). Please note the **paper due dates**, **debate days**, and **exam dates** in bold.

<b>Unit One      Belief in the Existence of God</b>		
<b>Week 1</b>		
Mon 8/26	Intro/Syllabus/Logic	No Readings
Wed 8/28	Irrationality	• Huemer, "Why People are Irrational About Politics" (pdf)
Fri 8/30	Pascal's Wager	• Pascal, "The Wager" (496-497)
<b>Week 2</b>		
Wed 9/4	The Concept of God	• Morris, "The Concept of God" (excerpt: 11-18) <sup>1</sup>
Fri 9/6	Ontological Argument	• "II.A. The Ontological Argument for the Existence of God" (137-138) • Anselm, "The Ontological Argument" (138-140) • Kant, "A Critique of the Ontological Argument" (141-144)
<b>Week 3</b>		
Mon 9/9	The Modal Ontological Argument	• van Inwagen, "Necessary Being: The Ontological Argument" (pdf)
Wed 9/11	No new topics	No new readings
Fri 9/13	<b>CAMPUS CLOSED</b>	No new readings
<b>Week 4</b>		
Mon 9/16	Cosmological Argument	• Rowe, "An Examination of the Cosmological Argument" (150-159)
Wed 9/18	The <i>Kalam</i> Cosmological Argument	• Craig & Moreland, "The Kalam Cosmological Argument" (160-172) • Draper, "A Critique of the Kalam Cosmological Argument" (172-177)
Fri 9/20	No new topics	No new readings
<b>Week 5</b>		
Mon 9/23	Teleological Argument	• Paley, "The Watch and the Watchmaker" (181-184)
Wed 9/25	Modern Teleological Argument	• Collins, "A Scientific Argument For The Existence of God" (202-212) <sup>2</sup>
Fri 9/27	No new topics	No new readings
<b>Week 6</b>		
Mon 9/30	Self-Defeating Naturalism <b>DUE: Paper #1</b>	• Plantinga, "An Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism" (612-616; 618) <sup>3</sup> • Plantinga, "Against 'Sensible' Naturalism" (pdf)
Wed 10/2	Self-Defeating Naturalism	• Bergmann, "Commonsense Naturalism" (621-627) • Huemer, "Foundational Justification" (pdf)
Fri 10/4	<b>Unit One Exam</b>	No new readings

<sup>1</sup> Do not read the last section, titled "Questions and Refinements: The Ultimate Method."

<sup>2</sup> Do not read the last section, titled "Appendix."

<sup>3</sup> You may stop on page 616 at the paragraph that begins, "Here we can simplify by dropping ..." But, please also read the single paragraph on page 618 that begins, "Can we mount an argument from ..."

Unit Two God, Morality, and Evil		
<b>Week 7</b>		
Mon 10/7	God and Morality	• Plato, "Euthyphro" (pdf)
Wed 10/9	God and Morality	• Morriston, "What if God Commanded Something Terrible?" (pdf)
Fri 10/11	God and Morality	• Watch: <a href="#">Debate: Craig vs. Antony</a> • Shafer-Landau, "Does Ethical Objectivity Require God?" (pdf)
<b>Week 8</b>		
Mon 10/14	<b>Debate Day: Group 1</b>	No new readings
Wed 10/16	The Problem of Evil	• Rowe, "The Inductive Argument From Evil Against The Existence Of God" (307-311) <sup>4</sup>
Fri 10/18	The Problem of Evil	• Plantinga, "The Free Will Defense" (338-341) <sup>5</sup> • Hick, "Evil And Soul-Making" (350-352) <sup>6</sup>
<b>Week 9</b>		
Mon 10/21	The Problem of Evil	• Adams, "Horrendous Evils And The Goodness of God" (384-390) <sup>7</sup>
Wed 10/23	Divine Hiddenness	• Rea, "Divine Hiddenness, Divine Silence" (266-274) • van Inwagen, " <a href="#">The Hiddenness of God</a> " (online)
Fri 10/25	Biblical Inerrancy	• The Bible, excerpts (pdf) • Morriston, "Did God Command Genocide?" (pdf)
<b>Week 10</b>		
Mon 10/28	Eternal Hell	• Davis, "Is There A Hell?" (pdf)
Wed 10/30	No new topics	No new readings
Fri 11/1	<b>Debate Day: Group 2</b>	No new readings

<sup>4</sup> Only read up through section I. Stop when you get to section II on page 311.

<sup>5</sup> Only read section 4, entitled "The Free Will Defense."

<sup>6</sup> Start on page 350, with the paragraph that begins, "In the light of modern..." and stop on page 352 when you get to the paragraph that begins, "In all this we have been..."

<sup>7</sup> Read only sections 2, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 5.

Unit Three Puzzles for Theism		
<b>Week 11</b>		
Mon 11/4	Identity and the Afterlife	• Olen, "Personal Identity and Life After Death" (PR: 479-488)
Wed 11/6	No new topics	No new readings
Fri 11/8	No new topics	No new readings
<b>Week 12</b>		
Mon 11/11	Human Freedom vs. Divine Foreknowledge	• Augustine, "Divine Foreknowledge and Human Free Will" (93-95) • Pike, "God's Foreknowledge and Human Free Will Are Incompatible" (96-105)
Wed 11/13	Human Freedom vs. Divine Foreknowledge	• Plantinga, "God's Foreknowledge and Human Free Will Are Compatible" (107-111)
Fri 11/15	No new topics	No new readings
<b>Week 13</b>		
Mon 11/18	Divine Omnipotence	• Aquinas, "Is God's Power Limited?" (87-89) • Mavrodes, "Some Puzzles Concerning Omnipotence" (89-91) • Frankfurt, "Logic of Omnipotence" (91-92)
Wed 11/20	Divine Freedom	• Rowe, "Can God Be Free?" (111-125)
Fri 11/22	Religious Experiences <b>DUE: Paper #2</b>	• Hick, "Theistic Belief Without Proof" (513-522) • Bacon, "Confirmation Bias" (pdf)
<b>Fall Break</b>		
11/25-11/29	Fall Break	No new readings
<b>Week 14</b>		
Mon 12/2	Miracles	• Hume, "Against Miracles" (406-409) <sup>8</sup> • van Inwagen, "Of Miracles" (415-423)
Wed 12/4	Miracles	• White, "The Miracles of St. Francis Xavier" (pdf) • <a href="#">The Harvard Prayer Study</a> (online) • Listen: <a href="#">Interview with Sam Parnia</a> (online) <sup>9</sup>
Fri 12/6	Faith vs. Reason	• Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief" (498-502) • Kierkegaard, "Fear and Trembling" (pdf)
<b>Week 15</b>		
Mon 12/9	The Meaning of Life	• Craig, "The Absurdity of Life Without God" (pdf)
Wed 12/11	The Meaning of Life	• Nagel, "The Absurd" (pdf)
Fri 12/13	Review: Final Exam	No new readings
Mon 12/16	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	7:30pm-10:00pm

<sup>8</sup> Read only part I. (skip part II)

<sup>9</sup> Especially the second half of the interview, starting at 20:43.