PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION  
Philosophy 185  
Fall 2010 

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Course Description: We will explore four related and hotly debated topics in the philosophy of religion, and, in doing so, address the following questions: 

(i) Is it rational to hold religious beliefs? Should we care about rationality when it comes to religious belief?  
(ii) Could different religions be different paths to the same ultimate reality, or is only one, at most, a “way to God”?  
(iii) What is the relationship between science and religion?  
(iv) What is the relationship between morality and religion? Must religious beliefs be true in order for morality to exist?  

As we will see, the philosophy of religion leads naturally into just about every other area of philosophy, including epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and the history of philosophy, and into particular central philosophical debates such as the debate over the nature of free will. This means that you will gain insight into many fundamental philosophical issues in this course. At the same time, the subject matter can be difficult. To do well in the course and to benefit from it, you must be willing to work hard and to subject your own views (whatever they may be) to critical evaluation. Evaluating our conception of ourselves and of the world is one of the distinguishing features of philosophy.  

Requirements:  

• Twice-weekly journal entries in composition book (15%)  
• 1 midterm exam (20%)  
• 1 paper (5-6 pages) (25%)  
• 1 final exam (40%) Date: Thursday, December 9, 3-6 pm  

Note: A hard copy of your paper must be turned in, and an electronic copy uploaded to turnitin.com. (This is very easy to do, and I’ll give you instructions and a password for doing so before each paper.)
Specific course topics and readings

Most readings may be found in Philosophy of Religion, edited by Louis Pojman. Others may be found on library e-reserves (http://reserves.ucsd.edu). Library materials are noted with an (L).

I. Rationality and Belief

9/23: Introduction

9/28: The Cosmological Argument
   Aquinas, The Five Ways
   Clarke, The Argument from Contingency
   Taylor, The Cosmological Argument: A Defense (L)

9/30: The Cosmological Argument
   Rowe, An Examination of the Cosmological Argument

10/5: The Teleological Argument
   Paley, The Watch and the Watchmaker
   Hume, A Critique of the Design Argument
   Swinburne, The Argument from Design

10/7: The Argument from Religious Experience
   Selections of Mystical Experiences
   Broad, The Argument from Religious Experience
   Freud, The Future of an Illusion

10/12: The Argument from Religious Experience
   James, Mysticism
   Alston, Religious Experience and Religious Belief
   BBC report, “God on the Brain” (L)

10/14: The Problem of Evil
   Hume, The Argument from Evil
   Liebniz, Theodicy: A Defense of Theism

10/19: The Problem of Evil
   Hick, Evil and Soul-Making
   Madden and Hare, A Critique of Hick’s Theodicy

10/21: The Problem of Evil and Rationality without Evidence
   Rowe, The Inductive Argument from Evil against the Existence of God
   Adams, Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God (L)
   Pascal, The Wager
10/26: **Midterm Exam**

10/28: Rationality without Evidence  
Clifford, *The Ethics of Belief*  
Blackburn, *Pascal’s Wager: A Critique* (L)  
James, *The Will to Believe*

11/2: The Role and Value of Rationality  
Kierkegaard, *Subjectivity is Truth*  
Adams, *Kierkegaard’s Argument Against Objective Reasoning in Religion* (L)

II. **Religious Pluralism and Exclusivism**

11/4: Pluralism  
Hick, *Religious Pluralism and Ultimate Reality*

11/9: Exclusivism  
Plantinga, *A Defense of Religious Exclusivism*

III. **Religion and Science**

11/11: Religion and Science  
Dawkins, *Science Versus Religion*  
Gould, *Overlapping Magisteria*

11/16: **Veteran’s Day Holiday**

11/18: Religion and Science  
Plantinga, *The Christian Argument Against Evolutionary Naturalism*

11/23: Religion and Science  
Sosa, *Plantinga’s Evolutionary Meditations*  
Plantinga, *Reply to Sosa*

11/25: **Thanksgiving Holiday**

IV. **Religion and Morality**

11/30: Religion and Morality  
Plato, *Morality and Religion*  
[Paper Due]
12/2: Religion and Morality
   Mavrodes, *Religion and the Queerness of Morality*
   Russell, *A Free Man’s Worship*

Notes

• If accommodations are needed for a disability or for religious reasons, please notify me during the first class period or as soon as possible.
• The Academic Honor Code must be observed in this course.
• Laptops and other electronic devices may not be used in class except for taking notes on the lecture.
• Please note that the policies and readings described above are subject to minor change.