

Course Information:

Title: PHIL 412—Philosophy of God
Time: MWF 12:20-1:15
Location: CH 153
Prerequisites: None (though previous study of philosophy will certainly be helpful and is *strongly* recommended)

(Note that this course does *NOT* fulfill the Ethics GE requirement)

Instructor Information:

Dr. Kevin Timpe
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Office: Founders 165A
Office Hours: MWF 10:00-11:15 and by appointment
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Course Description:

This course is a course in philosophical theology, and is designed to get students to begin to think philosophically about the nature and existence of God. There are two main objectives in the course:

- (i) for students to learn how philosophers in the Christian tradition have approached the metaphysics of God and
- (ii) for students themselves to think philosophically about the same topic.

To fulfill objective (i), we will be examining a number of influential writings in philosophical theology. While knowledge of what other philosophers have thought is essential to success in this course, this is not merely a course designed to get you to repeat or memorize data. Students are expected and required to engage the material themselves. Thus, (ii) is essential as well. Course readings and discussions will focus on the Christian tradition within monotheism; however, students are welcome and encouraged to think philosophically about their own religious tradition, whether another strand of monotheism (e.g., Judaism, Islam), polytheism or atheism.

Texts:

There is no text that you need to purchase for this course. I am in the middle of putting together an anthology entitled *Arguing about Religion* for Routledge Press, and we will be using the materials for that book as our text for this term. The readings will all be available via E-reserve (ER) through Copley Library:

<http://copleylib.sandiego.edu/eres/courseindex.aspx?error=&page=search>

The ER password for this course is '**Rasputle**'. Students are expected to print and bring the readings to class.

This course will also make use of WebCT. Students are responsible for regularly checking WebCT to keep current with the course schedule, as well as for various handouts and assignments.

Assignments:

Part of your course grade is based on class participation. Students are to keep up with the reading and come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Students who are not willing to read or publicly discuss what is assigned should **not** take the class. Everyone benefits from robust classroom discussion.

There will be **three exams**, which will consist primarily of short-answer and essay questions. A study guide will be circulated prior to each exam. Exams **cannot** be made up if missed.

Students will write **two papers** for the course. The first will be a reflection paper of approximately four pages based on a number of autobiographical readings of leading philosophers. Students will also write one argumentative paper of approximately twelve pages. The topic can be any issue related to the course material, but must be approved beforehand by the instructor. Further details on both papers will be forthcoming.

All assignments will be docked 1 full letter grade for *each* 24 hour period late (or part thereof), excluding official University holidays.

Course Grade:

Class Participation	10%
Exam I	15%
Exam II	15%
Exam III	20%
Autobiographical Reflection	10%
Argumentative Paper	30%
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>100%</u>

Grading Scale:

A	> 93%
A-	90-93%
B+	88-90%
B	83-88%
B-	80-83%
C+	78-80%
C	73-78%
C-	70-73%
D+	68-70%
D	63-68%
D-	60-63%
F	< 60%

Academic honesty:

This is, after all, a course concerned with truth. Academic dishonesty in any form (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) will **not** be tolerated. The University of San Diego’s policy on academic honest reads, in part, as follows:

Academic dishonesty, and allegations of academic dishonesty, are matters of University-wide concern in the same way that academic integrity is a matter of University-wide concern. Students bear the responsibility not only for their own academic integrity but also for bringing instances of suspected academic dishonesty to the attention of the proper authorities.... Penalties imposed by the instructor or supervisor with respect to a course or academic exercise may include: reduction in grade of the affected person in the course or exercise; the requirement that the

affected person withdraw from the course or exercise; the requirement that all or part of the course or exercise be retaken; the requirement that the person engage in additional work in connection with the course or exercise.

Cheating on an assignment, such as plagiarizing a paper or consulting previous semester's exams, is grounds for failure of the course. I **will not** hesitate to fail you if you cheat.

Miscellaneous Information:

All students must utilize their USD email accounts. I will sometimes use email to communicate with the class. Thus, I expect you to check your email on a reasonable basis. If you normally use a different email address, you will need to set your USD account to automatically forward all received mail to your preferred account.

Students are expected to treat all others in the class with the respect that is due. This included making sure that your **cell-phones are turned off** during class time.

You should become familiar with my web-page, as it has links to E-Reserve and WebCT. Also note that email is probably the best way to communicate with me outside of class.

Rough Course Schedule (Subject to Change):

The current class schedule of readings and assignments can be found on WebCT. Make sure you check this **regularly** and **often**.

Section 1: The Nature of Philosophy of Religion

28 Jan—syllabus

30 Jan—Norman Kretzmann, "The Nature of Natural Theology"

1 Feb—Scott MacDonald, "What is Philosophical Theology?"

4 Feb—Al Plantinga, "The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology" and Richard Swinburne, "Rational Religious Belief"

6 Feb—John Hick, "Religious Pluralism and Salvation"

8 Feb—Keith Ward, "Truth and the Diversity of Religions" and Timothy O'Connor, "Religious Pluralism"

Section 2: Arguments for God's Existence

11 Feb—Peter van Inwagen, "The Ontological Argument"

13 Feb—Alex Pruss, "Some Recent Work on the Cosmological Argument" and Wes Morriston, "A Critical Examination of the Kalam Cosmological Argument"

15 Feb—Robin Collins, "The Fine-Tuning Design Argument" and Elliot Sober, "Design Arguments"

18 Feb—Louis Pojman, "A Critique of the Argument from Religious Experience"

20 Feb—Make-up & Review

22 Feb—Exam I

Section 3: Arguments against God's Existence

25 Feb—Introducing the Problem(s) of Evil

27 Feb—Peter van Inwagen, "The Argument from Evil"

29 Feb—Whitley Kaufman, "Karma, Rebirth and the Problem of Evil"

3 March—Richard Swinburne, "Natural Evil and the Possibility of Knowledge"

5 March—William Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism"

7 March—William Alston, "The Inductive Argument from Evil and the Human Cognitive Condition"

10 March—Peter van Inwagen, "The Hiddenness of God"

- 12 March—Michael Murray, “Coercion and the Hiddenness of God”
- 14 March—Robert Lovering, “Divine Hiddenness and Inculpable Ignorance”
- 17-24 March—No Class (Spring Break)

Section 4: Divine Providence

- 26 March—William Lane Craig, “The Middle-Knowledge View”
- 28 March—William Hasker, “The Openness of God”
- 31 March—Derk Pereboom, “Free Will, Evil, and Divine Providence”
- 2 April—John Sanders, “Why Simple Foreknowledge Offers No More Providential Control than the Openness of God”
- 4 April—Make-up & Review
- 7 April—Exam II
- 9 April—Eleonore Stump, “Petitionary Prayer”
- 11 April—Kevin Timpe, “Prayers for the Past”

Section 5: The Afterlife

- 14 April—Kevin Corcoran, “Dualism, Materialism, and the Problem of Postmortem Survival”
- 16 April—Lynne Rudder Baker, “Persons and the Metaphysics of Resurrection”
- 18 April—Thomas Talbott, “The Doctrine of Everlasting Punishment”
- 21 April—Eleonore Stump, “Dante’s Hell, Aquinas’s Moral Theory and the Love of God”
- 23 April—Tim Pawl and Kevin Timpe, “Heavenly Freedom”

Section 6: Religion and Contemporary Society

- 25 April—Daniel Dennett, “Breaking the Spell”
- 28 April—Richard Dawkins, “The God Delusion” and Alister McGrath “Dawkins’ God”
- 30 April—Philip Johnson, “Evolution as Dogma: The Establishment of Naturalism”
- 2 May—Phillip Kitcher, “Born-Again Creationism”
- 5 May—Paul Weithman, “Theism, Law, and Politics”
- 7 May—Robert Pennock, “Why Creationism Should Not be Taught in the Public Schools”
- 9 May—Alvin Plantinga, “Creation and Evolution: A Modest Proposal”
- 12 May—Make-up & Review
- 14 May—Final Exam (2:00-3:50 PM)