Texts:


Course Description:

Welcome to *Philosophy of Religion*! In this course we will be exploring the phenomenon of religion with an emphasis on issues of faith, reason, belief, knowledge, and language. We will examine various traditional topics in the philosophy of religion (e.g., the problem of evil, faith and reason, arguments for and against the existence of God, death and the immortality of the soul, etc.) as well as a postmodern philosophy of religion. This course is an invitation to rigorous reading and critical thinking about the ways in which humans encounter religion and assess its significance in relation to questions of value and meaning.

Course Objectives:

To think critically about the following questions:
• What is religion?
• What are some traditional notions of God?
• What are some modern and postmodern criticisms of religion?
• What are some possible relationships between faith, reason, belief, knowledge, and language?
• To introduce students to the academic study of religion and philosophy
• To encourage a close reading of philosophical and religious texts

Assignments and Grading Grid

I. Writing Assignments: Participation in the course will be determined by assignments in each of the modules. Directions for the posts will be provided under the "Assignments" heading in each module. Discussions will close at the end of each module; do not wait until the last day to respond. You will be allowed to continue to the next module even if you choose not to post in the previous module. Discussion Assignments will not be extended or opened once closed at the end of each module.

II. Quizzes: There will be a quiz in each of the modules to assess your reading of the material. Quizzes will consist of responding to multiple choice questions based on the readings. Given the open book nature of the course, quizzes will be timed. You will only be allowed one attempt per quiz, so make sure you are prepared before taking the quiz. Quizzes will open weekly (check calendar). You will not be able to continue to the next module without taking the previous module's quiz.

III. Final Exam: This exam will consist of multiple-choice questions covering readings from the beginning of the semester.

Final grades will be based on the number of points earned by the student out of a total of 500 possible points.

Grade Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points Range</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>465-500 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>450-464 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>435-449 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>415-434 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>400-414 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>385-399 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>365-384 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>350-364 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>335-349 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>315-334 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>300-314 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 300 pts.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Module Readings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Text &amp; Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
<td>Course and Canvas Material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Night, Wiesel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Varieties of Religious Experience</td>
<td>Exploring the Philosophy of Religion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Personal/Academic Conduct

**Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism and Cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course) and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for
further action. See the UCF Golden Rule for further information. I will assume for this course that you will adhere to the academic creed of this University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. In other words, don't cheat by giving answers to others or taking them from anyone else. I will also adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity, so please do not ask me to change (or expect me to change) your grade illegitimately or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

**Personal Conduct**

You are expected to conduct yourself in a manner that is conducive to the academic ends that we are attempting to achieve (see University standards for personal conduct as outlined in The Golden Rule). It is expected that each student will respect the views of those in the course and will refrain from offensive posts. Furthermore, it is expected that each student will be sensitive to the beliefs/values of others in the course. **Critical thinking should not be understood as “belief bashing.”** In the case that this advice is not followed you should expect a lowering of your final grade or, in the event of continuous serious violations, removal from the course.

**Disability Statement**

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

**Copyright**

This course may contain copyright protected materials such as audio or video clips, images, text materials, etc. These items are being used with regard to the Fair Use doctrine in order to enhance the learning environment. Please do not copy, duplicate, download or distribute these items. The use of these materials is strictly reserved for this online classroom environment and your use only. All copyright materials are credited to the copyright holder.

**Third-Party Software and FERPA**

During this course you might have the opportunity to use public online services and/or software applications sometimes called third-party software such as a blog or wiki. While some of these could be required assignments, you need not make any personally identifying information on a public site. Do not post or provide any private information about yourself or your classmates. Where appropriate you may use a pseudonym or nickname. Some written assignments posted publicly may require personal reflection/comments, but the assignments will not require you to disclose any personally identity-sensitive information. If you have any concerns about this, please contact your instructor.
Federal Financial Aid Regulation

Beginning in the Fall of 2014, all faculty members are required to document students' engagement in the course based on their academic activity at the beginning of each semester. In order to document that you have begun this course, the student information for instructor assignment included in this module must be completed within the first week of classes (or, if adding the course late, as soon as you have access to the course). This assignment must be completed no later that August 27th. Failure to complete this assignment prior to the deadline will result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

Protocols

Classroom Expectations

The following ground rules will help your work in this course to go more smoothly. Please carefully review these expectations and follow them.

1. Academic integrity will be appraised according to the student academic behavior standards outlined in The Golden Rule of the University of Central Florida’s Student Handbook. See http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/ for further details.
2. Keep up with the reading. You have quite a few chapters, modules, discussion postings, and e-mail messages to read for the class. Please keep up with the reading. Students who keep up with the reading tend to do much better in this kind of class than those who do not.

Messaging

Make sure you:

1. Check your inbox at least twice per week (more often is better).
2. Be patient. Don’t expect an immediate response when you send a message. Generally, two days is considered reasonable amount of time to receive a reply.
3. Be courteous and considerate. Being honest and expressing yourself freely is very important but being considerate of others online is just as important as in the classroom.
4. Make every effort to be clear. Online communication lacks the nonverbal cues that fill in much of the meaning in face-to-face communication.
5. Do not use all caps. This makes the message very hard to read and is considered "shouting." Check spelling, grammar, and punctuation (you may want to compose in a word processor, then cut and paste the message into the discussion).
6. Break up large blocks of text into paragraphs and use a space between paragraphs.
7. Never assume that your messages can be read by no one except yourself; others may be able to read or access your mail. Never send or keep anything that you would not mind seeing on the evening news.
Discussion Topics

General "rules of the road" or protocols that apply to messages also apply to the use of discussions. Use the following conventions when composing a discussion posting:

1. During a Discussion assignment, deadlines for posting to and replying will be specified with each assignment. It is a good practice to always check the Discussions multiple times during the week.
2. Be patient. Don’t expect an immediate response when you send a message.
3. Everyone should feel free to participate in class and online discussions. Regular and meaningful discussion postings constitute a substantial portion of your grade.
4. Respect each other’s ideas, feelings and experience.
5. Be courteous and considerate. It is important to be honest and to express yourself freely, but being considerate of others is just as important and expected online, as it is in the classroom.
6. Explore disagreements and support assertions with data and evidence.
7. Do not use postings such as "I agree," "I don’t know either," "Who cares," or "ditto." They do not add to the discussion, take up space on the Discussions, and will not be counted for assignment credit.
8. Avoid posting large blocks of text. If you must, break them into paragraphs and use a space between paragraphs.

Word of Caution

Caution

Since this course is predominantly self-paced, my very strong recommendation is that you keep up with the readings, discussion posts, and quizzes in order to stay on track. It has been my experience that self-paced courses are a double-edged sword. The flexibility that makes online courses popular also brings with it the temptation to procrastinate in the absence of weekly F2F meetings. As a result, withdrawals and "F"s due to the inability to complete work are very high in online courses. Given this flexibility as well as the open-book nature of this course, the final, quizzes and posts will not be re-opened; no "Incomplete" will be granted without a documented medical emergency. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of all deadlines (keep an eye on the calendar and follow prompts in the modules and announcements regarding deadlines). If you find that you have forgotten, misread, misunderstood, misconstrued the deadlines, and/or have “misplaced” your cyber-calendar, are the victim of a computer crash, have fallen prey to cyber-gremlins, and/or your cyber-dog ate your cyber-paper, and/or just plain procrastinated, do not e-mail the instructor requesting any of the aforementioned.

The moral of the story is this: if you want to avoid undue stress, anxiety, and do well in the course, make sure you take the time to read on a consistent basis and check in on the discussion messages regularly; do not wait until the last possible day/minute to take quizzes and post discussions. Keep in mind those students that are actively engaged in the course will fare better at the end of the semester. If you have any questions concerning the course, feel free to email me. If you encounter material in the readings that you do not understand, contact me and I will gladly assist you.