

PHILOSOPHY 350 — FOLSOM LAKE COLLEGE
PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION



Professor: Dr. Mathias Warnes
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Office Hour: T/Th 2-4pm by Zoom



Fall 2020—Class Number 20827
Class Meets on Canvas and Zoom
Course Materials at: mathiaswarnes.com and Canvas

Prerequisite: None.

General Education: AA/AS Area I; CSU Area C2; IGETC Area 3B

Course Transferable to UC/CSU

Hours: 54 hours lecture, 108 hours out-of-class work, 162 student learning hours.

Catalog Description: This course is an introduction to traditional philosophical problems connected with religious belief. Issues to be discussed are the existence and nature of God, the problem of evil, the nature of religious language, the possibility of religious knowledge, the existence of miracles, religious experience, and mysticism. The rationality of religious belief will also be examined.

Texts:

1. Kripal, Jeffrey J. *Comparing Religions*. Wiley Blackwell, 2014. ISBN: 9781405184588.
2. ***Coursepack*** available in PDF at mathiaswarnes.com, and on Canvas.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's):

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. compare and contrast theories or positions on issues such as the existence of God, the afterlife, religious faith, or other topics relevant to the course.
2. analyze and evaluate arguments from primary sources concerning the existence of God, the afterlife, religious faith, or other topics relevant to the course.
3. evaluate religious concerns or questions unique to specific historical and/or cultural places and times.
4. formulate reasons to justify one's beliefs concerning the existence of God, the afterlife, religious faith, or other topics relevant to the course.

Grade Breakdown:

Reading Responses	30%	Midterm Exam	10%
Discussion	20%	Final Exam	10%
Active Participation	20%	Presentation	10%

Reading Responses (6 x 5% = 30%): Keep in mind that Reading Responses must cover *one* assigned reading for the current week, *or* immediately preceding week. Check Canvas for more specific instructions for each RR. Late RR's are accepted for half credit. Length requirements are strict. RR's must be between **2-3 pages, 1.5- or double-spaced typed, 12 pt. font** with standard margins. An RR that is *on* two pages, but is closer to 1.5 of actual text, does **not** meet the length requirement, and will not be graded. RR's must contain *two solid* pages of text minimum. RR's are due in Canvas by Sunday at 11:59pm the week they are due. Since RR's are the most formal writing you will do for this course, content and quality requirements are strictly enforced. A *Reading Response Rubric* is available at mathiaswarnes.com, and on Canvas. RR's will be graded on a five category system. 5/5 = Exemplary, 4.5/5 = Excellent, 4/5 = Good, 3.5/5 = Satisfactory, and 0/5 = Unsatisfactory. 0/5 may be resubmitted with revisions for up to 4/5. Between reading & writing expect to spend 3-4 hours *per* Reading Response.

Presentation (10%): Each student is expected prepare a PPT presentation (8-12 slides). Presentation weeks will be assigned within Canvas, and should be considered as set in stone unless you have a good reason for needing to reschedule. Poor personal planning does not constitute a good reason, so choose your presentation week wisely. Students are encouraged to produce recordings, but this is not required. At a minimum, presenters must upload their PPT or PDF into the designated *Student Presentation Forum* on Canvas, along with accompanying notes or summaries for each slide. Students must also upload their presentation in the *Presentation Upload Link* to receive a grade. What can your presentation be on? By default, you will be assigned a subsection in Kripal's *Comparing Religions*. Your job will be to summarize and present the main claims and informative points in your section, and to bring in images, and lines of questioning from additional research. You can also do your presentation on any topic or figure relevant to the Philosophy of Religion provided you receive topic & source approval from your instructor. A *Presentation Rubric* available on Canvas and at mathiaswarnes.com). How are presentations graded? /10. Fantastic presentations receive a 10/10. Most presentations receive a 7 (satisfactory, fulfills basic requirements), 8 (good, it is effective/informative), or 9 (excellent, contains great insights, is of a high educational value). A 6/10 or lower indicates that you did not fulfill one or several basic requirements.

Discussion Forums (20%): There will be 10 Discussion Forums on Canvas in sync with our weekly modules, and worth 2% each. See instructions in each Discussion Forum. In general, a satisfactory DF contribution will include 2 paragraphs of minimum 8 lines each on *two* assigned materials, as well as *two* substantive replies to a student peer of minimum 4 lines.

Active Participation (20%): The AP portion of your grade is designed to keep each student active in their learning process each week. There are **two** components to the AP grade: 1. *AP Forums* and *Student Presentation Forums* (15%); 2. *Zoom Discussions or Attendance Forums* (5%).

1. *AP and Student Presentation Forums* (10% + 5% = 15%): *AP Forums* will give students the opportunity to comment on and discuss specific materials included in the Modules, and are worth 1% each. Additionally, each student is responsible for commenting on 1 student presentation each week that there are presenters (10 X .5%). A satisfactory comment must be at least 4-6 lines of text, and contain one well-formulated question. Presenters are responsible for answering at least *one* student question before Sunday at 11:59pm the week they present.

2. *Zoom Discussions or Attendance Forums* (5%): Although this is an asynchronous class, some live learning components will be required. This is designed to: 1. boost class morale; 2. help us get to know each other; 3. provide synchronous learning options for students who prefer that. Our class will have 10 scheduled Zoom Discussions always on **Wednesdays from 3:00pm-4:00pm**. Students are highly encouraged to attend all 10. Mere attendance will be worth .5% of the Zoom Discussion for that week, but the full 1% will only be awarded to students who come prepared to pose a salient question in regards to the week's readings. **NOTE WELL:** Since this is not billeted as a Hybrid Class, I intend to be flexible regarding attendance at our Zoom Discussions. There are 10 scheduled sessions but you are only required to attend 5. If there are students who must miss more than 5 Zoom Discussions, I will offer alternative scheduling for smaller groups given reasonable notice. Reasonable notice does ***not*** include waiting until semester end, and then letting me know you need 5 Zoom hours ASAP.

Midterm and Final Exam (20%): The midterm and final are summative assessments designed to test knowledge of core curriculum. They will consist of 8 of 15 short answer questions (80%), and 1 short essay (20%). The key factor for success is using *assigned course materials* and *your own words* in crafting original responses, never google.com! Good luck!

Course Schedule: Phil 350

Week One	Aug 24-28
<i>Topics</i>	Introductions, Syllabus, What is Philosophy of Religion?
<i>Readings</i>	<i>Comparing Religions</i> , Introduction & Chapter 1 (p. 1-26)
Week Two	Aug 31-Sep 4 (Sep 6 is Census Day)
<i>Topics</i>	Ancient Egyptian, Vedic, and Greek Religion as Philosophy
<i>Readings</i>	1. <i>Coursepack</i> , p. 1-44 (“Preface” and “The African Mind” from Asante’s <i>The Egyptian Philosophers: Ancient African Voices for These Times</i> ” & “Introduction” from Mahony’s <i>The Artful Universe: An Introduction to the Vedic Religious Imagination</i>) 2. <i>Coursepack</i> , p. 45-91 (“Introduction” from W.F. Otto’s <i>The Homeric Gods: The Spiritual Significance of Greek Religion</i> , and Hesiod’s <i>Theogony</i> & <i>Orphic Hymns</i>)

Week Three	Sep 7-11
<i>Topics</i>	Greek Philosophy as Religion: The Presocratics as Religious Reformers
<i>Readings</i>	<i>Coursepack</i> , p. 91-156 (“Introduction” & Thales to Parmenides from Curd’s <i>A Presocratics Reader: Selected Fragments and Testimonia</i>)
Week Four	Sep 14-18
<i>Topic</i>	Plato’s Religion: <i>Euthryphro</i>, <i>Phaedo</i>, <i>Republic</i>, <i>Phaedrus</i>
<i>Readings</i>	<i>Coursepack</i> , p. 157-230 (<i>The Euthryphro</i> , Selections from Partene’s <i>Plato: Selected Myths</i> , “The Other World,” “The Cave,” “Er’s Journey,” and “The Winged Soul”, and Max Charlesworth on Plato’s “Philosophy as Religion”)
Week Five	Sep 21-25
<i>Topics</i>	Hellenistic Philosophical Religions: Cicero’s <i>On the Nature of the Gods</i> on Epicurean vs. Stoic Theology, and Skepticism
<i>Readings</i>	<i>Coursepack</i> , p. 231-255 (“Summary of the Text” & Selections from Books 1-3)
	<i>Comparing Religions</i> , Chapter 2
Week Six	Sep 28-Oct 1
<i>Topics</i>	The Rise of Christian Theology: Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas
<i>Readings</i>	<i>Coursepack</i> , p. 256-324 (Charlesworth Cont’d on Neo-Platonism and chapters from Melchert’s <i>The Great Conversation: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy</i>)
	<i>Comparing Religions</i> , Chapter 3
Week Seven	Oct 5-9
<i>Topics</i>	The Rise of Islamic Theology: al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, Avicenna, al-Ghazālī
<i>Readings</i>	<i>Coursepack</i> , p. 325-348 (Charlesworth Cont’d on Islamic Philosophy & chapter from Melchert’s <i>The Great Conversation: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy</i>)
	<i>Comparing Religions</i> , Chapter 4

Week Eight	Oct 12-16
<i>Topics</i>	Renaissance and Modern Philosophies of Religion: Pico della Mirandola's Syncretism, and Rationalism to the Enlightenment
<i>Readings</i>	<i>Coursepack</i> , p. 349- 417 ("Introduction" & Pico's <i>Oration on the Dignity of Man</i> , and Charlesworth on "The Enlightenment: Pure Reason and Religion")
	<i>Comparing Religions</i> , Chapter 5
Week Nine	Oct 19-23
<i>Topics</i>	German Idealist Philosophy of Religion: Hegel, Hölderlin, Schelling
<i>Readings</i>	<i>Coursepack</i> , p. 418-453 ("The Oldest System-Program of German Idealism", Selections from Hölderlin's <i>Hyperion</i> , & Books I and V from Schelling's <i>Clara</i>)
	<i>Comparing Religions</i> , Chapter 6
Week Ten	Oct 26-30
<i>Topics</i>	Kierkegaard's and Early Nietzsche's Philosophy of Religion
<i>Readings</i>	<i>Coursepack</i> , p. 454-498 (Selections from Kierkegaard, & Nietzsche's "Fate and History", "Freedom of the Will and Fate", & §1-7 of <i>The Birth of Tragedy</i>)
	<i>Comparing Religions</i> , Chapter 7
Week Eleven	Nov 2-6
<i>Topics</i>	Nietzsche's Philosophy of Religion II: The Death of God
<i>Readings</i>	<i>Coursepack</i> , p. 499-529 ("The Madman", "Zarathustra's Prologue", BGE, §3 "The Religious Disposition", & <i>The Anti-Christ</i> from <i>The Nietzsche Reader</i>)
	<i>Comparing Religions</i> , Chapter 8
Week Twelve	Nov 9-13
<i>Topics</i>	Nietzsche's Philosophy of Religion III: Redeeming Nietzsche
<i>Readings</i>	<i>Coursepack</i> , p. 530-607 "The orientation of Nietzsche's question of God" and "Holy Nietzsche" from Fraser's <i>Redeeming Nietzsche: On the Piety of Unbelief</i> , and

	optional reading from <i>Heidegger's Philosophy of Religion</i> by Ben Vedder)
	<i>Comparing Religions</i> , Chapter 9
Week Thirteen	Nov 16-20 (Nov 17 is "W" Day)
<i>Topics</i>	Jung's Philosophy of Religion in <i>Redbook</i> and The Poetics of God in Rilke's <i>Book of Hours</i>
<i>Readings</i>	<i>Coursepack</i> , p. 608-659 ("Liber Primus" from Jung's <i>Redbook</i> , and Rilke's "Book of Monastic Life")
	<i>Comparing Religions</i> , Chapter 10
Week Fourteen	Nov 23-27
<i>Topics</i>	Gloria Anzaldúa: Chicana Perspective on Philosophical Religion
<i>Readings</i>	<i>Coursepack</i> , p. 660-698 (Selections from <i>Borderlands</i> , & "Flights of the Imagination" from <i>Light in the Dark: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality</i>)
	<i>Comparing Religions</i> , Chapter 11
Week Fifteen	Nov 30-Dec 4
<i>Topics</i>	Postmodernist Critique vs. Postmodern Christianity
<i>Readings</i>	<i>Coursepack</i> , p. 699-758 ("Philosophy as Postmodernist Critique of the Religious Domain" in Charlesworth's <i>Philosophy and Religion</i> & "Believing that One Believes" from Vattimo's <i>After Christianity</i> , and "Faith and Knowledge: Two Sources of »Religion« at the Limits of Reason Alone)
	<i>Comparing Religions</i> , Chapter 12
Week Sixteen	Dec 7-11
	Review, Discussion, and Catch-up Week
	<i>Final</i> Closing Date for All Things (Except Final Exam): Dec 13th by 11:59pm
Finals Week	Dec 14-18

Administrative Matters

Grading Policy: A student's grade for this course **must** be based upon mastery of course content. A student's grade cannot be based upon mere attendance, extraneous extra-credit, scholarship, financial aid needs, or other pleading. It is important that students examine the syllabus and plan appropriately to achieve the grade they desire. I will be happy to meet with you during office hours to discuss how best to achieve your target grade. This class uses standard grading. Please be aware of the significance of the grades assigned. "A" designates exemplary work, work that could be used as an example of what all students should do. "B" designates good work. Some students seem to believe that "B" means bad work. This is not the case. "B" signifies that the student has done good work. "C" means that the student has done average or slightly below average, i.e. mediocre work. "D" signifies poor work. "F" signifies that the student has not worked enough to receive credit for the course. Students should know that in my grading scale an "A" is 89.45% or above. "B" is 79.45%-89.45%, "C" is 69.45%-79.45, etc. This scale holds for all and I cannot give special treatment with grading.

Virtual Environment Behavior: All students are expected to maintain professional and courteous conduct in the virtual environment at all times. I expect an atmosphere of solicitous attention and respect for the instructor and for other students' expressions and opinions in all forums, and a consistently objective and empathetic response to the material we study together. Observing these guidelines will ensure a better learning experience for all.

Plagiarism and Honesty in Academic Work: It is important to know that Plagiarism and cheating are serious ethical violations and have serious consequences. Violations of standards of academic conduct include but are not limited to the following: 1. Receiving or providing assistance on an examination or assignment unless the instructor authorizes such assistance; 2. Using materials other than those permitted by the instructor during an examination; 3. Plagiarizing: failure to indicate the source of borrowed words and ideas. Plagiarism defined: Simply stated, plagiarism is "the taking of others' words or thoughts without due acknowledgment."¹ This definition applies to both printed, online, and unpublished material. That is, students must acknowledge, through the appropriate forms of citations, any borrowed ideas or phrases, and all direct quotations if more than three or four words. They also must not submit work that has been written, revised, or edited, in part or in whole, by another. I will return the first instance of plagiarized work ungraded, and you *might*, after a one-on-one conversation, be allowed to resubmit. However, in cases of clear & deliberate plagiarism, you will receive a 0, and will not be allowed to resubmit. A second instance of plagiarism will result in automatic failure, and possible expulsion. Plagiarism rules are the same for all assignment.

Students with Disabilities: If you have a verified need for an academic accommodation or materials in alternate media (i.e.: Braille, large print, electronic text, etc.) per the Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, please contact me as soon as possible to arrange accommodations.

¹ Frederick Crewes, *The Random House Handbook*, 3rd ed. New York: Random House, 1980 (p. 405).

Free Help: In addition to my regularly scheduled Office Hour, for free, one-on-one help with any writing or other work in any class, please contact the *Reading and Writing Center*. Cypress Hall room FL2-239 on the Folsom campus (916) 608-6517.