

# **PL 4: Reason and Religion**

**Dale Tuggy**

**Fall 1999**

**Tuesday & Thursday 9-10:20; RI Hall 201**

## **Course Description**

This course is an introduction to some of the central issues of “western” philosophy of religion. Should we inquire into the intellectual credentials of religious belief? Can it be proven that God exists? Does the existence of evil in the universe prove that God doesn’t exist? What about people’s religious experiences - are they illusory, evidence of some higher reality, or are the data inconclusive? What is the relationship between science and belief in God? What are “miracles”, and are they impossible? Is there any reason to think that humans can survive after physical death? What should one make of the fact of religious pluralism? We will examine these and other questions by closely and carefully examining the arguments that philosophers have given concerning them.

## **Goals**

1. To enable you to think critically about religious and philosophical issues.
2. To make you conversant with some of the extensive and rich literature in the philosophy of religion, both recent and classic.
3. To improve your argumentative writing skills, that is, your ability to write a paper which effectively and cogently makes a case for your position.
4. To introduce you to some wider philosophical issues in metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics, and their relevance to the philosophy of religion.

## **Texts**

Martinich, A.P. *Philosophical Writing* [W]

Peterson, Hasker, Reichenbach, Basinger:

*Reason and Religious Belief* [RRB]

*Philosophy of Religion - Selected Readings* [PR]

## **Requirements and Grading**

There are 400 possible points for the course, which break down as follows:

Required Reading	40
Discussion Group	30
Paper 1 (3 pgs)	50
Paper 2 (5 pgs)	80
Paper 3 (8-10 pgs)	100
<u>Final exam</u>	<u>100</u>
Total	400

*Reading 10%*

It is important that you keep up with the reading. Lectures will presuppose that you have read the material beforehand. You will be asked at the start of each class to sign a sheet indicating that you have done the required reading for that day. Everyone will be granted three free absences/failures to read without any grade penalty. If you come in late it is your responsibility to find the sheet and sign it. Skipping class equals losing reading points.

*Discussion Section 8%*

Required discussion sections will meet weekly eleven times, starting the second week of class. The discussion group grade covers attendance only, and everyone gets one free skip.

*Exam 25%*

There will be a comprehensive final exam. We will observe the reading week (December 6-10), during which there will be optional review sessions.

*Papers 58%*

There will be three papers - 3 pages (due 9/21), 5 pages (due 10/14), 8-10 pages (due 11/23).

•Late work will not be accepted.

**Office Hours:**

In Room 101@ the Philosophy Department (“Gerard House”), 54 College St.

Dale: Thursday 10:30-11:30, 1-2

Andy: Monday 1:30-2:30, Wednesday 11:45-12:45

You are welcome to email us at: Dale\_Tuggy@Brown.edu & Andrew\_Roos@Brown.edu

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Required Reading</b>
UNIT ONE: FAITH AND REASON		
9/7	Introduction, syllabus Pascal’s Wager	
9/9	Arguments & Logic Aquinas on faith & reason Clifford on the Ethics of Belief	W 18-51 RRB 43-61,63-5; PR 57-65 PR 65-71
9/14	William James' response to Clifford	PR 71-80

Kierkegaard's fideism PR 80-4  
W. Abraham on 'soft rationalism' PR 84-94

## UNIT TWO: RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

9/16 classic accounts of religious RRB 18-42, 317-20; PR 7-  
20 experience  
9/21 *paper 1 due*; Martin: a skeptical view PR 41-55  
9/23 Alston on perceiving God PR 20-9, W 52-66  
9/28 Can we know that God exists without PR 321-9, 330-6; RRB 146-65  
arguments?

## UNIT THREE: ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

9/30 What is kind of being is God supposed RRB 62-84  
to be?  
10/5 What use are theistic proofs? RRB 85-7  
Ontological argument; Richard Taylor's RRB 87-91; PR 167-76  
cosmological argument  
10/7 the Kalaam cosmological argument PR 176-89, RRB 90-100  
10/12 Mackie's objections to PR 189-98, W 97-142  
cosmological Arguments  
10/14 *paper 2 due*, a moral argument? PR 221-8, RRB 106-11, 279-83  
10/19 teleological arguments RRB 100-6, W 143-68  
10/21 cont. PR 198-221  
Religion and Science RRB 237-58  
10/26 cont. PR 465-91

## UNIT FOUR: THE PROBLEMS OF EVIL AND MIRACLES

10/28 Hume on Miracles RRB 156-73, PR 389-98  
11/2 Mackie/Swinburne debate on miracles PR 399-407, W 169-82  
11/4 cont. PR 407-17  
11/9 Hume on the Problem of Evil RRB 92-116, PR 235-42  
varieties of theodicy PR 231-5, 281-94  
11/11 Rowe: the objection pressed PR 295-306

## UNIT FIVE: LIFE AFTER DEATH

11/16	concepts of immortality, personal identity	RRB 212-36
	Price, Plato, Swinburne on immortality	handout, PR 419-31, PR 431-42
11/18	Badham vs. survival	PR 443-52

UNIT SIX: THE MEANING OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

11/23	<u>paper 3 due</u> , Pluralism	RRB 259-78, PR 495-502
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[no discussion sections this week]

*THANKSGIVING BREAK - NOV. 24-8*

11/30	Pluralism, cont.	PR 502-26
12/2	Faith & Reason revisited, review	RRB 324-32

*READING WEEK DEC. 6-10*

12/6-10	Optional Review Session(s) (to be announced)	
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12/11-20	<i>Final Exam</i> (to be announced)	
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