

Philosophy of Religion

I Instructor Information

Name: Dr. Bradley Rettler
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II Course Description

Philosophy of religion is the attempt to answer questions about God, religion, and religious experience. Some of the questions that we'll be discussing this semester are:

1. Does God exist?
2. Is the existence of God compatible with the existence of evil?
3. Do the physical constants give us reason to believe in God?
4. Is the existence of God compatible with God's hiddenness?
5. Can we make sense of goodness without God?

III Required Readings

Links to all readings will be posted on the website. There is no textbook.

IV Evaluation

You will have option to take Track 1 or Track 2. Which track you take is entirely your choice. If you are choosing Track 1, you *must* tell me by Sept 21.

Track 1:

100% of your grade for the course will be for one original paper of approximately 5,000 words. Additionally:

- 1) Around a third of the way through the semester (Sept 21), you'll come to my office for a half hour to an hour to talk about philosophy of religion. You should have some idea of what general topic you want to write your final paper on. We'll talk about that topic and your thoughts on it. I'll give you further reading that isn't on the syllabus.

- 2) About halfway through the semester (Oct 14), we'll meet again. You should have read most of the further reading. We'll talk about it and your thoughts on it. I might give you a bit more reading.
- 3) About two thirds of the way through the semester (Nov 9), we'll meet again. You should have done all of the reading I've assigned, and more besides. You should have also started working on the paper. We'll talk through your argument.
- 4) I will read drafts of papers if and only if they are submitted by November 30.

Track 2:

- 1) Five times during the semester, and on at least three different readings you will write a one-page reaction paper and email it to me by 11:59pm the night before class. The paper can include questions (phrased as precisely as possible) and/or objections. Each will be 5% of your grade.
- 2) One time during the semester you will (briefly) summarize the argument from the article, present the questions/objections in your reaction paper to the class, and lead discussion for ten minutes. This will be 10% of your grade.
- 3) You will write one 2,000-3,500 word paper on a topic related to the course. You will meet with me around the halfway point of the semester (Oct 14) to talk through potential topics. This will be 35% of your grade. I will read one-page outlines if and only if they are submitted by November 30.
- 4) You will have a final exam comprised of 4-6 short essay questions on the readings. This will be 30% of your grade.

V Honor Code

All students are expected to abide by the University Honor Code. Students are not allowed to write papers together, although verbal discussion of one's paper (with anyone) is not only permitted but encouraged. Any use of outside sources for specific ideas or arguments must be properly cited. Plagiarism is easily detectable and will absolutely not be tolerated. The Philosophy Department provides guidelines on what constitutes plagiarism here: <http://www.baylor.edu/honorcode/index.php?id=44060>. You are **strongly encouraged** to read that document. If you have any doubt about the appropriateness of any action, please check with me.

VI Expected Schedule

See website.