

Syllabus for PHIL 347, Spring term 2025

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Instructor: Dr Anders Kraal

1. Course Description

This course is concerned with central questions pertaining to God and religion. What do the words “religion” and “God” signify? What are the main arguments for the existence of God? What are the main arguments against? And what sort of reasons are required for responsible belief to start with?

2. Lectures. MWF 10:00-10:50am in BUCH A 202 and/or over Zoom livestream. (Note: this course is given in parallel classroom and online sections. Recordings will be available for both sections.)

3. Instructor. Dr. Anders Kraal (anders.kraal@ubc.ca)

4. Instructor Office Hours. TBA

5. Instructor Email Policy. Instructor will read and reply to emails weekdays, but please ask course-related questions on the Canvas webpage’s Discussion Board.

6. Teaching Assistant. TBA (*The TA will be marking exams, and will answer questions about marked work via email.*)

7. Required Texts.

—Kraal, Anders. *The problem of God in David Hume*. Cambridge University Press. 2023

—Course PDF.

In addition to the bookstore, the readings will be made available in a PDF posted on canvas.

8. Course Requirements

In-Class Exam (x3): In the in-class exams, you will be asked to provide answers to questions dealing with matters brought up in class prior to the date of the exam. If you miss these exams you will automatically be assigned 0 points unless you provide the TA with an UBC Academic Calendar approved rationale for make- up exam or transfer of the weight to the final exam.

Final Exam: The final exam will be held during UBC’s final examinations period. A missed final exam will be assigned 0p unless an explanation is provided that is acceptable by the standards of the UBC Academic Calendar (in which case there will be a standing deferred final exam).

9. Lecture Recordings

Lectures will be recorded and uploaded for easy student access typically within 2 days of the lecture in question. Link to recording playlist will be provided at beginning of term.

10. Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course the student will be expected to be familiar with i) main ideas about the meanings of the terms “God” and “religion”; ii) main arguments in support of theism; iii) main arguments against theism; and iv) main ideas about criteria for responsible belief.

11. Marking Parameters

Your mark in this course will be a function of three main factors: i) your performance on the examinable momenta relative to your peers, ii) your comprehension of the course material, iii) demonstration of skill in assessing and evaluating philosophical ideas.

12. Marking Scale

A+ 90-100% / **A** 85-89% / **A-** 80-84% / **B+** 76-79% / **B** 72-75% / **B-** 68-71%

C+ 64-67% / **C** 60-63% / **C-** 55-59% / **D** 50-54% / **F** 0-49%

The degree of difficulty on the examinable momenta will be set so as to *aim* at a class average outcome that by and large conforms to the department average for this course down the years. Upwards scaling may be used to this effect.

13. Policy on Review of Marked Work

Marks on exams and papers will be posted on canvas. Feedback on expected outcomes of exams and papers will be provided (typically by the Instructor) in so-called Feedback Sessions. Any concerns about the marking of a paper or exam should be submitted to the marker (typically the TA) via email, and will be responded to (typically by the TA) via email.

14. Plagiarism (from the UBC Academic Calendar)

Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Scholarship quite properly rests upon examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. However, when another person's words (i.e. phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, in endnotes, or in another accepted form of academic

citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (for example, within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the student's own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments. See also <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>

15. UBC Values and Policies (from the UBC Academic Calendar)

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available here (<https://senate.ubc.ca/policiesresources-support-student-success>).

16. Schedule (more detailed schedule will be published on canvas)

6/1 Socrates on God

8/1 Plato on God

10/1 Aristotle on God

13/1 Epicurus on God

15/1 The cosmological argument

17/1 The cosmological argument

20/1 The cosmological argument

22/1 The cosmological argument

24/1 The cosmological argument

27/1 The design argument

29/1 The design argument

31/1 The design argument

3/2 The design argument

5/2 Exam1 (worth 20%) (classroom for Online Section TBA)

7/2 The ontological argument

10/2 The ontological argument

12/2 The ontological argument

14/2 The ontological argument

17/2 Family Day: no class

19/2 Exam 2 (worth 20%) (classroom for Online Section TBA)

21/2 The ontological argument

24/2 The ontological argument

26/2 The ontological argument

28/2 The problem of evil

3/3 The problem of evil

5/3 The problem of evil

7/3 The problem of evil

10/3 The problem of evil

12/3 The problem of evil

14/3 Exam 3 (worth 20%) (classroom for Online Section TBA)

17/3 midterm break: no class

19/3 midterm break: no class

21/3 midterm break: no class

24/3 Historical, psychological, sociological objections

26/3 Historical, psychological, sociological objections

28/3 What is religion?

31/3 What is religion?

2/4 Responsible belief

4/4 Responsible belief

7/4 Course review

April: final exam (worth 40%) (time and date and classrooms TBA)