Philosophy of Religion (PHI3700 Sec. 01)

Basic Info

Title: Philosophy of Religion
Prefix and Number: PHI 3700
Section: 01
Semester/Year: Fall 2011
Location: MMC
Day/Time: MWF 1:00 PM
Instructor: Kenton Harris
Instructor Office: DM 434B (MMC)
Instructor Telephone Number: (305) 348-2185
Instructor E-mail: harrisk@fiu.edu
Instructor Web Site: http://www.fiu.edu/~harrisk/
Text(s): The Idea of the Holy: Rudolf Otto
Breaking the Spell: Daniel Dennett
Tests: One In-class Exam (objective- short answer)
Papers: One Thesis Paper (8-10-page papers)
Final Exam: Yes

Important Dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam 1</th>
<th>October 17 2011</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1</td>
<td>11/14/11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>As Scheduled by University Calendar</td>
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Course Description:

This course will examine key concepts arising from the theory and practice of Religion including the nature of religion, of God, of faith, as well as traditional and modern arguments for and against the existence of God. We will also consider what limits exist with respect to cognitions of God.

Purpose:

How does this course advance/fit University Mission?

Because this is a course in the philosophical consideration of nature and elements of religion, it necessarily requires that student become acquainted with history, mythology, politics, and ethics. Beyond that, the student will learn to sharpen his/her observational skills, analytic as well as synthetic thinking, and writing abilities and communication skills. It is precisely this kind of breadth of knowledge and intellectual maturity, which is expected of a University graduate.

Objectives:

It is the objective of this course to acquaint the student with philosophy of religion both as a way of enriching the student’s exchange with religion and religious discourse as well as give the student a deeper appreciation of the religions of world and the issues and controversies therein. More generally, it
is the aim of this course to familiarize the student with the discipline of philosophy, its ubiquitous presence in all areas of reflective human experience, its fruitful if occasionally tempestuous exchange with established religions, and the value of the examined life. Finally it is the aim of this class to equip the student with the tools necessary to make informed and intelligent judgements about religion and religious practice.

**Learning Methods:**

The course will be primarily Lecture in format. The student will be tested on comprehension of lecture and text material with one midterm exam and a comprehensive final exam. Also the student will be required to write at least one thesis paper involving some research and original thought.

**Writing Component:**

The thesis paper will be the focus of the writing component of the course. However, the student will also need to prepare and deliver a chapter summary from one of the required texts for the course.

**Skills Component:**

As with any philosophy class there will be heavy emphasis clear articulation skills, the ability to reason and justify one’s one assertions, to see the implications and ramifications of theoretical positions. Developing these skills will be a major focus of the course and, indeed, will be necessary for passing this course.

**Learning Competencies:**

The student will need to hone his/her skills as both an analytic and synthetic reasoner as well as his/her observation and communications skills. This course will involve experiencing, thinking about, talking about and ultimately writing about art.

**Basic Policies**

Below are listed various procedural policies. By remaining a registered student in this course you indicate your acceptance of the policies listed in this syllabus.

**Attendance and make-up policies:**

1. Class participation and the in-class assignment are an integral part of a satisfactory grade. Poor attendance will result in a lower grade.

2. With respect to make-up exams, documented emergencies will be dealt with on an individual basis.

**Drops:**

Students unable to continue in the course should notify the instructor. **It is their responsibility to fill out official withdrawal forms with the registrar's office.** If they do not officially withdraw, they will receive an F for the course.

**Special Learning Needs:**

Students with documented special learning needs are asked to have Student Services inform the instructor so that accommodations can be made when necessary for testing, note taking or, paper writing.

**Class Conduct:**
1. All students must come to class, on time and prepared with his or her own books and materials.

2. Beepers and cellular phones must be turned off prior to class.

**Requirements and Grading:**

**Requirements:**

**Paper:**

There will be one assigned thesis paper. This paper should be approximately 8-10 pages in length, typed and double-spaced and turned in on the dates designated by the lesson plan. It will take the form of a critical examination of a text selection to be given in class. The student must demonstrate not only an understanding of the article and issue but a critical appraisal as well, including anticipating responses to the critical comments raised by the student. The paper will count as 30% of the student's final grade.

**Chapter Summary:** Each student will be assigned pick one chapter from the Dennett text to summarize and comment on. The grade will be based on the quality of the summary and the depth of the commentary. This will count as 10% of the student’s final grade.

**In-class Examination:**

There will be one in-class exams as designated by the lesson plan. This exam will be count as 30% of the final average.

**Final Examination:**

A final examination will be given during the final exam week as specified by the University calendar. The final exam will be largely objective and drawn from class lectures and text material. The final exam will be not be cumulative, but rather cover material presented after the first exam. The final exam will count for 30% of the final grade.

**Grading:**

Grades will be based on the paper (30% total), in-class exam (30% total), and the final exam (40% total).

**Grading Scale:**

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c}
\text{Grade} & \text{Range} & \text{Grade} & \text{Range} & \text{Grade} & \text{Range} \\
\hline
A & (100-94) & A- & (93-92) & B+ & (91-88) \\
B & (87-84) & B- & (83-81) & C+ & (80-77) \\
C & (76-74) & C- & (73-70) & D+ & (69-66) \\
D & (65-63) & D- & (62-60) & F & (59-0) \\
\end{array}
\]

**ATTENTION STUDENTS:** NOTE both the grading scale and the exam and paper dates now. No exceptions will be made so you must decide NOW whether these terms are acceptable to you or not or whether they interfere will travel plans or personal commitments. It is your decision to remain in this course under the specified conditions and I encourage each of you to thoughtfully consider this before the drop/add deadline.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>/Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8/22/11</td>
<td>Welcome to The Wonderful World of Philosophy</td>
<td><strong>Intro to Philosophy</strong></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>8/29/11</td>
<td>Logic and Critical Thinking</td>
<td><strong>Logic and Critical Thinking</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Vegetarianism</strong></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>9/5/11</td>
<td>What is &quot;Religion&quot;/Theism/ Atheism/ Agnosticism</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>9/12/11</td>
<td>Logical Positivism and Theology and Falsification</td>
<td>Theology and Falsification: (<a href="http://people.stfx.ca/wsweet/Flew-Mitchell.pdf">http://people.stfx.ca/wsweet/Flew-Mitchell.pdf</a>)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>9/19/11</td>
<td>Evidential Arguments for Theism (Ontological)</td>
<td><strong><a href="http://www.anselm.edu/homepage/dbanach/anselm.htm">http://www.anselm.edu/homepage/dbanach/anselm.htm</a></strong></td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>9/26/11</td>
<td>Evidential Arguments for Theism (Cosmological)</td>
<td><strong><a href="http://www.newadvent.org/summa/1002.htm">http://www.newadvent.org/summa/1002.htm</a></strong></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>10/3/11</td>
<td>Evidential Arguments for Theism (Teleological)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>10/10/11</td>
<td>Non-evidential Arguments for God</td>
<td><strong>Pascal</strong></td>
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<td><strong>James' Forced Wager</strong></td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>10/17/11</td>
<td>Evidential Arguments for Atheism/ Problems of Evil</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>10/24/11</td>
<td>What is Faith? Aquinas</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>10/31/11</td>
<td>What is Faith? Kierkegaard</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>11/7/11</td>
<td>What is Religious Experience?</td>
<td><strong>Otto Text</strong></td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>11/14/11</td>
<td>What is Religion?: Freud/ Feurebach</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>11/21/11</td>
<td>What is Religion? Dennett</td>
<td><strong>Dennett Text</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Chapter One: Summery</strong></td>
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<td>11/28/11</td>
<td>Intelligent Design Redux</td>
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