

## PHL 305: Philosophy of Religion Summer 2010

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**Course description:** Religion in general, as well as particular religions, raise many interesting philosophical issues. For example, how can we determine whether any particular religious view is correct? When, if ever, does religious (for example, mystical) experience count in favor of a particular religion? What arguments have been given for the existence of a Supreme Being, or God? Are any of them compelling? Are they compelling when taken together? What about historical evidence? For example, are there or have there ever been miracles? Is there good evidence for thinking that some miracles have occurred? Could there under any imaginable circumstances be good evidence?

What about arguments or evidence against the existence of God? Could there be evidence either for or against the existence of non-physical entities, even in principle? Should we believe some things in the absence of good evidence for their truth?

Could there be morals if there is no God to dictate what is right or wrong? Or is God himself subject to a 'higher arbiter' of good and evil? Could life be meaningful in the absence of a God, eternal life, or some form of 'transcendent reality'? Is there life after death? Is there good empirical evidence for it? Does the idea make sense? What about free will? If God knows what we are going to do before we do it, can we be genuinely free to act?

Does the existence of the physical universe provide evidence for the existence of God? What about features of physical laws, such as their apparent 'fine-tuning'? Does the existence of evil show that there is no God as conceived by theists?

We will mostly deal with philosophical issues pertaining to **theistic** religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in particular, although some questions (such as mystical experience, miracles, and immortality) may lead us to consider some aspects of other religions as well.

**Texts:** Required: Louis Pojman, *Philosophy of Religion, an Anthology*; Course packet (available from Paradigm, at the corner of Guadalupe and 24<sup>th</sup>); Allen Stairs et. al., *A thinker's guide to the philosophy of religion*.

**Grading:** A mid-term and a final exam. The mid-term will count 40%; the final exam will count 50%. Class participation will count 10%.

Tentative Exam Dates: Mid-term: Thursday, July 29; Final Exam: Sat, August 14, 7-10pm.