

Philosophy of Religion (4/51010), Fall 2009; J. Wattles
MWF 11:00-11:50, 206 Bowman Hall

This course introduces the student to classic and contemporary themes in philosophy of religion, providing exposure to a variety of approaches: analytic, European continental, feminist and Eastern. Topics included are religious experience, science and religion, the nature and existence of God, the problem of evil, pluralism and exclusivism, and methodological issues at the boundary of philosophy and theology.

Texts: (1) *Philosophy of Religion: Classic and Contemporary Issues*, ed. Paul Copan and Chad Meister (Blackwell, ISBN 978-1-4051-3990-8); (2) Dominique Janicaud, *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn": The French Debate*, Fordham University Press (0-8232-2053-2).

Evaluation is based on participation (15%), including at least one seminar report (10%), two quizzes (total 20%), and two papers (10 pages for undergrads, at least 15 for grads) (20% each) plus other written exercises (15% total). We are a community of inquiry, and our interaction has a life of its own; so you are expected to attend regularly, be on time, have the reading and any other assignments done, and be ready to participate. Missing more than two weeks may affect the grade, and if you miss a month, it is not clear that you can pass. If you feel you have a reason to request an alternative to any assignment, please speak with the instructor.

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get notes from someone else, to ask the instructor if you still have questions, and to ask the instructor for whatever may have been handed back during your absence.

Papers must be well written to receive a C or above. For a quick introduction to some of the standards, see <http://www.personal.kent.edu/~jwattles/papers.htm>. Writing—a skill that schools sometimes fail to teach—is important for your career, especially when so much communication is mediated by machines. English is a first or second language in many nations, and to use the language well is a service to our world. If I don't fuss about writing, you should *see* what some folks hand in! So I fuss, and I generally get quite decent writing. It's a good idea to familiarize yourself with the Writing Center (<http://dept.kent.edu/english/WritingCent/writngcenter.htm>). Speaking of communication, the University obliges you to check your kent.edu e-mail (or whatever address may be used on Flashline). If I have messages to send to the whole class, e.g., to change an assignment, or keep in touch in an emergency, I will use those addresses.

My office hours are MWF, 10:55-11:55 and TR 10:40-11:40 (Bowman 320H) and by appointment (330-672-0276; e-mail: jwattles@kent.edu).

In line with a recommendation from KSU's Faculty Professional Development Center, this syllabus is tentative, and may be adjusted to reflect our backgrounds and interests.

Schedule of activities

I. Tuesday, September 1. Introductions.

Thurs. 3. We'll start our reading in the Copan and Meister anthology with a plunge into the depth of religious thought and experience: Paul Moser, "Divine Hiddenness, Death, and Meaning."

II. Tues. 8. Paul Copan, "The Moral Argument." As you prepare the readings for this week, please do not wait until after Tuesday's class to dig into the Benson piece, which is more demanding than I normally assign for a Thursday.

Thurs. 10. Bruce Ellis Benson, "Continental Philosophy of Religion."

III. Tues. 15. Gavin Flood, "Eastern Philosophy of Religion."

Thurs. 17. William Mann, "The Epistemology of Religious Experience." **Quiz 1.**

IV. Tues. 22 Joseph Runzo, "Religious Pluralism."

Thurs. 24 Pamela Sue Anderson, "Feminist Philosophy of Religion."

V. Tues. 29 Harold Netland, "Religious Exclusivism" and René van Woudenberg, "Reformed Epistemology."

Thurs. October 1 Paul Draper, "The Argument from Evil."

VI. Tues. 6 John Polkinghorne, "Religion and Science."

Thurs. 8 "Teleology Past and Present." <http://www.personal.kent.edu/~jwattles/telos.htm>.

VII. Tues. 13 Robin Collins, "The Teleological argument."

Thurs. 15, William Lane Craig, "The Cosmological Argument."

VIII. Tues. 20. Quentin Smith, "A Naturalistic Account of the Universe."

Thurs. 22. Katherin A. Rogers, "God, Time, and Freedom."

IX. Tues. 27. Graham Oppy, "The Ontological Argument."

Thurs. 29. **PAPER ONE DUE**

X. NOV Tues. 3 Now we turn to French phenomenologists. Janicaud

Thurs. 5

XI. Tues. 10 Ricoeur

Thurs. 12

XII. 17 Marion

Thurs. 19

XIII. Tues. 24 Chrétien

26 Thanksgiving

XIV. DECEMBER 1

Thurs. Dec 3 **PAPER TWO DUE.**

XV. Tues. 8 Henry

Thurs. 10

Final examination, Thursday, December 17, 7:45-10:00

The official registration deadline for this course is 9/13. University policy requires all students to be officially registered in each class they are attending. Students who are not officially registered for a course by published deadlines should not be attending classes and will not receive credit or a grade for the course. Each student must confirm enrollment by checking his/her class schedule (using Student Tools in FlashFast) prior to the deadline indicated. Registration errors must be corrected prior to the deadline. The last day to withdraw is 11/08.

University Policy 3342-3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through Student Accessibility Services (contact 330-672-3391 or visit www.kent.edu/sas for more information on registration procedures).

The Philosophy Department Grievance Procedure for handling student grievances is in conformity with the Student Academic Complaint Policy and Procedures set down as University Policy 3342-4-16 in the University Policy Register. For information concerning the details of the grievance procedure, please see the Departmental Chairperson.