



PHL 246

Philosophy of Religion

S1 Day 2014

Philosophy

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Nicholas Smith

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W6A 735

To be confirmed

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

12cp or admission to GDipArts

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Religion has been an important feature of human life throughout history and it continues to shape human affairs across the planet today. All religions posit the existence of some divine force or power, contact with which is the source of deep spiritual fulfilment. The major monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – take this divinity to be a single all-powerful God. But what kind of justification can be given for belief in the existence of God, so conceived? Does science support or undermine belief in God? Or have science and religion got nothing to do with each other? Can religious belief be justified on practical grounds? Might religion provide a basis for morality and spiritual fulfilment that secular or non-religious people lack? Or are there secular sources of meaning available in the modern world that could make religion redundant? Is there a link between religion and violence? Should religion be viewed as an antidote to violent conflict or a cause of it? What place should there be for religion in the political sphere? The unit does not presuppose any religious commitment or particular religious perspective, just a willingness to explore these questions, and others like them, in an open-minded and rigorous way.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Acquire an understanding of basic religious concepts at an intermediate level.

Acquire knowledge of the history of the philosophy of religion at an intermediate level.

Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments about the meaning of religion and religious concepts in written and oral form

Analyse and critically evaluate philosophical arguments

Manage study projects effectively

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>On-line Quizzes</u>	20%	Weekly
<u>Short Essay</u>	25%	11/04/14
<u>Major Essay</u>	35%	13/06/14
<u>Participation</u>	10%	Weekly
<u>Project management</u>	10%	Weeks 6, 11 and 13

On-line Quizzes

Due: **Weekly**

Weighting: **20%**

Multiple choice questions to test knowledge of material covered in the unit each week

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Acquire an understanding of basic religious concepts at an intermediate level.
- Acquire knowledge of the history of the philosophy of religion at an intermediate level.

Short Essay

Due: **11/04/14**

Weighting: **25%**

750-1000 word analysis of selected text from part one of the unit

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Acquire knowledge of the history of the philosophy of religion at an intermediate level.
- Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments about the meaning of religion and religious concepts in written and oral form
- Analyse and critically evaluate philosophical arguments

Major Essay

Due: **13/06/14**

Weighting: **35%**

1500 word essay on a specified topic

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Acquire an understanding of basic religious concepts at an intermediate level.
- Acquire knowledge of the history of the philosophy of religion at an intermediate level.
- Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments about the meaning of religion and religious concepts in written and oral form
- Analyse and critically evaluate philosophical arguments

Participation

Due: **Weekly**

Weighting: **10%**

Contribution to class discussion based on appropriate preparation

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments about the meaning of religion and religious concepts in written and oral form
- Analyse and critically evaluate philosophical arguments

Project management

Due: **Weeks 6, 11 and 13**

Weighting: **10%**

On-time submission of written work and submission of essay plan and bibliography in week 11.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Manage study projects effectively

Delivery and Resources

The unit will be delivered by way of weekly lectures and tutorials.

Recorded lectures, lecture slides, and other information can be accessed from the PHL246 i-learn site.

Essential reading for the unit is contained in PHL246 Unit Reader for 2014, which all students should purchase.

Unit Schedule

WEEKLY LECTURE SCHEDULE

Week 1 05/03	Introduction; What is religion? Philosophy of Religion and Philosophical Theology
Part 1: Classical Problems in Philosophy of Religion	
Week 2 12/03	The idea of the perfect being: Descartes.
Week 3 19/03	Providence and the problem of evil: Leibniz
Week 4 26/03	Design and purpose in nature: Hume and Paley
Week 5 26/08	Religion within the limits of reason: Kant
Week 6 02/04	Faith and subjectivity: Kierkegaard
Part 2: Understanding and Explaining Secularism	
Week 7 30/04	Understanding secularism – Nietzsche and his heirs
Week 8 07/05	Secularism, religion and morality - Richard Rorty's pragmatism
Week 9 14/05	The significance of religious pluralism – Charles Taylor
Part 3: Contemporary Social Issues of Religion	
Week 10 21/05	Science and religion

Week 11 28/05	Religious toleration
Week 12 05/06	Religion and violence

Lecture 1: Wednesday 11.00 AM W5C 320

Lecture 2: Wednesday 12.00 PM W5C 320

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)

- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments about the meaning of religion and religious concepts in written and oral form
- Analyse and critically evaluate philosophical arguments
- Manage study projects effectively

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Acquire an understanding of basic religious concepts at an intermediate level.
- Acquire knowledge of the history of the philosophy of religion at an intermediate level.

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments about the meaning of religion and religious concepts in written and oral form
- Analyse and critically evaluate philosophical arguments

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments about the meaning of religion and religious concepts in written and oral form
- Analyse and critically evaluate philosophical arguments
- Manage study projects effectively

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments about the meaning of religion

and religious concepts in written and oral form

- Analyse and critically evaluate philosophical arguments

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Acquire knowledge of the history of the philosophy of religion at an intermediate level.
- Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments about the meaning of religion and religious concepts in written and oral form
- Analyse and critically evaluate philosophical arguments
- Manage study projects effectively

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Acquire knowledge of the history of the philosophy of religion at an intermediate level.
- Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments about the meaning of religion and religious concepts in written and oral form
- Analyse and critically evaluate philosophical arguments