**SYLLABUS**

**Phil 024 – Philosophy of Religion**

**Course Description**

Whether or not one considers themselves to be religious, we all live our lives based on a personal working hypothesis of how the world operates—our worldview. For the majority of human history, the human worldview has primarily been a religious one. As a result, religious belief has played a central role in human behavior and in our quality of life.

This course will encourage students to be more conscious of their own worldview by examining various philosophical issues pertaining to religious belief, religious experience, religious practice, and religious interpretations of reality. Our examination will include traditional and modern philosophical explorations of various religions including, but not limited to, esoteric and exoteric dimensions of western, eastern, primal, and nature-based religions.

Students will exit the course having tackled several of life’s big questions concerning the existence of God, the problem of evil, the ultimate nature of reality, the efficacy of religion, and the purpose and meaning of life.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Identify, discuss, and explain how religious dimensions of life fall under the scope of philosophy.
2. Identify, discuss, and explain the ways philosophers analyze the religious dimensions of life.
3. Identify, compare, and contrast philosophical critiques of religious beliefs.
4. Articulate the place of religion in a variety of cultural contexts
5. Articulate the relationship between religion and everyday life.

**Instructor Information**

**Javy Galindo**

**Fall, 2013**

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**Phone: (408) 357-0504**

**Office Hours: 1:00-1:20 PM in L13 & 3:20–3:50 PM in MLC113 Mon & Wed, 1:20-1:50pm Friday in MLC111, or By Appointment**

**Course Website:** [**http://www.thinking-differently.com/philosophyofreligion**](http://www.thinking-differently.com/philosophyofreligion)

**Course Expectations and Requirements**

Attendance

* Students may miss a total of *two class* meetings without penalty during the term. There will be a half letter grade deduction assessed at the end of the term if the student misses three meetings, and a fourth absence will result in a full letter grade deduction. A fifth absence may result in dismissal from the course. (Students are highly encouraged to speak to the instructor after his or her fifth absence.)
* It is a student’s responsibility to obtain any information or assignments they may have missed while absent.
* Attendance may be taken at the beginning of class on a daily basis. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that his/her name has been recorded accurately on daily attendance sheets.
* Students are expected to come to class *on time* and stay for the duration of the class meeting. Any combination of three late arrivals or early departures will be considered equivalent to one absence on the attendance record.
* Students who arrive late or leave early must do so respectfully, causing minimal distraction to the rest of the class.

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Classroom Policies

* All homework will be due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will not be accepted. Exceptions may be made for extenuating circumstances for partial credit. No assignments will be accepted that is more than one week late, regardless of circumstances.
* Students are expected to be in class on time and may miss assignments and graded activities that they cannot make up if they arrive late.
* Place all phones and pagers to vibrate. **Using electronic devices such as laptops, mobile phones, and pagers is not permitted during class time without instructor approval**. Students who use electronic devices without prior permission from the instructor may be asked to leave.
* Be respectful to others in the class and behave in a professional manner. Students who the instructor deems as being disrespectful to the class may be immediately dropped from the course.

Grading

* There are no make-up exams or make-up quizzes. Exceptions may be made for extenuating circumstances for partial credit. The lowest of the four quiz scores will be dropped when calculating the student’s final grade.
* With the exception of the final essay assignment, homework will be graded on a pass/fail/zero system: 100% for passing assignments, 50% for failing assignments, and zero points if the assignment is not turned in on time.
* Class discussions will frequently feature small-group work. It is expected that students will participate actively in these groups in a respectful manner. Students may be asked to leave and receive no credit otherwise.
* Academic honesty is imperative in all written work. Plagiarism, the use of unauthorized electronic devices during quizzes, and other violations will automatically result failing grade in the course, and will be reported to the Dean of Academics. Students who are unsure about standards for academic honesty should consult with me.
* **Final Exam 20%**
* **Midterm 20%**
* **Final Essay 20%**
* **Top 3 Quizzes 15%**
* **Projects and Assignments 15%**
* **Participation 10%**

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| **Letter Grade** | **Percentage Range** |
| A+ | 96.5-100 |
| A | 92.5-96.4 |
| A- | 89.5-92.4 |
| B+ | 86.5-89.4 |
| B | 82.5-86.4 |
| B- | 79.5-82.4 |
| C+ | 76.5-79.4 |
| C | 69.5-76.4 |
| D+ | 66.5-69.4 |
| D | 62.5-66.4 |
| D- | 59.5-62.4 |
| F | 0-59.4 |

Required Textbook

Stewart, David. Exploring the Philosophy of Religion (7th Ed)Prentice Hall, 2010.

Please ensure that you are using the **7th** edition of this text. If the bookstore is out of copies, I recommend searching online vendors such as www.amazon.com or [www.half.com](http://www.half.com) for reasonably priced used copies.

Many other required readings will be distributed to students electronically and posted on the course website.

*\*The following course schedule is an approximate schedule and subject to change.*

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| **\*Course Schedule** | |
| **Week 1** | * Topics - Introduction to Philosophy of Religion, Syllabus, Course Review, & A Brief Look at the World’s Religions. Religion as beliefs vs. religion as way of experiencing. * 9/23 – Print out Syllabus, Review Website * 9/25 – Read Handouts on “The Parable of the Gardener” |
| **Week 2** | * Topics - Arguments for God’s Existence * 9/30 – **Prepare for Quiz #1**. Begin reading pgs 119-158 * 10/2 – Finish reading pgs 119-158 |
| **Week 3** | * Topics –The Problem of Evil * 10/7 – Complete HW #1 as assigned. Begin reading pgs 161-207. * 10/9 – Finish reading pgs 161-207 |
| **Week 4** | * Topics –Faith & Reason, In Class Film Screening * 10/14 - **Prepare for Quiz #2.**Begin reading pgs209-261. * 10/16 - Finish reading pgs 209-261 |
| **Week 5** | * Topics –Faith & Reason Continued, The Nature of Religious Knowledge: miracles, mystical experience. * 10/21 - Complete HW #2 as assigned. Begin handout and pgs 1-48. * 10/23 - Finish reading handout and pgs 1-48. |
| **Week 6** | Topics –Midterm, Human Destiny/Identity: soul, death, afterlife   * 10/28 – **Prepare for Midterm Exam** * 10/30 – Finish reading handout and pgs 85-115. |
| **Week 7** | * Topics –Human Destiny (afterlife) continued, Naturalistic Explanations of Religion, New Atheism, Scientism * 11/4 – Complete HW #3 as assigned. Begin reading handout. * 11/6 – Finish reading handout. |
| **Week 8** | * Topics –Religious Beliefs & Everyday Life (Politics, Gender Equality, Abortion Debate) * 11/11 – No class. Veterans Day. * 11/13– **Prepare for Quiz #3.**Finish reading handout &pgs 263-312. |
| **Week 9** | * Topics –Purpose & The Meaning of Life, In Class Film Screening * 11/18 – Complete HW #4 as assigned. Begin handout &pgs 49-83. * 11/20 – Continue reading handout &pgs 49-83. |
| **Week 10** | * Topics –Purpose & The Meaning of Life, Religious Implications of Modern Science * 11/25 - **Prepare for Quiz #4.** Finish reading handout &pgs 49-83. * 11/27 – Finish reading handout. |
| **Week 11** | * Topics –Religious Language, Spirituality, & the Essence of Religious Life. * 12/2 – Complete essay assignment (electronic copy only). Begin reading handout. * 12/5 – Finish reading handout. |
| **Week 12** | * Topics –Efficacy of the Religious Life, Purpose & Meaning Revisited,& Final Exam * 12/9 – Begin preparing for Final Exam. * 12/10 – **Final Exam (Tuesday) 1:45pm – 3:45pm** |