

Course Information



Philosophy of Religion (HU)

PHIL 2350-501

Fall 2025

Course Section Information

Days: online

Time: online

Campus: online

Classroom: online

Course Description

This course will explicate and evaluate some of the truth-claims made by the major world religions concerning the nature of reality and humanity's relationship to it. It will address such classic topics in Philosophy of Religion as conceived of by the major Western monotheistic traditions (i. e. , Judaism, Christianity, Islam).

Semester: All

Course Prerequisites/Co-requisites

N/A

Instructor Information

Name: Shannon Atkinson

Email: satkin19@slcc.edu

Phone: 801-653-2463

Office Location: Online

Office Hours: M/W 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in person at Juniper Campus or by appointment online

Textbooks, Readings, and Course Materials

Authors: Peterson, Michael, Hasker, William, Reichenbach, Bruce and Basinger, David

Publication Date: 2013

Title: Reason and Religious Belief: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion

Edition: Fifth

Publisher: Oxford University Press

ISBN: ISBN: 978-0-19-994657-0

For more information on textbook accessibility, contact Accessibility & Disability Services at ads@slcc.edu.

Course Student Learning Outcomes

- Identify, compare, analyze, and evaluate key concepts, approaches and arguments made in major theories within the philosophy of religion, covering topics such as philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God, the problem of evil, free will, and the characteristics of deity.
- Write clear and persuasive arguments and analyses that evaluate philosophical theories and apply them to the exploration of philosophical dilemmas in religion.
- Provide coherent syntheses of multiple, often conflicting positions regarding people's beliefs about deity, miracles, ethics, and faith, exploring the relationship

between religious claims and beliefs, and how individuals express these beliefs, analyze them, and justify them in their daily lives.

- Identify, organize and evaluate one's own personal beliefs and practices in order to engage and participate in public life with those who differ in perspectives and worldviews.
- Identify the connections that philosophy of religion has to other disciplines like anthropology, sociology, and psychology.

Assignment Schedule

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
	Introduce Yourself	Discussion	0
9/6/25	About me	Discussion	20
9/20/25	Exam 1	Quiz	50
9/20/25	First discussion	Discussion	20
9/20/25	Second discussion	Discussion	20
9/20/25	Submit answers to Handout 1	Assignment	10
9/20/25	Submit answers to Handout 2	Assignment	10
9/20/25	Submit answers to Handout 3	Assignment	10
9/20/25	Third discussion	Discussion	20
10/19/25	Exam 2	Quiz	50
10/19/25	Fifth discussion	Discussion	20
10/19/25	Fourth discussion	Discussion	20
10/19/25	Midterm Paper	Assignment	100

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
10/19/25	Sixth discussion	Discussion	20
10/19/25	Submit answers to Handout 4	Assignment	10
10/19/25	Submit answers to Handout 5	Assignment	10
10/19/25	Submit answers to Handout 6	Assignment	10
11/15/25	Eighth discussion	Discussion	20
11/15/25	Exam 3	Quiz	50
11/15/25	Seventh discussion	Discussion	20
11/15/25	Submit answers to Handout 7	Assignment	10
11/15/25	Submit answers to Handout 8	Assignment	10
12/13/25	Exam 4	Quiz	50
12/13/25	Final Paper	Assignment	100
12/13/25	Ninth discussion	Discussion	20
12/13/25	Submit answers to Handout 10	Assignment	10
12/13/25	Submit answers to Handout 9	Assignment	10
12/13/25	Tenth discussion	Discussion	20

Coursework & Assignment Descriptions

Note to the instructor: Consider adopting this template (or a similar format) for transparent assignment descriptions in the "Assignment Descriptions" section following.

1. Handout/Homework uploads: 25% of grade; 10 uploads, 10 points per upload.

There are 10 handouts incorporated right into the modules of Canvas that is your homework (they are also under the Files tab of Canvas). You will be prompted by Canvas to do 10 online submissions of these handouts/homework throughout the semester after you complete the readings on the handouts, using the Modules, and watching the video lectures. You may of course work ahead if you want, just makes sure you are uploading these by the due dates, which is usually on the weekend, Saturday at 11:59 p.m. Each module is divided into 4 week sets though, so the first set of handouts you will have approximately 4 weeks to complete them. All handout questions are taken from the textbooks and added websites on each handout and the modules will help you understand and answers those questions more thoroughly, as well as the added video lectures. You may need extra notes to answer the handout questions, as the space I provide on the handout may not be adequate. All test questions are taken directly from these handouts; so, fill them out carefully and add to them from the discussions as needed. You will receive 10 points for each completed handout. Completed handouts are those that have all the questions answered to the best of your abilities by the due date and uploaded to Canvas by the due date. Partially completed and late handouts may receive half-credit (5 points) although Canvas will grade them automatically as a 0 and lock you out if you do not turn it in on time, and you may receive no points if the handout is not uploaded at all. These handouts cannot be made up, so please get into the habit of submitted them to Canvas when completed. Simply put, this is your homework and students who do their homework invariably do better in the class.

2. Discussions: 25% of grade 10 discussions, 20 points per discussion.

Discussions are between you and your peers. I rarely get involved in these other than a remark or two possibly. This is your time to respond to a specific question relating to the religion we are studying and to discuss that topic with at least two of your peers, responding to their comments. I realize this may seem like busy work to many students, but it is a very successful way of connecting with others, which is what religion is about, during the semester. These are also due by 11:59 p.m. on Saturday after the 4 weeks are

up. Follow the grading rubric carefully to get full points. The grading rubrics are generally found when you open the assignment. Another way is to click on the three dots near the assignment and it should allow you to "view rubric."

3. Exams: 4 exams = 50 points each = 200 points = weighted 25% of grade

There will be 4 exams with 3 essay questions and 4 short answer questions. Exam 1 is on the information on Handouts 1, 2 and 3. Exam 2 is on the information on Handouts 4, 5 and 6. Exam 3 is on the information on Handouts 7 and 8, and Exam 4 is on the information on Handouts 9 and 10. The short answer questions on the exam are usually just a few sentences. The essay questions must be answered in essay format, where you must answer the question(s) with 3 to 5 clear paragraphs (at least three sentence paragraphs please). I also include a few extra credit questions. All exam questions are taken directly from the handouts with some variations. The handouts cannot be used during the test, nor can you use your notes, the modules, or the Internet to help you during the exam. I give you time to study before taking the exam, but once you begin it, you will only have an hour and half to complete it. Also, I know how ChatGPT and other AI software answer these questions and I get a feel for how you write and do the assignments. In short, I can tell if you use AI to help you take these exams, don't cheat, as you risk failing the course if caught. Now here is the kicker--I am going to treat you all like adults and I am not going to administer your exams via Proctorio (the testing system with a lock-down browser). They will appear as quizzes and I will usually open them on Friday's and give you the entire weekend usually until Sunday at 11:59 p.m. to complete it (unless I or Canvas states otherwise) but you will only have an hour and a half once you open the exam to complete the exam. What this means is, if you are inclined to cheat and use your notes or the modules or the Internet to help you on the exams, that is all on you. The "gods" will be watching you, your conscience will know, karma will know, and they will be much harsher on you than I ever could. If that sounds like a major guilt trip, it is not meant to be. What it is meant to be a sign of respect between you, as my students, and me, your professor. Straight up, I am going to respect you and trust you not to cheat. I hope you will afford yourself (and me) the same respect.

4. Midterm and Final Paper: 25% of grade; 2 papers. 100 points per paper.

You will be required to write two, 5 to 7-page double-spaced 'argumentative' papers about a topic in the philosophy of religion. These topics are already on Canvas, including sample "A" papers from past students, and you may choose from the subjects provided

under the topics under the Files Tab (they are called Midterm Paper topics and Final paper topics). This is not necessarily a research paper, but a testing of your knowledge and comprehension about a topic in the philosophy of religion and your ability to communicate and reproduce that argument including your position on the matter through writing. I provide you with the paper topics on Canvas and you must use those topics. Once you submit the paper via Canvas, here is how you view my comments after your submission: https://ursinus.instructure.com/courses/2839/pages/view-instructor-comments?module_item_id=87880. I am happy to help you during the writing process of your papers, so please do not hesitate to ask for help with your thesis statements, formulation/reproduction of arguments, and/or anything relating to the writing of your papers if it's not too close to the due date. I provide sample philosophy papers on Canvas, too. I also encourage you to use the writing center (<http://www.slcc.edu/swc/> Links to an external site.). Details about the structure and content of these papers are explicated below with the grading rubric on Canvas and I will go over these criteria in a video when the assignment is given. I am again letting you know that I am happy to help you during the writing process of your papers, so please do not hesitate to ask for help with your thesis statements, formulation of your arguments, and/or anything relating to the writing of your papers. Make sure you view and read at least one of the sample papers on Canvas so you have an idea what I am looking for.

Grading Scale

Grading

Assignments are weighted as follows

Exams 25% of grade

Handouts 25% of grade

Discussions 25% of grade

Papers 25% of grade

A: 94-100% B+: 87-89% C+: 77-79% D+: 67-69% E: below 60%
A-: 90-93% B: 84-86% C: 74-76% D: 64-66%
B-: 80-83% C-: 70-73% D-: 60-63%

Engagement Plan

- I will respond to email within 24 hours unless otherwise stated in an announcement. I will offer feedback on major assignments within 4 weeks for papers and within 3 to 5 days on others. The best way to contact me is through [the Canvas Inbox or via my school e-mail, as I will prioritize this method over other modes of communication.
- In this course I will be posting announcements each week.
- If you do not receive comments on assignments, that means you did it well, in fact, perfectly. Keep it up. I will always make remarks on your assignments in Canvas if you are deducted points.
- I usually do not participate in your course discussions or interactions with your peers in the discussion posts, however, I read them all.
- The modules are discussion helps, not the material itself. That is the textbook and your readings from original sources in the reader or online readings provided in the modules and under the files tab.

Additional Materials

N/A

How to Navigate to Canvas

This course uses the Canvas course management system. All students must use Canvas to retrieve course readings, access web pages, upload assignments, receive course announcements, and review the class section's syllabus.

General Education Information

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This course fulfills the above requirement for the General Education Program at Salt Lake Community College. It is designed not only to teach the information and skills required by the discipline, but also to develop vital workplace skills and to teach strategies and skills that can be used for life-long learning.

General Education courses teach basic skills as well as broaden a student's knowledge of a wide range of subjects. Education is much more than the acquisition of facts; it is being able to use information in meaningful ways in order to enrich one's life.

While the subject of each course is important and useful, we become truly educated through making connections of such varied information with the different methods of organizing human experience that are practiced by different disciplines. Therefore, this course, when combined with other General Education courses, will enable you to develop broader perspectives and deeper understandings of your community and the world, as well as challenge previously held assumptions about the world and its inhabitants.

How to Succeed in the Course

Expectations (Participation)For the Student:

- Check into canvas regularly
- Participate in each module by moving through pages sequentially
- Complete all assignments on time, including "in-class" reflections, discussions, and papers.
- Check your email regularly; I correspond at least once a week.
- Email me with any questions or concerns.

Expectations from me:

- Respond to your emails within 24-48 hours during the week
- Be available for you when you set an appointment or need to discuss the course
- Grade assignments and provide feedback within seven days of the due date (holidays excepted and papers will take longer)
- Listen to your concerns, comments, and critiques and work with you to be successful in the course

Additional Class Policies

Technology Requirements:

- This is an online, semi-asynchronous course, this means there are no set times for class, no "face-to-face" lectures or zoom meetings. You move independently throughout the module, but engage with others in discussions and other course work and there are due

dates that must be adhered to.

- This is an online course. The course is divided into Learning Modules (units) that move you through the content including weekly readings/viewings, discussions, in-class activities, and assignments. Each unit is divided into approximately 4 week module sets. This syllabus provides you with an overview of expectations and a schedule. Please take sufficient time to read through it very carefully. It is your responsibility to manage your time appropriately and successfully. Because of the amount of foreign vocabulary and the somewhat difficult concepts, subsequent modules will open as scheduled and only after completion of the entire Orientation module.

Community Norms:

Students are free to bring their personal experiences into the class discussions but to maintain a spirit of free inquiry & dialogue you must work to overcome tendencies toward:

- Stereotyping of people & their religious beliefs or lack thereof
- Microaggression: brief everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership
- Ethnocentrism: the belief that the group/s you belong to are better
- Prejudice: negatively judging & depreciating others based on cultures
- Judging & diagnosing of others based on your limited knowledge about religion.
- Proselyting: actively advocating or promoting one way of thinking—converting others

Course Content Advisory

Please be advised that this course may include discussions, readings, and other content that some students might find distressing or triggering. Specifically, the course may cover topics such as:

- Violence or traumatic events
- Sensitive social and political issues
- Discussions of mental health, including depression and anxiety
- Graphic or explicit descriptions and imagery
- Any other specific content relevant to the course

Our aim is to explore these topics thoughtfully and respectfully, understanding their importance in our field of study. However, we recognize that such material can be challenging. If you have concerns about your ability to engage with certain course materials due to past experiences or

personal reasons, please feel free to discuss this with me privately. We can explore alternative ways for you to engage with the material while ensuring your educational experience is not compromised.

Your well-being is important, and support services are available through the college's counseling support services should you need them.

Institutional Policies

As members of our academic community, we would like to invite you to review the Institutional Syllabus which covers important policies and procedures. This document contains important links for students on the code of student rights and responsibilities, academic integrity, and grading policies, Title IX and other important acknowledgements. By familiarizing yourself with this information, you can help us create a safe and respectful environment for everyone.

For more information, navigate to the Institutional Policies tab on the [Institutional Syllabus](#) page.

Academic Integrity

Please Don't Cheat.

Academic dishonesty includes all situations where students make use of the work of others & claim such work as their own even though some wording, method of citation, or arrangement of evidence, ideas, or arguments have been altered. Please make sure you cite your sources properly using MLA or APA format. First offence receives a "0" on the assignment, second earns you an "E" in the course. Plagiarized assignments cannot be resubmitted for an improved grade. AI may be used to help you on assignments, but not do your assignments for you, especially the course discussions. If you use AI in a paper, it must be cited.

Learning Support and Tutoring Services

We are pleased to offer a range of tutoring and learning support services to help you achieve your academic goals. Whether you need assistance with a specific subject or want to improve your study skills, you have many options for tutoring or other support.

To learn more about the services we offer and how to access them, visit the [Institutional Syllabus](#) page under the Tutoring and Learning Support tab. We encourage you to take advantage of these resources to help you succeed in your studies. If you have any questions or would like to schedule a tutoring session, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We are here to support you in any way we can.

Online Tutoring

Students at SLCC have access to online tutoring through Canvas. From your Canvas course click Online Tutoring in the course navigation and follow the steps to set up an appointment. If this is your first time using the Online Tutoring we recommend you click "Take a Tour" to familiarize yourself with the service.

Note that students only receive 480 minutes of tutoring time each semester. After that we encourage you to use the resources found through this link:

<https://www.slcc.edu/tutoring/index.aspx>

If you have any additional questions reach out to elarningsupport@slcc.edu.

Transfer, Certification, Licensure, and Employment Information

N/A

Advising and Counseling Support Services

At our institution, we are committed to supporting your academic and personal growth. That's why we offer a range of advising and counseling services to help you navigate the challenges of college life. To learn more about the resources available to you and how to access them, visit the [Institutional Syllabus](#) page under the Advising and Counseling Support Services tab. Our advising team and the support centers across campus are here to support you in achieving your goals and overcoming any obstacles you may face.

Philosophy of Religion (HU)

PHIL - 2350 501

Student Academic Calendar

As students you should be aware of all important dates in the semester, such as the day that courses begin and end, as well as the drop date and the last day to withdraw. To learn more about those dates, navigate to the Student Academic Calendar below:

[SLCC Student Academic Calendar](#)