

Philosophy of God

PHL 202 | DePaul University | Department of Philosophy
Monday/Wednesday, 1:00-2:30 | 2352 N Clifton Room 145
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Introduction

This class constitutes an introduction to western philosophical theology. In it we will read texts ranging from the ancient to the modern that include arguments for the existence of God, arguments about the nature of God, and reflections on the consequences for human life that these arguments imply.

The class assumes no prior knowledge; however, it will require a high degree of sustained attention and focus. The course is reading and writing intensive, and is designed in accordance with the DePaul Philosophy Department's stated learning outcomes. It will be a lot of work for all of us, but I promise it will be worth it!

Schedule of Classes

The following schedule of readings and assignments is provisional and subject to change.

Wed. Sept. 5 Course Introduction

I. The Metaphysics of the Divine in Ancient Greek Philosophy

Mon. Sept. 10 Plato, *Euthyphro*

Wed. Sept. 12 Aristotle, *Physics* VIII 1 (eternity of motion), 4-6 (unmoved mover) (pgs. 919-926, 933-953)

Mon. Sept. 17 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII (prime mover as God) (pgs. 3629-3655)
Quiz 1

II. Medieval Christian Theology

Wed. Sept. 19 Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I, qq. 2-4 (existence, simplicity, and perfection of God) (pgs. 12-29)

Mon. Sept. 24 Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I, qq. 6, 7, 9-11 (goodness, infinity, immutability, eternity, and unity of God) (pgs. 35-44, 49-64)

Wed. Sept. 26 Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I, qq. 12, 19 (knowledge of God, God's will) (pgs. 64-79, 139-152)

Mon. Oct. 1 Anselm, *Proslogion*, Preface to Chapter 8 (pgs. 82-91)
Quiz 2

Wed. Oct. 3 Anselm, *Proslogion*, Chapters 9-26 (pgs. 91-104)

Sun. Oct. 7 **Paper 1 due**

III. Early Modern Philosophical Theology

Mon. Oct. 8 Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part I up to Proposition 16
Quiz 3

Wed. Oct. 10 Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part I Proposition 17 to the end of Part I

Mon. Oct. 15 Leibniz, *Principles of Nature and Grace* (pgs. 206-212)

Wed. Oct. 17 Leibniz, *Monadology* (pgs. 213-224)

IV. Modern Skepticism and Idealism About God

Mon. Oct. 22 Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Introduction to Part 4

Wed. Oct. 24 Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Parts 5-8
Quiz 4

Mon. Oct. 29 Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Parts 9-12

Wed. Oct. 31 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Antithetic of Pure Reason, Antinomies 1 and 4 (pgs. 459-475, 490-495)

Sun. Nov. 4 **Paper 2 Due**

Mon. Nov. 5 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, The Ideal of Pure Reason, Sections I-IV (pgs. 551-568)
Quiz 5

Wed. Nov. 7 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, The Ideal of Pure Reason, Sections V-VII (pgs. 569-589)

Mon. Nov. 12 Concluding Discussion

Sun. Nov. 25 **Final Paper Due**

Course Materials

The following books are required for this class. They will be available at the Lincoln Park campus bookstore, but you can acquire them by other means. I strongly advocate purchasing rather than renting books. If you would like to purchase any of these texts but cannot afford to do so, please let me know and we will try to work something out.

Plato. *Five Dialogues*. Trans. G.M.A. Grube. Ed. John M. Cooper. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002.

Anselm. *The Major Works*. Ed. Brian Davies and G.R. Evans. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Spinoza, Benedict de. *Ethics*. Trans. Edwin Curley. New York: Penguin, 1996.

Leibniz, G.W.F. *Philosophical Essays*. Trans. and ed. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989.

Hume, David. *Dialogues and Natural History of Religion*. Ed. J.C.A. Gaskin. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

The other texts we are reading will be available as PDF's on the 'content' page of our course's D2L site. Their bibliographic information is as follows:

Aristotle. *Complete Works* (2 vols.). Ed. Jonathan Barnes. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.

Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologica*. Christian Classical Ethereal Library. Public Domain.
<<http://ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/summa.html>>

Assignments and Course Structure

1. *Attendance and participation* (10%). You must come to each class having read the assigned materials and prepared to regularly participate in ongoing discussions to whatever extent you are physically and mentally capable. You will not receive full credit simply for showing up; active participation is mandatory.
2. *Quizzes* (20%). Five quizzes, each worth five points, will be administered throughout the quarter at the beginning of classes (see the above schedule for dates). Each quiz will be in multiple-choice format and will be designed to ensure that you are keeping up with the readings. The quiz will be on the text that you have read for that same class. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped when I calculate your final grade.
3. *Term papers* (40%). Two reflection papers, each worth twenty points, will be due on Sunday, October 7th and Sunday, November 4th, by online submission to the appropriate dropbox folder of our course's D2L page. Each will be 2-3 pages long (approximately 400 to 600 words), and in each you will respond directly to a prompt that I will provide at least one week prior to the paper's due date.
4. *Final paper* (30%). One final paper, worth thirty points, will be due on Sunday, November 25th, by online submission to the appropriate dropbox folder of our course's D2L page. It should be 5-7 pages long (approximately 1300 to 1800 words). Several weeks before the deadline, I will provide you with a number of detailed prompts, one of which you will choose and respond to.

Late papers will not be accepted unless I explicitly grant you an extension in advance, and quizzes cannot be made up.

Classroom Rules

Please come to class on time. Bring the assigned readings with you, having read them carefully and prepared for discussion. Please have your phones set to silent for the duration of our session and refrain from texting. Laptops may be used for taking notes with my explicit permission.

Always be respectful toward all your fellow classmates, attentive when they speak, and charitable in interpreting and responding to their statements. The classroom is a complex space in which people of diverse ethnic backgrounds, economic situations, genders, sexualities, abilities, ages, beliefs, and dispositions all come together to learn collectively.

Be mindful of the way in which you interact with others, and know that you are responsible for helping to maintain an atmosphere for learning that is respectful and welcoming. If you fail to adhere to these guidelines, I reserve the right to lower your participation grade.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

The DePaul University Undergraduate Student Handbook explicitly prohibits plagiarism. This includes directly copying any source without proper acknowledgement, copying any source with minor alterations without proper acknowledgment, submitting as your own work the efforts of another person, and paraphrasing another's work without proper acknowledgment.

I have a non-negotiable zero tolerance policy for plagiarism in this class. Any instance of plagiarism will result in an automatic failure for the entire course. Please understand that *nobody ever gets away with plagiarism*. Please don't even try.

If you do not know how to cite a work, I will be happy to provide you with assistance.

Student Resources

DePaul University offers many resources for students that you may want to take advantage of. This list is not exhaustive.

DePaul University Center for Writing-Based Learning

<http://depaul.mywconline.com>

Schmitt Academic Center, Room 212, Lincoln Park Campus

773.325.4272

DePaul Office of Multicultural Student Success

<http://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/omss.aspx>

Student Center, Suite 304, Lincoln Park Campus

773.325.7325

DePaul Center for Students with Disabilities

<http://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx>

773.325.1677

Office Hours and Availability

I hold regular office hours in the philosophy department, which is located at 2352 N. Clifton Avenue on the Lincoln Park campus. This quarter, I will be in my office on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3pm to 5pm. If that time does not work for you, feel free to send me an email and we will schedule an appointment at a time that works for both of us.

Know that our discussions in office hours do not need to be strictly limited to the themes or material from our class; you have a standing offer to talk to me about any issues you may be having or ideas you would like to discuss.

One last thing: whenever you send me an email, please make the subject line “PHL 202 [subject]”. So, for example, if you want to schedule a meeting with me, the subject line should read “PHL 202 meeting”, “PHL 202 appointment”, etc.