



**DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND EDUCATION**

**COURSE OUTLINE - Winter 2015**

**PH3570 (A3): Philosophy of Religion - 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours**

<b>INSTRUCTOR:</b>	Tom Enders, PhD	<b>PHONE:</b>	780-539-2996
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<b>OFFICE HOURS:</b>	TBA and by appointments		

**PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE:** none

**REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:**

- Steven M. Cahn, editor, *Reason and Religions: Philosophy Looks at the World's Religious Beliefs*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth/Cengage, 2014
- Internet readings, class handouts, and Moodle postings.

**CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:**

General topics in the Philosophy of Religion. Selections from the following will be studied: The concept of 'religion,' the relationships between philosophy and religion, arguments for and against the existence of God, meaning and intelligibility in religious language, religion and morality, religion and 'the meaning of life,' implications of the study of religion in the social sciences.

**CREDIT/CONTACT HOURS:** 3 credits / 3 hours per week

**DELIVERY MODE(S):** Lectures and discussions.

**OBJECTIVES:**

By the end of this course you should have a good beginning understanding of some key concepts used by philosophers in the field of

study. You will have knowledge of some major issues, and awareness of positions taken on them. You should also have begun to develop your ability to assess positions and formulate informed, thoughtful opinions of your own.

**TRANSFERABILITY:** AF, AU, CU, CUC, KUC, UA, UC, UL

\* The grade of D or D+ may not be accepted for transfer to other postsecondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability.

### GRADING CRITERIA:

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE			
GRADING CONVERSION CHART			
Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Designation
A <sup>+</sup>	4.0	90 – 100	EXCELLENT
A	4.0	85 – 89	
A <sup>-</sup>	3.7	80 – 84	FIRST CLASS STANDING
B <sup>+</sup>	3.3	76 – 79	
B	3.0	73 – 75	GOOD
B <sup>-</sup>	2.7	70 – 72	
C <sup>+</sup>	2.3	67 – 69	SATISFACTORY
C	2.0	64 – 66	
C <sup>-</sup>	1.7	60 – 63	
D <sup>+</sup>	1.3	55 – 59	MINIMAL PASS
D	1.0	50 – 54	
F	0.0	0 – 49	FAIL
WF	0.0	0	FAIL, withdrawal after the deadline

## EVALUATION:

Attendance/Participation...	10%
Midterm exam .....	25%
Final exam .....	30%
First assignment .....	15%
Second assignment .....	20%

Please be informed that it is **not** the instructor's policy to allow exams or assignments to be rewritten, or extra work done to increase marks. You are welcome, however, to consult with the instructor prior to exams and assignment due dates.

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

\* You are expected to devote time in the classroom to the class itself. Use of cell phones and use of laptops for non-class purposes is unacceptable. It is also not acceptable to socialize or do work on other courses (or even for *other* work for this course) during the class.

\* You are strongly advised to keep a copy of your own of any work you submit for grading at least until you have your work returned to you.

\*\* Students who miss an excessive number of classes (i.e. more than six without reasonable justification such as illness) may be denied the opportunity to write the final exam, as stated in the Calendar.

\*\*You are expected to write the final exam in April when scheduled by the Registrar's Office - with possible exceptions in the case of compelling and urgent circumstances beyond your control. Take this into account when making any travel plans. Also note and observe other key dates during the term as provided in the Calendar.

## STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

\* You are required to reference sources fully and properly for written assignments. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with College Calendar information pertaining to cheating and plagiarism, for which there are various penalties depending on the severity of the offense. Also refer to the College Policy on Student Conduct at [https://www.gprc.ab.ca/files/forms\\_documents/Student\\_Misconduct.pdf](https://www.gprc.ab.ca/files/forms_documents/Student_Misconduct.pdf)

\*\*Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available at <https://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/>

Details of this course outline are subject to change. Any changes will be discussed in class.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:**

12, 14 January

I. Introduction to philosophy and philosophy of religion. What is religion?

19, 21 January

II. Introduction to different religions, theistic and nontheistic, supernatural and non-supernatural.

26, 28 January

III. Who or what is God or a Supreme Being – with which attributes or characteristics? Negative theology. What are appropriate responses? (fear, obedience, worship...?)

2, 4 February

IV. Faith, reason and evidence for belief in God. Are faith and reason compatible or incompatible?

9, 11 February

V. Religious Experience and Mysticism.

23 February

VI. Psychological Explanations of Religious Beliefs.

25 February – Midterm Exam

2, 4, 9, 11 March

VII. Arguments for the existence of God.

16, 18 March

VIII. Religion and Science. Separate, complementary, competing and conflicting?

23 March

IX. Miracles. What are they? Is there good evidence they have been and are being performed?

25, 30 March

X. Problem of Evil (and pain and suffering). An argument against the existence of that God. Theistic replies.

1 April

XI. Life After Death. The Problem of Hell.

6, 8 April

XII. Religious Diversity and Pluralism. Is reconciliation possible and/or desirable?

13 April

XIII. Conclusion.

**Additional Information:**

This course is an introduction to selected issues in the Philosophy of Religion such as: Who or what is God? How can we know if there is a God? Do philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God succeed? Can a good, loving God allow evil to exist? Do miracles occur? Is there life after death?

This is a course in Philosophy. It is not a course in theology, the history of religion, the sociology or psychology of religion or comparative religion, although there is some overlap with these fields.

As William Rowe writes (p. 1), the primary concern of philosophy of religion is "to assess the sorts of reasons that thoughtful people have advanced for and against religious beliefs." Philosophy of religion is "the critical examination of basic religious beliefs and concepts... To critically examine a religious belief involves explicating the belief, and examining the reasons that have been given for and against the belief, with a view to determining whether there is any rational justification for holding that belief to be true or holding it to be false" (p. 2).