



School of Humanities and Languages

ARTS2382, Philosophy of Religion Semester 1, 2014

Table of Contents

Course Staff and Contact Details	2
Course Details	2
Learning and Teaching Rationale	4
Attendance/Class Clash	4
Assessment	5
Critical Reflections (20% for 5 reflections)	5
Group Presentation (10%).....	6
Presentation Script (20%)	8
Research Essay (35%)	8
Class Test (15%)	9
Grades	9
Submission of Assessments	9
Late Submission of Assignments	9
Academic Honesty and Plagiarism	10
Course Schedule	11
Course Resources	12
Course Evaluation and Development.....	13
Student Support	13
Grievances	14
Other Information	14

1. Course Staff and Contact Details

Course Convenor, Lecturer and Tutor			
Name	A/Prof Karyn Lai	Room	MB 326
Phone	9385 1194	Email	k.lai@unsw.edu.au
Consultation Time	Tuesday 11am – 12 pm, or email for an appointment		

2. Course Details

Course Description	This course studies the phenomenon of religion, its relation to ways of life, and its construction of stories and myths. Drawing from a variety of religious sources, it analyses the different categories and forms in and through which religious ideals are expressed and justified. Topics covered include arguments for the existence of God, the concept of evil, faith and mysticism, human relation to the natural world, religion and morality, religion and gender, and free will and determinism.
Student Learning Outcomes	<p>Upon successful completion of the course students can expect to have developed, or further developed, the following competencies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An understanding of the history and contemporary significance of the philosophy of religion. 2. An understanding of the relevance of philosophical approaches to the study of religious belief. 3. An ability to understand and analyse arguments and concepts in contemporary philosophy of religion and to evaluate different philosophical theories in relation to other relevant disciplinary approaches. 4. Further developed skills in clarity of written expression, interpretation, and critical analysis. 5. Enhanced ability to interpret texts and develop appreciation of core philosophical concepts. 6. Ability to provide a philosophical understanding of concepts in a way that allows the philosophical issues to be recognised and developed in diverse forms of human experience. 7. Ability to provide the basis for ongoing engagement with key figures in the history of philosophy and in contemporary debates.
Graduate Attributes (developed through lecture attendance, preparation for and participation in tutorial discussions, and	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to read and interpret texts sensitively and carefully, especially appreciating the importance of intellectual tradition; 2. Ability to evaluate and critically analyse beliefs, ideas and information using a range of techniques of philosophical reasoning; 3. Appreciation of the importance of reasoned enquiry and an ability to apply tools of philosophical analysis to a range of issues including those in contemporary debates; 4. Ability to present coherent and persuasive arguments;

successful completion of assignments)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">5. Skills of effective communication;6. Appreciation of, and respect for, diversity; and7. Respect for ethical practice and social responsibility.
---------------------------------------	--

3. Learning and Teaching Rationale

My teaching, and what I expect

My approach to teaching is to involve students as much as possible. I expect you to participate in this course. It is also important that you do not consider the lectures and tutorials as 'optional'. They are not: it is compulsory for you to attend at least 80% of classes (both lectures and tutorials) in order to pass the course. In classes, we will be thinking together; I aim to demonstrate to you, through my teaching, what *good* philosophy is. It is crucial that you commit yourself to a consistent reading program from the start. It is only through this that you will be able properly to follow the discussions in the class and reap the benefits from taking the course. You will get as much out of the course as you put in. I will create, as much as I can, opportunities for discussion.

The lectures, tutorials, assignments and online activities have been designed to introduce you to the *content* of debates in Philosophy of Religion as well as to encourage and develop your *skills* in critical thinking, argumentation and research.

For my part, I will attempt to provide prompt and detailed feedback on assignments. I am also happy to explore a range of assessment options or assessment topic options if you suggest them early during the course so I have time to think them through with others who are taking the course. I envisage that students will be able to look back favourably, at the end of the course, to reflect on the content they have learnt, and skills developed.

4. Attendance/Class Clash

Attendance

Students are expected to be regular and punctual in attendance at all classes in the courses in which they are enrolled. Explanations of absences from classes or requests for permission to be absent from classes should be discussed with the teacher and where applicable accompanied by a medical certificate.

To successfully complete this course you are required to attend minimum 80% of all classes, including lectures and tutorials. If this requirement is not met you will receive an "Unsatisfactory Fail (UF)" grade even if you may have attained 50 or higher in the total mark for the course.

Students who falsify their attendance or falsify attendance on behalf of another student will be dealt with under the student misconduct policy.

Class Clash

A student who is approved a permissible clash must fulfil the following requirements:

- a. The student must provide the Course Convenor with copies of lecture notes from those lectures missed on a regular basis as agreed by the Course Convenor and the student.
- b. If a student does attend a lecture for which they had secured a permitted clash they will still submit lecture notes as evidence of attendance.
- c. **Failure to meet these requirements is regarded as unsatisfactory performance in the course and a failure to meet the Faculty's course attendance requirement.**

Accordingly, Course Convenors will fail students who do not meet this performance/attendance requirement.

- d. Students must attend the clashed lecture on a specific date if that lecture contains an assessment task for the course such as a quiz or test. Inability to meet this requirement would be grounds for a Course Convenor refusing the application. If the student misses the said lecture there is no obligation on the Course Convenor to schedule a make-up quiz or test and the student can receive zero for the assessment task. It should be noted that in many courses a failure to complete an assessment task can be grounds for course failure.

5. Assessment

The assessment in this course is designed to address the learning outcomes, and builds up cumulatively over the course of the session. You are encouraged to maintain a portfolio of your work (in a file) right through the session in order to chart your own progress. The purpose of the portfolio is to enable you to return to your previous work and to assess and develop it. Through that process, you will be developing critical and analytical skills. It will also be satisfying charting how much you have learnt, and the skills you have acquired, through the session.

You must attempt all assessment components. Failure to complete any one component will result in an "Unsatisfactory Fail (UF)" grade, even if the total mark for the course is 50 and above.

Assignment Task	Weight	Due Date	Word Length/Scope
Critical Reflections	20% (total for all 5 reflections)	Every Tuesday <i>by noon</i> from weeks 3 to 7	100-120 words per week (only from weeks 3-7)
Group Presentation	10%	Groups to present at the lectures in week 9 or 10	15 minutes per group
Presentation Script	20%	Monday 19th May	1000 words
Research Essay	35%	Monday 16th June	2000 words
Class Test	15%	Thursday 5th June, <i>during tutorial hour</i>	2 short-answer questions. 45 minutes

Critical Reflections (20% for 5 reflections)

Submitted and assessed on Moodle

Every Tuesday, by 12 noon, in weeks 3 to 7, each student is to post on the Moodle "Critical Reflections" site a **question or a point for reflection** relating to the reading or

lecture material for the previous week. *For example, by Tues 12 noon in Week 3, each student must have posted a question relating to the material discussed either in lectures or tutorials in week 2.* I will then select a number of these questions for discussion in the tutorials, in addition to the ones I have circulated.

You are encouraged to raise questions about the implications of particular ideas etc, inviting reflection on them. Alternatively, you may simply ask a question that seeks clarification of an idea or concept. *Note, however, that the emphasis is on asking reflective questions.*

A good question is precise and to-the-point. It need not have a clear “yes” or “no” answer; indeed, the question being asked might not have *an* answer. A good question is an intelligent question and it should invite or encourage respondent/s to think critically. In other words, a good question seeks to engage, and not to foreclose on the issue at stake.

If you find that you have a point to raise that another student has raised, feel free to comment on their post by extending their point. Comments on other students’ posts may also count as your ‘question’ or ‘reflection’ for the week.

Rationale: This assignment component helps to develop skills of reflection on what you are learning. To *ask questions* is a core task in philosophy. It takes more thought to ask questions than merely to absorb what you read and hear.

Marking criteria

You should aim to demonstrate:

- an understanding of key questions relating to the topics each week; and
- the ability to express ideas clearly; and
- the ability to respond to comments and engage with others’ views.

Group Presentation (10%)

Group presentation in either weeks 9 or 10, during lecture times.

Each group will choose to work on a particular religion, exploring a particular dimension of that religion. The 'dimension' must be a philosophical category covered in class, either in Metaphysics, Epistemology or Ethics, within Philosophy of Religion.

Examples of topics include: Buddhist ethics; the Concept of the Divine in Hinduism; Different levels of existence in Islamic philosophy; The connection between ethics and salvation in Christianity; Teleological beliefs in Judaism.

Each group is to decide on a topic by week 6 and groups must be prepared to make their presentations either in week 9 or week 10.

The primary aim of the presentations is to build on and extend class discussions, thinking through how particular religions incorporate and express key ideas and approaches.

The marking rubric for the presentation is as follows:

	Presentation Marking Rubric (Group)				
	4	3	2	1	Mark
Presentation Skills <i>Were the ideas presented effectively?</i>	Regular/constant eye contact, The audience was engaged, and presenters held the audience's attention. Appropriate speaking volume & body language. Visual resources were used effectively to enhance the presentation.	The audience was engaged by the presentation. Presenters spoke at a suitable volume. Some fidgeting by member(s). Visual resources were used to enhance the presentation, although they sometimes distracted the audience from listening to the presenters.	The audience was distracted. Presenters could only be heard sometimes. Body language was distracting. Primarily prepared but with some dependence on just reading off slides. Visual resources involved mainly cutting-and-pasting from information sources.	The audience was not engaged. Presenters spoke too quickly or quietly making it difficult to understand. Inappropriate/uninterested body language. Dependence on slides. Visual resources were of a poor quality.	
Content <i>Did the presentation have insightful material?</i>	Presentation had an exceptional amount of insightful material, building on and extending the discussions in class.	Presentation had a good amount of material and extended some of the discussions in class.	Presentation had moments where insightful material was present but, as a whole, did not adequately address themes discussed in class.	Presentation contained little to no valuable material. It did not relate to ideas discussed in class, nor extend them in significant ways.	
Participation/ Group Dynamics <i>Was there evidence of effective group work?</i>			All presenters knew the information, participated equally, and helped each other as needed. Extremely well-prepared and excellent coordination among members of the group.	Significant controlling by some members while others seemed not to be aware of what was going on. Unbalanced presentation or tension resulting from over-helping. Multiple group members not participating.	
				Total	/10

Presentation Script (20%)

Due Monday 19th May
1000 words

The discussion in this script is conducted *individually*. Students are to prepare a script, drawing from their group presentations. They may use the material collectively gathered by the group.

The selected topics *need not be* exactly the same as that presented in the group presentation. For example, while a student's group might have focused on Buddhist ethics, a student might choose to write on how Buddhist ethics contrasts with Islamic ethics. Or a student's group might have done a presentation on the layers of gods in Hinduism, and the student might choose to write on polytheism in contrast to monotheism, using Hinduism as an example of the former.

Marking criteria

You should seek to demonstrate the following in your presentation scripts:

- Demonstrated analytic and critical capacity.
- Clarity and logic of writing in English.
- Methodological self-awareness.
- Rectitude in matters of bibliography, citation and quotation.

Research Essay (35%)

DUE Monday 16th June
Essay Length: 2200 words

Questions and topics for the research essay will be circulated around weeks 9-10 of session. At around week 9, I will schedule a tutorial where we focus on discussing the essay questions. I will also give an opportunity to any student to review their course outline during that time frame.

Marking criteria

The essay is designed to encourage and foster the development of your skills and knowledge areas as specified in the marking criteria below:

- Clarity and coherence of argument supported by evidence.
- Capacity for originality and independent research.
- Familiarity with, and understanding of, relevant literature.
- Clarity and logic of writing in English.
- Demonstrated analytic and critical capacity.
- Methodological self-awareness.
- Rectitude in matters of bibliography, citation and quotation.

Class Test (15%)

Thursday 5th June, during tutorial classes.

Allocated time: 45 mins for two short-answer questions

Word count: 200 words max. for each question.

The class test will cover all topics discussed during the semester. It is an open-book test. You are allowed to bring in any materials you wish, including the textbook, other reference books and your handwritten notes.

The test is *not* a test of memory. It is a test of your capacity for critical thinking and how you are able to apply the knowledge you've required. The mark is awarded on the basis of the following criteria below; you should seek to demonstrate that you have read and understood the material from week to week in a critically reflective way.

Grades

All results are reviewed at the end of each semester and may be adjusted to ensure equitable marking across the School.

The proportion of marks lying in each grading range is determined not by any formula or quota system, but by the way that students respond to assessment tasks and how well they meet the objectives of the course. Nevertheless, since higher grades imply performance that is well above average, the number of distinctions and high distinctions awarded in a typical course is relatively small. At the other extreme, on average 6.1% of students do not meet minimum standards and a little more (8.6%) in first year courses. For more information on the grading categories see

<https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/academiclife/assessment/GuideToUNSWGrades.html>

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Assignments which are submitted to the School Assignment Box must have a properly completed School Assessment Coversheet, with the declaration signed and dated by hand. The Coversheet can be downloaded from <https://hal.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/courses/course-outlines/>. It is your responsibility to make a backup copy of the assignment prior to submission and retain it.

Assignments must be submitted before 4:00pm on the due date. Assignments received after this time will be marked as having been received late.

Late Submission of Assignments

Late assignments will attract a penalty. Of the total mark, 3% will be deducted each day for the first week, with Saturday and Sunday counting as two days, and 10% each week thereafter.

The penalty may not apply where students are able to provide documentary evidence of illness or serious misadventure. Time pressure resulting from undertaking assignments for other courses does not constitute an acceptable excuse for lateness.

6. Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's thoughts or work as your own. It can take many forms, from not having appropriate academic referencing to deliberate cheating.

In many cases plagiarism is the result of inexperience about academic conventions. The University has resources and information to assist you to avoid plagiarism.

The Learning Centre assists students with understanding academic integrity and how to not plagiarise. Information is available on their website: <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/>. They also hold workshops and can help students one-on-one.

If plagiarism is found in your work when you are in first year, your lecturer will offer you assistance to improve your academic skills. They may ask you to look at some online resources, attend the Learning Centre, or sometimes resubmit your work with the problem fixed. However, more serious instances in first year, such as stealing another student's work or paying someone to do your work, may be investigated under the Student Misconduct Procedures.

Repeated plagiarism (even in first year), plagiarism after first year, or serious instances, may also be investigated under the Student Misconduct Procedures. The penalties under the procedures can include a reduction in marks, failing a course or for the most serious matters (like plagiarism in an Honours thesis) or even suspension from the university. The Student Misconduct Procedures are available here:

<http://www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/studentmisconductprocedures.pdf>

7. Course Schedule

11	Topic	Reading
Week 1 (3-7 Mar)	God's Existence: Ontological Arguments	St. Anselm. 1992. "The Ontological Argument for the Existence of God," from ED Klemke (ed) <i>To Believe or Not to Believe</i> , USA: Harcourt Brace Publishers. Rene Descartes. 1992. "The Ontological Argument Restated," from <i>To Believe or Not to Believe</i> .
Week 2 (10-14 Mar)	God's Existence: Ontological Arguments	Gaunilo and St Anselm. 1992. "The Ontological Arguments," from <i>To Believe or Not to Believe</i> . Refer to the full text at: http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/anselm-gaunilo.asp D & M Haight. 1992. "An Ontological Argument for the Devil" (1970). <i>Monist</i> . Vol. 54.
Week 3 (17-21 Mar)	God's Existence: Cosmological Arguments	St. Thomas Aquinas "Five Ways to Prove the Existence of God," from Oliver J. Thatcher (ed.) <i>The Library of Original Sources</i> (Milwaukee: University Research Extension Co., 1907). Vol. V: The Early Medieval World, pp. 359-363. Accessed at: http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/aquinas3.asp David Hume "The Cosmological Argument," from <i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i> , Part IX. © 2006 David Banach Accessed online at: http://www.anselm.edu/homepage/dbanach/dnr.htm#A10 An audio version is available at: http://www.archive.org/download/dialogues_concerning_natural_religion_lm_librivox/naturalreligion_09_hume.mp3
Week 4 (24-28 Mar)	God's Existence: Design Arguments	William Paley. 1802. Excerpts from <i>Natural Theology or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity Collected from the Appearances of Nature</i> . Accessed from http://faculty.humanities.uci.edu/bjbecker/RevoltingIdeas/paley.html David Hume "Design and the Teleological Argument", from Rowe and Wainwright (eds) 1998. <i>Philosophy of Religion</i> . 3 rd ed. Harcourt Brace Publishers. Richard Taylor "God: The Cosmological and Design Arguments," from <i>To Believe or Not to Believe</i> .
Week 5 (31 Mar-4 Apr)	Metaphysics: Realism, Conceptions of the Divine	Plato. 360 BCE. "The Cave," Book VII, <i>The Republic</i> . Translated by Benjamin Jowett. Accessed at: http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.8.vii.html Charles Taliaferro 1998. "Divine Intelligence and the Structure of the Cosmos" in <i>Contemporary Philosophy of Religion</i> . Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
Week 6 (7-11 Apr)	Metaphysics: Attributes of the Divine	Richard Swinburne. 1979. "The Problem of Evil," in <i>The Existence of God</i> , Oxford: Clarendon Press. Jerome Gellman. 1992. "A New Look at the Problem of Evil," <i>Faith and Philosophy</i> , Vol. 9, no. 2. George Schlesinger. 1979. "On the Compatibility of the Divine Attributes," <i>Religious Studies</i> Vol 23.

Week 7 (14-17 Apr)	Comparing Religions	<i>Readings provided on Moodle</i>
Mid-semester break		
Week 8 (28 Apr-2 May)	Ethics: God and Morality	Plato. 380 BCE. <i>Euthyphro</i> (trans. Benjamin Jowett). Accessed at: http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/euthyphro.html Charles Taliaferro 1998. "God, Values and Pluralism" in <i>Contemporary Philosophy of Religion</i> . Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
Week 9 (5-9 May)	Presentations	
Week 10 (12-16 May)	Presentations	
Week 11 (19-23 May)	Epistemology: Burden of Proof	Anthony Flew. 1992. "The Presumption of Atheism," in R. Douglas Geivett and B Sweetman (eds) <i>Contemporary Perspectives on Religious Epistemology</i> , New York: Oxford University Press. Scott Shalkowski. 1992. "Atheological Apologetics," in <i>Contemporary Perspectives on Religious Epistemology</i> . John Wisdom. 1992. "Gods," from <i>To Believe or Not to Believe</i> .
Week 12 (26-30 May)	Revisiting Intelligent Design	Peter Van Inwagen. 2008. "The Place of Rational Beings in the World: Design and Purpose," in <i>Metaphysics</i> , 3 rd ed, USA: Westview Press.
Week 13 (2-6 June)	Final Test (in tutorials)	

8. Course Resources

Readings

A book of readings is available for purchase from the UNSW Bookshop.

Supplementary readings

The UNSW library has books on Philosophy of Religion. The most effective way to search this is to go to the library shelves and look to see what's on the shelf. The textbooks that introduce the Philosophy of Religion would be a good place to start. The relevant item numbers are S210 etc (e.g. S210/56).

If you do a search in the library database for "The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Religion" (*include the double quotation marks*), you'll get to a pretty helpful online resource.

For research on religions, type in "world religions" (*with the double quotation marks*) in the Library's search engine. You should find quite a few useful resources there.

An excellent online dictionary is available via the library website. Search in the library for "The concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions" (*with the double quotation marks*).

Internet resources for philosophy

The UNSW website allows access to a wonderful search engine for philosophy, the [Philosophers' Index](#). This database attempts to give you information on everything that has been published in Philosophy in English. Key in the right search terms, and you're in business.

The [Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) is a great resource (accessible via the UNSW Library website) for good introductions to various topics. The [Stanford Encyclopedia](#) is great too—with open access.

The [BBC religions](#) website is a particularly good starting point to discover basic information about some world religions. You might want to refer to this website to decide on the religion/topic that you'd like to present on.

Other Research tools

The Oxford Bibliographies is a great research resource, with up-to-date information on ideas, books and articles. This resource is a *bibliographic* resource. That is, it doesn't present summaries of arguments in the field but rather gives a sense of what has been published recently in current debates within the field.

On Philosophy of Religion, go to <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195396577/obo-9780195396577-0103.xml?rskey=byOmu6&result=147&q=>

On the epistemology of religious belief, go to:
<http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195396577/obo-9780195396577-0104.xml?rskey=byOmu6&result=148&q=>

On religious experience, go to: <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195396577/obo-9780195396577-0206.xml?rskey=byOmu6&result=149&q=>

9. Course Evaluation and Development

There will be the usual end-of-session CATEI survey form. These surveys are important as they help me to make positive changes to the course for subsequent years. From your point of view, however, it is important that certain aspects of the course that are not working well be fixed *while you are enrolled in the course!*

I will conduct anonymous evaluations right through the course for this reason. But, if there is anything at all that you think can be improved, just send me an email to let me know (k.lai@unsw.edu.au). While you're in this course, you should never feel that, in sending an email of this nature, that you are criticising the lecturer and therefore may be penalised as a result. I *appreciate* student feedback because:

- (i) they are a form of affirmation that you are listening to me or taking heed of what I say and do;
- (ii) they help me teach better; and, importantly

(iii) they tell me that you are keen to learn and do well. For me, personally, this is one of the incentives of teaching!

10. Student Support

The Learning Centre is available for individual consultation and workshops on academic skills. Find out more by visiting the Centre's website at:

<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au>

11. Grievances

All students should be treated fairly in the course of their studies at UNSW. Students who feel they have not been dealt with fairly should, in the first instance, attempt to resolve any issues with their tutor or the course convenors.

If such an approach fails to resolve the matter, the School of Humanities and Languages has an academic member of staff who acts as a Grievance Officer for the School. This staff member is identified on the notice board in the School of Humanities and Languages. Further information about UNSW grievance procedures is available at:

<https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/Complaints.html>

12. Other Information

myUNSW

myUNSW is the online access point for UNSW services and information, integrating online services for applicants, commencing and current students and UNSW staff. To visit myUNSW please visit either of the below links:

<https://my.unsw.edu.au>

<https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/ABC.html>

OHS

UNSW's Occupational Health and Safety Policy requires each person to work safely and responsibly, in order to avoid personal injury and to protect the safety of others. For all matters relating to Occupational Health, Safety and environment, see

<http://www.ohs.unsw.edu.au/>

Special Consideration

In cases where illness or other circumstances produce repeated or sustained absence, students should apply for Special Consideration as soon as possible.

The application must be made via Online Services in myUNSW. Log into myUNSW and go to My Student Profile tab > My Student Services channel > Online Services > Special Consideration.

Applications on the grounds of illness must be filled in by a medical practitioner. Further information is available at:

<https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/SpecialConsideration.html>

Student Equity and Disabilities Unit

Students who have a disability that requires some adjustment in their learning and teaching environment are encouraged to discuss their study needs with the course convener prior to or at the commencement of the course, or with the Student Equity Officers (Disability) in the Student Equity and Disabilities Unit (9385 4734). Information for students with disabilities is available at: <http://www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au>

Issues that can be discussed may include access to materials, signers or note-takers, the provision of services and additional examination and assessment arrangements. Early notification is essential to enable any necessary adjustments to be made.