

PHIL 30323 / RELI 30633: Philosophy of Religion
11:00 MWF, BEA 205
Texas Christian University
Spring 2012

Dr. C. David Grant

Office: BEA 021

Office Hours: I am usually available for drop-in conferences on Wednesday from 3:00–5:00 and Thursdays from 2:00–4:00. I work on campus, so I'm around most days and will be more than glad to set up an appointment at other times than those above. Check with me after class, call me at the above number, or send me an e-mail.

Telephone: 817-257-6447

E-mail: d.grant@tcu.edu

Course Web Site: <http://faculty.tcu.edu/grant/30633>

Description: This course is centrally concerned with issues relating to the rationality and justification of religious convictions. There is also an interest in the coherence of religious concepts. Various philosophical models for understanding and evaluating religious convictions and practices are examined and applied.

Objectives: As a result of this course students will be able to:

- (1) Identify major philosophical issues involved in religious faith and belief.
- (2) describe, analyze, and evaluate the classical philosophical arguments about God's existence and attributes.
- (3) Think critically for themselves about the rationality and justification of religious beliefs.
- (4) Write clear and cogent philosophical arguments on religious topics.

Requirements: Students will be expected to:

- (1) Attend class. Consistent class attendance is expected of all students and erratic attendance will adversely affect final grades. Students occasionally get sick; built into the attendance policy is a five-class allowance for missing class due to minor illness or personal emergency. (Work missed as result will *not* be excused.) *After five absences, however, your final term average will be lowered by a half-letter grade (five points) for each additional absence.* A roll will be passed around at the beginning of each class, and you are to sign this roll with your *usual signature*. It is your responsibility each day to see that you've signed the roll before you leave the classroom, for these rolls are the official record of class attendance.
- (2) Keep up with reading assignments and demonstrate this by participation in class discussions. A rubric will be developed in the first week of class concerning the evaluation of class participation.
- (3) Submit two critical essays. The first essay, to be approximately 1250–1500 words, will be due at the beginning of class on March 16. The second essay, to be approximately 2500–3000 words, will be due at the beginning of class on April 30. Details concerning those essays will be distributed at the appropriate times during the semester.
- (4) Take a midterm examination (February 29) and a final examination (May 9 from 11:30–2:00 p.m.). These examinations will be essay examinations. **NO MAKE-UP EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN, EXCEPT FOR VERIFIED OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY ABSENCES, SERIOUS ILLNESSES, CATASTROPHIC ACCIDENT OR FAMILY EMERGENCIES.** Such verification will require the presentation of appropriate medical records as requested by the

instructor or the Campus Life Office. NOTE: Graduating Seniors and students whose published exam schedule would require them to take more than two final examinations in a twenty-four-hour period may ask to reschedule the final exam. If you are in this situation and wish to reschedule the final for this class, you must submit to Dr. Grant a Request for Rescheduled Final Examination no later than Wednesday, April 25, 2012. The form can be downloaded from the course web site. This request must contain your examination schedule as published, including course numbers, section numbers, and instructors' names.

- (5) Complete daily assignments. Students will receive assignments for daily written work that must be completed when specified. These assignments will be listed on the course Web page, so students who miss a class should check that page for any assignments they missed.

Required Books: Students are to purchase the following books:

- Peterson, Michael, et al. *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings*. 4th ed. New York: Oxford, 2010. ISBN 978-0-19-539359-0.
 Hartshorne, Charles. *Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1984. ISBN 978-0-87395-771-7.

Grades: Term grades will be determined according to the following scheme:

First Critical Essay	15%
Second Critical Essay	20%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Exam	25%
Daily Assignments	15%
Discussion participation	10%

Grades will be based on the scale of quality delineated in the *TCU Undergraduate Studies Bulletin 2011-2012*:

A – Excellent work.	D – Poor work.
B – Good work.	F – Failing work.
C – Satisfactory work.	

Appropriate pluses and minuses will be used.

Written Work: All written work should conform to the standards of presentation found in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (7th. ed., New York: Modern Language Association, 2009), with the exception that, for the two critical essays, you should place the required heading on a separate cover sheet and put only the title of your paper (not your name) on the first page. Also, please number the pages in the top right corner and do not include your name with the page number. Then staple all the pages together in the top left corner. (This enables me to evaluate the essays without knowing the author's identity until the evaluation is done.) You should purchase a copy of the *MLA Handbook* if you do not already own one.

Plagiarism, whether accidental or deliberate, is a *serious* academic offense. You can avoid plagiarism by carefully using quotation marks around material that you directly cite from a source and indicating your indebtedness to an author by a reference when you borrow ideas. Please see section 1.8 of the *MLA Handbook* for a detailed discussion of plagiarism. Students must be ready to defend their papers in oral examination if so requested by the instructor. If I determine that you've committed plagiarism, you will receive a zero on the assignment and I will recommend to the dean that you be dropped from the course with an *F* and that further appropriate disciplinary sanctions be applied. Students will also submit their critical essays to TurnItIn.com for evaluation of originality. Instructions for doing so will be distributed at the appropriate time in the semester.

NOTE: The last day to drop a class is March 15, 2012.

Disabilities Statement: Texas Christian University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact the Coordinator of Student Disabilities Services in the Center for Academic Services located in Sadler Hall, 1010. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Further information can be obtained from the Center for Academic Services, TCU Box 297710, Fort Worth, TX 76129, or at (817) 257-6567.

Students with emergency medical information or needing special arrangements in case a building must be evacuated should discuss this information with their instructor/professor as soon as possible.

Academic Conduct: You are expected to know and follow appropriate academic conduct. Academic misconduct as defined in the Code of Student Conduct, sec. 3.4.-3.4.9, will result in serious sanctions.

Computers, Mobile Phones, and other Electronic Devices: Please be sure all electronic devices are off and stowed away in pockets, purses, or backpacks during class. I will ask that you have your textbook open on your desk, so I encourage you to take handwritten notes. Using a computer or electronic tablet for note-taking requires special permission, so see me if you intend to use such in class. Audio or video recordings of the class are prohibited except by special permission.

Criteria for Evaluation of Critical Essays. Your critical essays will be evaluated in light of the four criteria below. Papers that fulfill these criteria in an excellent way will be awarded *As*; papers that do so in an good way, *Bs*; and papers that meet the criteria at a satisfactory level, *Cs*. Papers that do not fulfill the criteria at a satisfactory level will be awarded *Ds* and *Fs*, depending on the severity of the problems.

1. *Organization:* The paper is well organized. It contains a clear thesis statement that focuses the essay and each and every paragraph logically contributes to the development and defense of that thesis. The paper is succinct, to the point, and avoids needless words.
2. *Understanding:* The paper exhibits a thorough understanding of the works being criticized and accurately explicates the authors' arguments where relevant to the development of its critical thesis.
3. *Criticism:* The paper takes a critical stance toward the material under examination, clearly articulating reasons for its critical evaluation. The criticisms are based on solid reasoning that is well supported with relevant evidence.
4. *Mechanics:* The paper is flawlessly presented, with no spelling or grammar errors. It properly references the ideas and words of others and is presented in the form stipulated by the *MLA Handbook*.

Papers are due at the time and on the day specified in the syllabus. Late papers will be penalized a letter grade per day, or fraction of a day, late.

RELI 30633/PHIL 30323: Philosophy of Religion

Spring 2012

Dr. Grant

	DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT
1	W 1/18	Course Introduction	
2	F 1/20	What is philosophy of religion?	Peterson, 1–4
The Arguments for the Existence of God			
3	M 1/23	• <i>The Ontological Argument</i> : Anselm, Gaunilo	Peterson, 169–73
4	W 1/25	Plantinga	Peterson, 174–83
5	F 1/27	• <i>The Cosmological Arguments</i> : Thomas Aquinas	Peterson, 184–86
6	M 1/30	Reichenbach	Peterson, 187–96
7	W 2/1	The Kalam Cosmological Argument: Craig	Peterson, 197–204
8	F 2/3	Mackie	Peterson, 205–211
9	M 2/6	• <i>The Teleological Arguments</i> : Paley & Hume	Peterson, 212–21
10	W 2/8	Betty & Cordell	Peterson, 222–30
11	F 2/10	NO CLASS	
12	M 2/13	• <i>Moral Arguments</i> : Adams	Peterson, 231–39
13	W 2/15	• <i>The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology</i> : Plantinga	Peterson, 246–55
14	F 2/17	Pargetter, Hasker	Peterson, 256–68
The Divine Attributes			
15	M 2/20	• <i>Necessity and the Via Negativa</i> : Hick and Maimonides	Peterson, 128–37
16	W 2/22	• <i>Omnipotence</i> : Thomas and Mavrodes	Peterson, 138–43
17	F 2/24	• <i>Omniscience</i> : Pike	Peterson, 144–49
18	M 2/27	• <i>Eternality</i> : Boethius, Wolterstorff	Peterson, 150–59
19	W 2/29	*** MIDTERM EXAM ***	
The Problem of Evil			
20	F 3/2	Hume and Leibniz on Evil	Peterson, 276–87
21	M 3/5	Mackie on Evil and Omnipotence	Peterson, 288–96
22	W 3/7	The Free Will Defense: Plantinga	Peterson, 297–315
23	F 3/9	Soul-Making Theodicy: Hick	Peterson, 316–23
24	M 3/12	Evidential Argument for Atheism	Peterson, 324–32
25	W 3/14	Evils and the Goodness of God	Peterson, 333–42
26	F 3/16	Discussion on the Problem of Evil	PAPER DUE
SPRING BREAK			
Neoclassical Theism (Process Theism)			
27	M 3/26	Hartshorne, Six Mistakes about God	Hartshorne, 1–49
28	W 3/28	The Physical and the Spiritual	Hartshorne, 51–63
29	F 3/30	Creation Through Evolution	Hartshorne, 65–95
30	M 4/2	Equal Love for Self and Other	Hartshorne, 97–136
31	W 4/4	Discussion on Hartshorne's Neoclassical Theism	
	F 4/6	NO CLASS: Good Friday	
Miracles			
32	M 4/9	Davis, Rationality of Belief in the Resurrection	Peterson, 433–40
33	W 4/11	Weak Evidence for Miracles, Hume, Mackie	Peterson, 441–54
34	F 4/13	Swinburne, Physical Miracles Not Impossible	Peterson, 455–60
Faith and Reason			
35	M 4/16	Thomas, Pascal	Peterson, 92–98
36	W 4/18	Clifford, James on the Ethics of Belief	Peterson, 99–110
37	F 4/20	Kierkegaard, Evans	Peterson, 111–21
Topic to be Chosen by Students			
38	M 4/23	TBA	
39	W 4/25	TBA	
40	F 4/27	TBA	
41	M 4/30	TBA	PAPER DUE
42	W 5/2	• Conclusions and Evaluations	