

PHILOSOPHY 4500/6500 "PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION"
Spring Term 2009

Call Numbers:

PHIL 4500: 47149
PHIL 6500: 07150
RELI 4500: 27151
RELI 6500: 47152

Room: Peabody Hall 205S

Time: 12:30-1:45 pm (4TH period); Tuesdays and Thursdays

Professor: Frank Harrison

Office: 102, Peabody Hall

Telephone: 542-2823

Office Hours: Wednesday, 2:00-4:00; and by appointment

While I have noted that my regular office hours are on Wednesdays from 2:00-4:00, please drop by to see me whenever you wish. Indeed, days other than Wednesday are often better as I also advise undergraduates on Wednesday afternoon. Just send me an e-mail at harrison@uga.edu in order to check if I am in the office at a particular time. Or catch me before or after class.

From time to time you will want to check my web page. To do this –

- 1) Go to <www.phil.uga.edu>
- 2) Go to "PEOPLE" (in left hand column)
- 3) Go to "FACULTY"
- 4) Go to "HARRISON"
- 5) Go to "HARRISON WEB PAGE"

Texts:

- 1) *Philosophy of Religion* - Selected Readings; William Rowe and William Wainwright
- 2) *Philosophy of Religion*; William Rowe
- 3) *Philosophy of Religion*; William Wainwright

In the following syllabus the framework of this course is described as well as what is required by it. If, for any reason, you do not believe that you can follow this syllabus and do the work required, then consider dropping this class NOW. As the course precedes this syllabus may be modified. If so, announcements will be made in class. It is your responsibility to know of such announcements whether you are in attendance or not on any day of such announcements.

This course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced in class by the instructor may be necessary. It is the sole responsibility of the student to be aware of any such possible deviations from the following syllabus.

OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

- 1) To introduce you to some of the classic readings and problems found in monistic-theistic religion, and critiques of them from the viewpoint of philosophic analysis;
- 2) To introduce you to rational thinking and argumentation by means of class questioning, discussion, and lectures;
- 3) To begin to clarify what it is for an issue to be a philosophical/theological problem and what are the sorts of considerations necessary to approach such problems in a rational manner;
- 4) Through written critical essay tests and a critical term paper to provide you with opportunities to display your knowledge of the materials assigned and discussed as well as to develop and express in writing well-structured rational arguments to support various positions you develop;
- 5) To provide class time opportunities for you to raise, and defend or criticize, questions and views concerning the assigned writings as applied to particular real life type situations; and
- 6) To aid you in coming to understand yourself better as a rational, thinking human being.

This course is offered in a professional and critical manner. As an individual human being, you have my full respect and concern. As a student learning, I demand, and expect, of you nothing less than your very best! In producing to the standard of your very best within the environment of this course, you will be required to display a great deal of discipline and hard work. To attempt anything less will be to cheat yourself, others in the class, me, all of those taxpayers who are helping to support your education, and ultimately the state and nation. I am not at all tolerant of any of this. Nor should you be. Furthermore, to work hard does not guarantee an 'A' in this class. I believe that a 'C' is a respectable grade, a 'B' is upstanding and an 'A' is reserved for the very few.

STUDENT DATA SHEET

You must complete a Student Data Sheet for this class. You will find the data sheet as the last page of this syllabus. Print off a copy of this page. On this copy indicate the name you wish to be called in class. Also indicate if you do **not** want either your local address or your local telephone number to be included in a class directory to

be passed out to all members of the class. **A recent photo MUST be attached to the Data Sheet where indicated.** (Photos can be obtained at Kinko's if you do not have a recent one.) The Data Sheet is not considered complete without this photo. ***This Data Sheet, with the photo, must be turned in no later than Tuesday, 15 January.***

FIRST SUBMITTED ASSIGNMENT

The first written assignment must be submitted to the professor ***no latter than Thursday, 15 January, during the class period.***

This assignment is to write an autobiographical sketch. The autobiographical sketch is to be typed on standard 8.5" x 11" paper. The sketch is to be no shorter than three (3) full pages and no longer than four (4) full pages. Pages are to be numbered consecutively in the upper right-hand corner of each page, beginning with the first page.

The completed Data Sheet is to be placed on the top of the autobiographical sketch and the entire document stapled together in the upper left-hand corner. ***Remember to attach a recent photo of yourself to the place indicated on the data sheet.***

In the autobiographical sketch I invite you to introduce yourself, **as a person**, to me. You may wish to address such questions as "Why am I in an institution of higher learning, and especially the University of Georgia?", "What is required to be successful at the University?", "What do I think relevant to my life in general, and to my university education in particular?", "What are my major likes and dislikes in both 'things' and people?", "What specific goals do I wish to reach in my next seven years? Why do I wish to reach these goals and not some others?", "Do I consider myself a moral person and on what standards of morality?", "Why am I in this class and what do I hope to achieve from it?" These questions are **only illustrative** of the types of topics you might want to address. Remember, the purpose of this assignment is for me to know you as a person and not merely a social security number.

I do not consider a student enrolled in this class unless the data sheet, with photo, and autobiographical sketch is submitted at the required time.

BASES OF FINAL GRADE PHIL 4500/6500

Two tests 30% each
Research paper..... 40%

And here is the good news – there is no final examination!

TESTS

There are two (2) in-class written tests. These tests will be composed of several critical essay questions from which you will select two on which to write. These essays are not to be understood as either purely descriptive, or opinion, essays, although surely both description and opinion will be appropriate to some small degree. In these essays you will be presented with a problem, or situation, to analyze, a hypothesis to defend or attack, etc. **Most importantly you are to construct arguments (as understood moving from premises to conclusion), give rational and objective reasons, etc. in support of the position you take in the essay.** Personal beliefs and personal opinions, no matter how important and strong they might be for you as motivations to believe that something is the case, are not to be confused with arguments and evidence in rational support of some position. In your essays you are further required to demonstrate in lucid and correct English your ability **to apply** the (1) assigned reading materials, (2) class discussions and (3) the rational method in addressing the topic of the essay. If you do not write well critical essays and are not proficient in both grammar and vocabulary, then do not expect to do well in this course.

In this class by "critical essay" the following is **minimally** understood for a passing ('D') grade. An essay shall contain **minimally** five paragraphs, each paragraph having at least five sentences. An essay must have a well constructed **introduction** (not merely a "first paragraph") and a well-constructed **conclusion** (not merely a "last paragraph"). Minimally the introduction must state clearly **what** the overall thesis of the essay is and **how** you intend both to develop and support that thesis. The conclusion must not merely summarize the salient points of the essay and their relation in regard to the general thesis, but also suggest problem areas and other considerations that still need to be considered in relation to the topic under consideration. Each paragraph must have a clearly written topic sentence, the subject of which is to be developed in that paragraph. Further, each paragraph, with the exception of the conclusion, must have a clearly written transitional sentence relating the content of that paragraph to the topic of the next. And, of course, each paragraph must have a clear development.

In a critical essay it is not sufficient merely to relate what someone (e.g., Rowe or Wainwright) says about a given topic. You must also clearly put forth the reasons (i.e., arguments) supporting **why** someone holds this position. Equally important are arguments **you** develop pointing out any weaknesses in the position under consideration, or if you perceive no weaknesses, giving reasons why.

At the end of each chapter Rowe has "topics for Review" and "topics for Further Study." I suggest that you pay serious attention to both of these in preparation for your tests as well as for your final research paper.

Remember that proper grammar, style and spelling is demanded in all cases of writing in this course. Mistakes in grammar, style and spelling **significantly** lower a test grade. Examples of standard references for proper grammar, style and spelling are

- 1) Harbrace Handbook of English, and
- 2) Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary

Once more let me stress that the above features constitute a minimally acceptable essay.

For further comments concerning the writing of critical essays for my courses, go to my web site and read, "Comments on Writing a Critical Essay." If you do not believe that you are prepared to do this sort of work, then I suggest that you seriously consider dropping this course for you will not do well in it. You may not pass it.

Again, I cannot sufficiently emphasize how important it is in this class for you to be able to write well in the sense of presenting and rationally developing topics, pro and con, while coming to a well reasoned conclusion. A good many students are more accustomed to short answer paragraphs, identification sentences and the like when taking a test. That level of work will guarantee a student an 'F' in my class.

It is important to note that the materials and tests in this class are cumulative. Hence, once anything has been introduced through reading assignments, hand-outs, class discussion, etc. **you are responsible for both knowing and using that material through the entire class.**

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Undergraduate students are to develop a specific problem arising in one of the major assigned topics of this course and then to write a 13-15 page paper on that specific topic. These major topics are: The Nature and Attributes of God, Arguments for the Existence of God, The Problem of Evil, Objections to Traditional Theism, Faith and Miracles, and Mysticism and Religious Experience. Graduate and Honors students are required to write a 18-22 page paper.

This paper must be typed, in 12 pt font and with 1" margins. Endnotes, in standard format, are to be placed at the end of the paper. The pages required for the endnotes do NOT count as part of the required length.

There is to be a title page containing the title of the paper, the name of the author, the course, and the "term date" ---

The Many Faces of God

Jane Doe
PHIL 4500
SPRING 2008

In this paper you are to present the various sides of the specific issue on which you select to essay. You are then to outline the major arguments for these positions.

Finally, you are to present your own position and argue for that position in face of the opposition. You might well end up by agreeing with some position presented in the readings. But, in your paper you are to do more than merely ape the arguments given in the assignments.

In writing this paper you are to use no less than five references other than the materials listed in this syllabus. The more recently dated the references, the better.

On 24 March you are to submit a 2-3 page **outline** (not a narrative sketch) of your research paper. Before beginning the outline I want you first to present a 1-2 sentence statement of your thesis. At the end of your outline I want a bibliography of the books and articles you plan to use and to cite in your paper. Your textbooks are not to be part of this bibliography.

I shall look over your outline, make comments and return it to you. If I do not think that your project is acceptable, I shall tell you. You will then either rework what you have submitted or produce an entirely new outline for a new project and present that to me within a week. Part of the assignment is to develop your own research topic. This is to say, I am not going to assign you one. As you are proceeding through the course, you will want to be thinking about your research topic. Indeed, you ought "to look ahead" at materials we have not yet discussed by the time your outline is to be submitted. Perhaps you will find some ideas there that interest you.

It is mandatory that you have your outline to me no later than the assigned date. Not to do so will automatically lower your paper grade a letter grade.

Further, you are also to return your outline to me, with my comments (if any) with your final paper. Once more, not to do so will lower your paper grade by a letter grade.

Your research paper is due to me no later than that class period one week before the last day of classes. ***After that date it will not be accepted and you will receive a zero for the paper grade unless you have a legitimate excuse for being late.*** Serious and documented illness is a serious excuse. Your printer not working at the last minute is not a reasonable excuse.

Often there is no single correct or incorrect answer to the more interesting and complicated issues of life. However, there are ranges of acceptable answers. Such ranges of acceptability are not rationally set by some individual, or group of individuals. For, after all, individuals and groups of individuals have been shown to be quite wrong in their positions. Rather, let us bind ourselves to the laws of logic and rational thought. It is in keeping with this suggestion that the following two sections of this syllabus are offered as guides you always ought to heed whether in this class or another.

STEPS IN REASONING AND WRITING WELL

- 1) Always state the **hypothesis** (or hypotheses) to be considered (discussed, argued for, etc.). What is your overall thesis? What the goal you are attempting to establish?.
- 2) Always point out key terms that need defining, points to be questioned, explanations needed, arguments required, and the like.
- 3) Always state the **methodology** to be used. That is, state **how** you are going to proceed in supporting and justifying the hypothesis you are considering.
- 4) Always **clarify** the hypothesis so that both the person presenting it (i.e., you) and the person receiving it will be discussing exactly the same thing. The less clear ones position, the worse the case for it.
- 5) Always **defend**, or **reject**, the hypothesis under consideration by presenting various kinds of arguments, explanations, factual considerations, as are appropriate to both the type of hypothesis being discussed and the specific hypothesis itself. Remember your beliefs about anything, no matter how strong those beliefs, do not constitute evidence but only provide motivation.
- 6) Always clearly draw some **conclusion(s)** and indicate further areas of discussion suggested by this (these) conclusion(s). Life is open ended. There is always more to learn, to investigate, to question. Be aware of that “more.”

FOUNDATIONAL ASSUMPTIONS OF RATIONALITY

- 1) Nothing in reality can correspond to a verbal contradiction.
- 2) Because someone (even a **great number** of people) **BELIEVE** that **X** does (or does not) exist, is (or is not) true, is (or is not) morally (politically, financially, aesthetically, etc.) acceptable (or not acceptable) or right (or wrong), it does not follow that **X** does (or does not) exist, is (is not) morally (politically, financially, aesthetically, etc.) acceptable (or not acceptable) or right (or wrong). While believing can often be a motivation to action, it is not rational justification for something.
- 3) Shouting a position is not arguing for that position. Shouting louder than your opponent does not make your position correct. It does make you look foolish.
- 4) The state-of-being (e.g., gender, religious persuasion, sexual orientation, race, and even sanity) of someone uttering **X often** has little to do with whether **X** is rationally acceptable or not. On the other hand, whether we accept or reject **X** may very well be influenced by our perceptions of the one presenting **X**. We must be careful of how we are influenced by our perceptions.
- 5) We must not confuse motivation with either argumentation or explanation. No

hypothesis or claim is to be accepted without evidence and/or argument. Our beliefs do supply motivation for us to act. They do not supply the criteria for correct action to take. Arguments, explanations, reasons, definitions and their clarifications must always be supplied to justify a position or an action.

6) A declarative sentence must be understood before it can be said whether that sentence is true or false, correct or incorrect, acceptable or not --- that is to say, **meaning** rationally precedes acceptance or rejection of any claim. Therefore, key terms in a position must always be properly defined.

7) If some position holds to be the case in one situation, then it also must hold to be the case in a situation similar to the first unless there are strong over-riding arguments for accepting some differences essential to the argument between the otherwise similar cases. This is nothing more than the demand for rational consistency.

POSTING OF FINAL GRADES

No final grades are posted, or given out, for this class. You will receive your final grade through The Office of the Registrar.

CHEATING

Cheating, plagiarism, etc. is in no way tolerated. Any suspected instance of such behavior is reported immediately to the Student Judiciary for action. In all such cases the policies of the **Student Handbook** are strictly followed.

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." All students are responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

ATTENDANCE

It is the better part of wisdom to attend, and participate in, ALL classes. And if you are not in class, you certainly cannot participate. Those who do not regularly attend class usually drop the class, make a poor grade, or fail. Further, it is the prerogative of the professor to assign a '**WF**', any time during the term, to a student for poor attendance (three absences is considered "poor attendance"). A '**WF**' will also be assigned to any student who fails to take the last test and/or turn in the research paper.

The student has sole responsibility of being aware of any material introduced and discussed, as well as any announcements made, during any class period. It is no excuse for the student to say that he/she was not aware of such-and-such because of any absences.

WITHDRAWALS

A **'WP'** is assigned to a student as a grade, regardless of the class average of that student, if he/she officially withdraws from the class up until, and including, the close of the final work day (5:00 pm) for class withdrawal as listed in the University Calendar.

If a student wishes to withdraw from the class **after** the final work day for class withdrawal, as listed in the University Calendar, a **'WF'** is assigned unless that student meets the requirements of the University for receiving a **'WP.'**

It would be wise to remember that a student can have only four assignments of 'WP' for his/her tenure at the University of Georgia. Furthermore, once a student has enrolled for a class and the drop/add period is passed, then any class dropped counts as part of the total number of HOPE hours a student may have.

INCOMPLETES

'I's ("Incomplete") are seldom given in this class, and only under the guidelines set out by the University. An 'I' must be requested in a formal letter to the professor. In this letter the student requesting an 'I' must establish that (s)he has a passing grade at the time of the request and that the reasons for requesting an 'I' are absolutely nonacademic. Evidence supporting this claim must accompany the request letter. The final decision to give an 'I' is left to the professor of the class within the guidelines set by the University. Any 'I' must be completed within nine months after it is given. If not, that 'I' automatically turns into an 'F'. The details of how the 'I' is to be completed will be written and signed by the student requesting the 'I' as well as the professor.

IMPORTANT DATES

8 January	First day of class
8-13 January	Drop Class Period
8-14 January	Add Class Period
15 January	Turn in Student Data Sheet with photo attached to autobiographical sketch with photo; seating assignments
26 February	First Test
3 March	Midterm
9-13 March	Spring Break
24 March*	Last day to withdraw from the class with a 'WP' . Such withdrawals must be completed and submitted by the closing of the Philosophy Office at 5:00 pm
24 March	2-3 page outline of the research paper you are going to submit
21 April	Research paper due

Of course you will be responsible on tests for all class assignments even though all of them probably will not be discussed in class.

The following provides a rough outline of the dates you will be expected to have materials initially read for class lectures and discussions.

ASSIGNMENT DATES

- 8 January Getting Started
- 11-16 January
 Selections: Part I: **The Nature and Attributes of God**
 Introduction
 Rowe: Preface, Chapter 1
 Wainwright: Preface, Chapter 1
- 15 January**
 Submit data sheet with a recent photo attached as well as your autobiographical sketch
- 18-23 January
 Selections: Necessary Being, Knowledge
- 26-30 January
 Selections: Knowledge, Power, The Metaphysical
 Attributes (Sts. Anselm and Aquinas)
- 1-6 February
 Selections: Part II: **Arguments for the Existence of God**
 Introduction
 The Ontological Argument
 Wainwright: Chapter 2; 35-41
 Rowe; Chapter 3
 Selections; 95-125
- 8-13 February
 The Cosmological Argument
 Wainwright; Chapter 2; 42-50
 Rowe: Chapter 2
 Selections: 126-154
 The Design (Teleological) Argument
 Wainwright: Chapter 2; 51-60
 Rowe: Chapter 4
 Selections: 155-183
 The Moral Argument
 Selections: 184-206
- 15-20 February, and 24 February
 Further discussion of the Three Arguments for the Existence of God
- 26 February Test I**
- 1-6 March
 Selections: Part III: **The Problem of Evil**

Introduction
 Rowe: Chapter 7
 Wainwright: Chapter 3

8-13 March Spring Break

15-20 March
 Selections: pages 224-233 and 242-283

22-27 March
 Selections: Part IV: **Objections to Traditional Theism**
 Introduction
 Wainwright: Chapter 7
 Selections: 293-313

24 March Research Paper Outline Due

24 March Withdrawal deadline

29 March-3 April
 Selections: Part VI: **Faith and Miracles**
 Introduction
 Rowe: Chapter 6
 Wainwright: Chapter 6

15-10 and 13 April
 Selections: 436-443; 444-455; 461-480
 Rowe: Chapter 9
 Wainwright: 61-64
 Selections: 492-506

17-23 April
 Selections: Part V: **Mysticism and Religious Experience**
 Introduction
 Rowe: Chapter 5
 Wainwright: Chapter 5
 Selections: 362-375; 384-415; 416-427

24 April Second Test

28 April Research Papers Must Be Turned in During Class Period
 Class evaluations

And finally, I very much enjoy getting together with my student friends outside of class for discussions and fellowship. When I was an undergraduate at Sewanee and a graduate at the University of Virginia I always found such social occasions with my professors and fellow students to be immensely profitable in all sorts of ways. I hope that we are able to do this as the term goes forward. I usually go downtown on Tuesday afternoons around five o'clock for conversation and relaxation. Do join with me if you are able to do so.

STUDENT DATA SHEET

course number and title

name

semester and year

student identification number

period and time

age

attach here a recent photo
of yourself

local address

local telephone number

e-mail address

class year and major

grade point average

List, by number and name, all philosophy
courses you have taken:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

List, by number and name, other courses
you are now taking:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____