

<b>Course ID:</b>	<b>Course Title:</b>	<b>Fall 2022</b>
<b>PH 203</b>	<b>Philosophy of Religion</b>	<b>Prerequisite: PH 125</b>
		<b>Credits: 3</b>

Class Information		Instructor Information		Important Dates	
<b>Delivery:</b>	IN-PERSON	<b>Instructor:</b>	KEN NICKEL, PHD	<b>First Day of Class:</b>	SEP 7
<b>Days:</b>	W & F	<b>Email:</b>	knickel@ambrose.edu	<b>Last Day to Add/Drop:</b>	SEP 18
<b>Time:</b>	8:15 AM	<b>Phone:</b>	403 410 2000 ext. 6903	<b>Last Day to Withdraw:</b>	NOV 21
<b>Room:</b>	2084	<b>Office:</b>	2103	<b>Last Day to Apply for Coursework Extension:</b>	NOV 28
<b>Lab/Tutorial:</b>	NONE	<b>Office Hours:</b>	DROP-IN / UPON REQUEST	<b>Last Day of Class:</b>	DEC 9
<b>Final Exam:</b>	Wed Dec 14 @ 9:00 2084				

## Course Description

This course is a philosophical examination of religious and theological issues including but not limited to: God's existence, justified belief in God, justified belief in God and evil, the nature of divine interaction with/in the world, the relationship between religion/theology and science, psychology, social psychology, morality, and law.

## Expected Learning Outcomes

1. Students should hone their skills in philosophical analysis and writing, improving their ability to think and write clearly, critically, and precisely.
2. Students should learn and understand the classical and enduring problems that have arisen as people have grappled with metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological claims about God's existence and God's relationships to the world and to human experience.

3. Students should become conversant with many of the current religious, theological, and scientific debates, arguments, and criticisms that persist at the intersections of faith and reason, faith and desire, Church and society.

## Textbooks

Reynolds, Terrence, ed. *The Phenomenon of Religious Faith*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson - Prentice Hall, 2005.

### Recommended:

Timpe, Kevin (Ed.). (2009). *Arguing About Religion*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Vaughn, Lewis, and Jillian Scott McIntosh. *Writing Philosophy: A Guide for Canadian Students*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013.

**Online Resource:** *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (SEP)  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>

## Course Schedule

**The Historical Project:** How has the history of Philosophy changed 'Philosophy of Religion'? What is Religion? What is Philosophy? What is Apologetics? Does 'history' matter? (\*Falsification Debate, \*Nickel)

SEP 7

SEP 9

SEP 14

SEP 16

SEP 21

SEP 23

**The Metaphysical Project:** Arguments for God's existence

Natural Theology, Cosmology, Teleology, and Evolution: Can Being and Becoming be reconciled?

SEP 28

SEP 30 TRC – NO CLASS

OCT 5 DEEPIDITY DAY – NO CLASS

OCT 7

OCT 12

OCT 14 First Assignment Due

**The Epistemological Project:** Evidentialism vs Reformed Epistemology/Existentialism/Fideism/Mysticism: AAR

Part 1 (Plantinga, \*Clifford, \*James, \*Kierkegaard, \*Plantinga, \*Nickel, \*Merton)

OCT 19

OCT 21

OCT 26

OCT 28

NOV 2

NOV 4

NOV 9 READING WEEK

NOV 11 READING WEEK

**The Moral Project:** *The Coherence of Divine Attributes, Miracles, Prayer, and Justice* (AAR Part 4 (Pereboom, Craig, Hasker, Sanders, \*Hume)

NOV 16 Second Assignment Due

NOV 18

*The Problem of Evil and Divine Hiddenness:* AAR Part 3 (van Inwagen, Swinburne, Alston, Murray, Lovering)

NOV 23

NOV 25

NOV 30

DEC 2

*The Problem of Religious Exclusivism:* AAR Part 1 (Hick, Ward, O'Connor, \*Plantinga, \*van Inwagen, \*Hick)

DEC 7

DEC 9

## Requirements:<sup>1</sup>

1. **Attendance, Participation, and Weekly Check-ins** 10%
  - Please make every effort to be seated and prepared for class by **8:15**. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of **ALL** classes for the purposes of contact-tracing on campus. Students are expected to attend each class session with an engaged frame of mind. Students should be prepared to contribute thoughtful conversation to the topics under discussion.
  - Students are required to give evidence of 'attendance' on a weekly basis either through in-class participation, Moodle discussion forums, office/zoom face-to-face meetings, or e-mail chats. Students lose

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<sup>1</sup> The Professor reserves the right to modify requirements, assignments, and exams in the event of any permanent transition to online delivery. The current requirements assume the semester will proceed as planned.

1 mark each week they are AWOL (absent without leave). Students who lose 10 marks (10 weeks) automatically FAIL the course and will not be permitted to write the Final Exam.

- Students whose 'attendance' is perfect but whose quality of engagement is minimal should anticipate nothing better than C+ (7/10) for this portion of their grade.

2. **First Writing Assignment (1200-1400 words)** 15%

- Due: **October 14 @ 8:14 AM** *before* class (electronic and paper submissions)
- A separate document regarding topics, format and submission guidelines, and late policy will be available on Moodle. Papers will be submitted by the Instructor to "**Turnitin**" for originality assessment. Personal privacy is protected.
- Students must submit this assignment to be eligible to write the Final Exam.

3. **Second Writing Assignment (1200-1400 words)** 15%

- Due: **November 16 @ 8:14 AM** *before* class (electronic and paper submissions)
- A separate document regarding topics, format and submission guidelines, and late policy will be available on Moodle. Papers will be submitted by the Instructor to "**Turnitin**" for originality assessment. Personal privacy is protected.
- Students must submit this assignment to be eligible to write the Final Exam.

4. **Third Writing Assignment (2300 MIN words -roughly 9 pages)** 25%

- Due: **December 12 @ 4:00 PM** (electronic only - no paper submission required)
- A separate document regarding topics, format and submission guidelines, and late policy will be available on Moodle. Papers will be submitted by the instructor to "**Turnitin**" for originality assessment. Personal privacy is protected.
- Students who have not submitted all assignments will not be permitted to write the Final Exam.

5. **Comprehensive / Cumulative Final Exam** 35%

- **Wednesday, December 14 @ 9:00 AM**
- Students must pass the Final Exam to ensure a passing grade in the course. Even if a student's accumulated grades are above 50%, the Professor reserves the right to withhold a passing grade for the course if the student fails the Final Exam.
- Students should refrain from scheduling all other commitments (e.g., flights or travel of any sort) that will conflict with the Final Examination schedule. Final examinations will not be rescheduled to accommodate travel arrangements.

**Attendance:**

(See requirements)

## Grade Summary:

Letter Grade	GPA	Description	Percentage
A+	4.0		96-100 %
A	4.0	Exceptional	91-95 %
A-	3.7		86-90 %
B+	3.3		82-85 %
B	3.0	Exceeds Expectations	75-81 %
B-	2.7		72-74 %
C+	2.3		68-71 %
C	2.0	Meets Expectations	63-67 %
C-	1.7		60-62 %
D+	1.3		56-59 %
D	1.0	Minimal Pass	50-55 %
F	0.0	Failure	≤ 49 %

Because of the nature of the Alpha 4.00 system, there can be no uniform University-wide conversion scale. The relationship between raw scores (e.g. percentages) and the resultant letter grade will depend on the nature of the course and the instructor's assessment of the level of each class, compared to similar classes taught previously.

Please note that final grades will be available on student registration system. Printed grade sheets are not mailed out.

## Other: (On a more personal note)

- ✓ **Students are responsible to check the Moodle** course site and their **Ambrose e-mail** accounts regularly. I like to use Moodle and/or e-mail to remind students of upcoming topics and readings, or to pose questions in light of readings or lecture topics. E-mail and Moodle may be used to notify you of cancelled classes or other important and immediate details relating to the course.
- ✓ Please, **put cell phones away during class**. Please try to avoid non-essential technology during class.
- ✓ Students should not be confused about what paying tuition entitles them to. Paying tuition entitles no one to a **passing grade**. Passing grades, indeed all grades, are *earned*—not paid for.
- ✓ No university student consents to any small amount of violence in any classroom, but paying tuition and enrolling in a Philosophy course **implies consent** to a variety of things you may or may not like. '**Academic freedom**' means you *will be* exposed to words and ideas, some of which will be distasteful to some students and possibly to all. It is impossible to identify and appreciate 'good' ideas without carefully considering 'bad' ideas. We should consider *why* they are 'bad' and not merely 'forbidden'.
- ✓ Philosophy students consent to the possibility that they might read and hear things that offend their sensibilities. You have every right *not* to be harmed in my class, but you have **NO right not to be offended**. The **pursuit of wisdom** equips students to better **cope** with life's inevitable challenges. No one on the planet—not God and certainly no Philosophy Professor at Ambrose—has the responsibility to make things **perfect** for you. Perfection is the enemy of the good. If you remain in *this* Philosophy class you **consent** to be challenged. You **consent** to think carefully about, among other things, Truth, Beauty, and Goodness in a world that is all too often deceptive, ugly, gritty, and unjust. The work of Philosophy takes **courage**, though, frankly, not very much.

## Ambrose University Important Information:

### Communication

All students have received an Ambrose e-mail account upon registration. It is the student's responsibility to check this account regularly as the Ambrose email system will be the professor's instrument for notifying students of important matters (cancelled class sessions, extensions, requested appointments, etc.) between class sessions.

### Exam Scheduling

150 Ambrose Circle SW, Calgary, AB T3H 0L5  
T 403-410-2000 TF 800-461-1222  
info@ambrose.edu  
ambrose.edu

Students who find a conflict in their exam schedule must submit a Revised Examination Request form to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date; please consult the Academic Calendar. Requests will be considered for the following reasons only: 1) the scheduled final examination slot conflicts with another exam; 2) the student has three final exams within three consecutive exam time blocks; 3) the scheduled final exam slot conflicts with an exam at another institution; 4) extenuating circumstances. Travel is not considered a valid excuse for re-scheduling or missing a final exam.

### **Standards of Behaviour in the Classroom Setting**

Learning is an active and interactive process, a joint venture between student and instructor and between student and student. Some topics covered within a class may lead to strong reactions and opinions. It is important that Students understand that they are entitled to hold contradictory beliefs and that they should be encouraged to engage with these topics in a critical manner. Committing to this type of "active learning" significantly increases the learning experience for both teacher and student, and reflects the Christian imperative to pursue truth, which lies at the heart of the Ambrose educational experience. However, active discussion of controversial topics will be undertaken with respect and empathy, which are the foundations of civil discourse in the Classroom Setting. Primary responsibility for managing the classroom rests with the instructor. The instructor may direct a student to leave the class if the student engages in any behaviour that disrupts the classroom setting. If necessary, Ambrose security will be contacted to escort the student from class. Please refer to your professor regarding their electronic etiquette expectations.

### **Academic Integrity**

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's ideas, words, or work as one's own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to acknowledge to another person's ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student's permanent record.

### **Academic Policies**

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Academic Calendar. The academic calendar can be found at <https://ambrose.edu/content/academic-calendar-2>.

### **Privacy**

Personal information (information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual) may be required as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at [privacy@ambrose.edu](mailto:privacy@ambrose.edu).

### **Coursework Extensions**

Should a request for a time extension on coursework exceed the end of the term, a *Coursework Extension Application* must be completed and submitted to the Office of the Registrar. The extension (if granted) will be recorded on the student record. Extensions are granted at the discretion of the instructor and are normally granted for 30 days beyond the last day of the term.

Normally, Course Extension Applications will be considered only when all of the following conditions are met:

- the quality of prior course work has been satisfactory;
- circumstances beyond your control, such as an extended illness or death of a family member, make it impossible for you to complete the course work on time; and
- you submit *Coursework Extension Application* to the Office of the Registrar on or before the deadline specified in the Academic Schedule.

If granted, time extensions do not excuse you from a final examination where one has been scheduled for the course.

A temporary grade of TX will be assigned until a final grade is submitted in accordance with the new deadline. A final grade of F will apply to:

- all course work submitted after the end of the semester unless a coursework extension has been granted; and all course work submitted after the revised due date provided by an approved extension to coursework.

## **Academic Success and Supports**

### **Accessibility Services**

Academic accommodation is provided to Ambrose students with disabilities in accordance with the Alberta Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Provision of academic accommodation does not lower the academic standards of the university nor remove the need for evaluation and the need to meet essential learning outcomes. Reasonable accommodations are tailored to the individual student, are flexible, and are determined by considering the barriers within the unique environment of a postsecondary institution. It can take time to organize academic accommodations and funding for disability-related services. Students with a disability who wish to have an academic accommodation are

encouraged to contact Accessibility Services as early as possible to ensure appropriate planning for any needs that may include accommodations. Staff can then meet with students to determine areas to facilitate success, and if accommodations are required, ensure those accommodations are put in place by working with faculty.

### **Ambrose Writing Services**

Ambrose Writing services provides academic support in the four foundational literacy skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It also assists students with critical thinking and the research process. Throughout the academic year, students can meet with a writing tutor for personalized support, or they can attend a variety of workshops offered by Academic Success. These services are free to students enrolled at Ambrose University. Academic Success serves all students in all disciplines and at all levels, from history to biology and from theatre to theology. To learn more, please visit <https://ambrose.edu/writingcentre>

### **Ambrose Tutoring Services**

Ambrose Tutoring Services provides support in specific disciplinary knowledge, especially in high-demand areas such as chemistry, philosophy, math and statistics, and religious studies. These tutors also coach students in general study skills, including listening and note-taking. During the academic year, Ambrose Tutoring Services offers drop-in tutoring for courses with high demand; for other courses, students can book a one-to-one appointment with a tutor in their discipline. These services are free to students enrolled at Ambrose University. To learn more, please visit <https://ambrose.edu/tutoring>.

### **Mental Health Support**

All of us need a support system. We encourage students to build mental health supports and to reach out when help is needed.

#### On Campus:

- Counselling Services: [ambrose.edu/counselling](https://ambrose.edu/counselling)
- Peer Supportive Listening: One-to-one support in Student Life office. Hours posted at [ambrose.edu/wellness](https://ambrose.edu/wellness).
- For immediate crisis support, there are staff on campus who are trained in Suicide Intervention and Mental Health First Aid. See [ambrose.edu/crisissupport](https://ambrose.edu/crisissupport) for a list of staff members.

#### Off Campus:

- Distress Centre - 403-266-4357
- Sheldon Chumir Health Care Centre - 403-955-6200
- Emergency - 911

### **Sexual Violence Support**

All staff, faculty, and Residence student leaders have received *Sexual Violence Response to Disclosure* training. We will support you and help you find the resources you need. There is a website with on and off campus supports – [ambrose.edu/sexual-violence-response-and-awareness](https://ambrose.edu/sexual-violence-response-and-awareness).

#### Off Campus:

- Clinic: Sheldon Chumir Health Centre - 403-955-6200
- Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse - 403-237-5888

Students are advised to retain a copy of this syllabus for their records.