



PH 273 Is Christianity True?

February Festival of Learning, 2006

Instructor: Terry Fach

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Office Hours: by appointment

Texts for this Course

Required : William Wainwright, *Philosophy of Religion*, 2nd edition, Wadsworth (1999).

To keep textbook costs under control, additional required reading *articles* will be available for photocopying in the library in files under “PH 273 Is Christianity True?”

Other Resources

1. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:
<http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>
2. How to Read a Philosophy Paper, by Jim Pryor:
<http://www.princeton.edu/~jimpryor/general/reading.html>
3. Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper, by Jim Pryor
<http://www.princeton.edu/~jimpryor/general/writing.html>
4. Philosophical Terms and Methods, by Jim Pryor
<http://www.princeton.edu/~jimpryor/general/vocab/>

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the philosophy of religion. As such, our aim will be to carefully examine philosophical arguments pertaining to such issues as the concept of God, the existence of God, the problem of evil and God, the epistemic value of religious experience, and the plausibility of religious pluralism. An important function of this course is to introduce students to the nature of philosophical investigation, specifically applied to matters religious. While many of the above topics have relevance to more than one world religion, our applications will be to theistic religions generally and to Christianity specifically.

Course Schedule

Day	Topic	Key Readings
Feb. 21	1. Introduction to Course Topics 2. The Concept of God	Wainwright ch. 1 Key Article: <i>The Openness of God: A Philosophical Perspective</i> , by William Hasker* Other article(s): <i>Divine Necessity</i> , by Alvin Plantinga
Feb. 22	3. Arguments for God's Existence	Wainwright ch. 2 Key Article: <i>The Argument from Design</i> , by Richard Swinburne* Other article(s): <i>Philosophical and Scientific Pointers to Creatio ex Nihilo</i> , by William Lane Craig
Feb. 23	4. The Argument from Religious Experience	Wainwright ch. 5 Key Article: <i>Religious Experience and Religious Belief</i> , by William P. Alston* Other article(s): <i>Experiential Arguments</i> , by Terry Fach
Feb. 24	5. Knowing God Without Arguments	Wainwright ch. 6 Key Articles: <i>Religious Belief Without Evidence</i> , by Alvin Plantinga* Other article(s): <i>Experiential Arguments</i> , by Terry Fach
Feb. 25	6. Problems for Theism: Evil and the Problem of Divine Hiddenness 7. Religious Pluralism (if time)	Wainwright ch. 3 Key Articles: <i>The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism</i> , by William Rowe* Other article(s): <i>Evil and Soul-making</i> , by John Hick Wainwright ch. 8 Key Article: <i>Buddhism, Christianity, and the Prospects for World Religion</i> , by the Dalai Lama*

* These articles will be discussed on the days scheduled. They will be made available to all in the class and may be picked up at the Registrar's Office by February 6, 2006

Our daily schedule will be:

9am – 12 noon: Lecture (includes one short break)

12 – 1 pm: Lunch break

1 pm – 2 pm: Lecture

2 pm – 2:15: Break

2:15 – 4 pm: Article Discussion

Course Requirements

1. Short Essay: This essay will focus on a topic to be presented in class. Length: 5 – 7 pages. Due: March 17, 2006
2. Long Essay: Topics for this essay will be handed out at the end of classes. You are welcome to write on a topic of your own choosing, but I ask that you have it approved by me before you begin writing. Length: 12 – 15 pages. Due: Last day of classes in Spring Term--
3. Take Home Final: At the final class meeting students will be given a one-question take-home final examination. The examination must be turned in by the following Tuesday, February 28th, 4 pm.
4. Attendance and Participation are crucial to your success in the course and are a valuable way to contribute to the learning of others. Thus, *good attendance at lectures* and *participation in discussions* will be a strong positive consideration should your essay grades leave you just below a given final grade.

Grading

Short Essay	25%
Long Essay	50%
Final Exam	25%