

PHILOSOPHY 244/28018
Introduction to Philosophy of Religion
Professor – Dr. Barry F. Vaughan
Spring 2017, MCC (Main Campus)

Text: Philosophy of Religion, Oxford Custom, or Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings. 3rd ed.

Authors: Rowe and Wainwright

Reading the assigned texts is ESSENTIAL for success in this class. You must therefore buy the book and read all material listed in the Reading Schedule below. Part of the study of Philosophy involves an examination of, and analysis of the literature of Philosophy. If you don't like to read, this class may not be for you.

Course Goals:

This course is designed as an *introduction* to the subdivision of Metaphysics, Philosophy of Religion. No previous exposure to philosophical literature is required for this class. However, some exposure to general Philosophy will aid your inquiry. This course will survey some of the basic problems associated with Philosophy of Religion by reading both classical and contemporary texts. By the end of the semester students are expected to have a working knowledge of the main problems in this area, and be capable of defending a position philosophically. At the end of each unit students should be able to 1) define the philosophical terms associated with that unit, 2) identify individual philosophers and their positions/arguments, 3) explain the views of the philosophers in their own (i.e., the student's) words, 4) contrast the views of the philosophers with personal experiences, 5) analyze the philosophical arguments presented in class for validity and soundness.

Philosophy deals with controversial adult material including human sexuality, the existence of God, principles of justice, etc. Students must be prepared to engage all material as presented/assigned. Alternate assignments, readings, lectures, etc. will not be provided.

Course Requirements:

Attendance - students are **required to attend class** as scheduled. Absences are excused in the case of illness (standard proof of illness is required) or other College sanctioned activities (see student handbook for details). If you know you will be absent on an exam day *please* make arrangements to take the exam *early*. There will be **no make-up exams** for unexcused absences. If you miss an exam for any reason, please contact me immediately!

Tardiness – I am not particularly offended by tardiness (after all, *you are paying* for this course). I understand that sometimes factors beyond our control conspire to make us late. If you are late to class come on in and find a place to sit. However, please be courteous to your classmates and do not make a disturbance if you are late. Finally, please do not allow tardiness to become a habit.

Student Assessment:

Grades will be figured on the following basis:

1) Four unit Exams each worth 100 points. The composition of the four exams will be discussed in detail in class prior to each exam (*lowest exam score dropped*).

2) Ten **Unannounced** (i.e. 'pop') Quizzes each worth 10 points. Quizzes will *only* be taken in class at the beginning of the period. The quizzes are designed to encourage you to come to class and keep up with your reading. Since they are unannounced, quizzes **cannot be made up** if you are absent, however, special arrangements will be made for excused absences (*proof of excused absence required*).

3) Extra credit will be available to students in the form of extra credit questions on each exam and the pre and post tests. (In order to be fair each student must have access to the same extra credit assignments.) There will be *absolutely no* outside-class extra credit, or assignments for individual students (*so don't bother to ask*). Extra credit points **will not** count *against* your final grade.

Grade Tracker: use the grade tracker below to record your grades as we go through the semester.

Quiz 1 _____	Exam 1 _____	Extra Credit 1 _____
Quiz 2 _____	Exam 2 _____	Extra Credit 2 _____
Quiz 3 _____	Exam 3 _____	Extra Credit 3 _____
Quiz 4 _____	Exam 4 _____	Extra Credit 4 _____
Quiz 5 _____		
Quiz 6 _____		Pre-Survey _____
Quiz 7 _____		Post-Survey _____
Quiz 8 _____		
Quiz 9 _____		
Quiz 10 _____		

Grade Scale and Symbols: based on five hundred total points, below is the percentage scale used to determine your final course grade and an explanation of the grade symbols used.

360-400 (90%-100%)	A <i>Excellent</i>
320-359 (80%-89%)	B <i>Above Average</i>
280-319 (70%-79%)	C <i>Average</i>
240-279 (60%-69%)	D <i>Minimal Passing</i>
0-239	F <i>Failure</i>
	Y <i>Withdraw Failing</i>
	W <i>Withdraw Passing</i>
	I <i>Incomplete</i>

Statement on Plagiarism/Academic Misconduct – Due to the proliferation of academic material available on the internet, plagiarism is on the rise in American academic institutions. Plagiarism is the use of two or more consecutive words from someone else's written work without proper citation, or passing off someone else's words as your own. Plagiarism includes paraphrasing someone else's work without giving proper citation of the source material. Plagiarism is **theft** of intellectual property and WILL NOT BE TOLLERATED.

Academic misconduct is a more general term for cheating of any variety. Obviously, the assignments you turn in and the examinations you take should reflect YOUR OWN work, and any attempt to circumvent this process is harmful. Therefore, any plagiarized, or otherwise academically inappropriate assignment, will receive an automatic 0 (or F), and the assignment cannot be made up or replaced. If two or more assignments are plagiarized or the product of academic misconduct in the course of a semester, the offending student may receive an automatic F for the course.

Student Responsibilities:

Responsibility for Information - Students are responsible for knowing and understanding all information contained in this syllabus. If you do not understand some portion of this document, please contact the professor for clarification. All student rights and responsibilities are governed through the MCC Student Handbook; students should be aware of all policies contained therein.

Students with Disabilities – It is the policy of Mesa Community College, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, to offer reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. If you are disabled and need accommodation you should contact the MCC Student Disabilities Office (MCC Disabilities Resources and Services Office at 480-461-7447 or email drsfrontdesk@mesacc.edu) before any assignments are due. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Student Disabilities Office with any request for special services. Students experiencing difficulty accessing course materials because of a disability should contact the course instructor so that a solution can be found that provides all students equal access to course materials and technology.

Dropping/Withdrawal - It is part of a student's academic responsibility to decide whether or not to drop or withdraw from a course once enrolled. If you find this course does not meet your needs or that you need to withdraw for other reasons you must secure a Drop/Add slip from the Registrar's Office, fill out the appropriate information, and bring it to the professor or the Registrar's Office. If you need to withdraw but are unable to come to campus please contact your professor via telephone or email. I will assume that all students who enroll in the course intend to finish the course and receive a grade. I **will not** automatically withdraw you from this course if you simply stop coming to class!

Cell Phones – All phones should be placed in the “off” or “standby” position, or your ringer should be **silenced** in class. Do not send or answer text messages or other online media while in class. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in punitive action.

Instructional Grievance – Students have the right to due-process if they feel they have been treated unfairly by their professor in regard to academic procedures (i.e., grading). Please refer to the process articulated in the Student Handbook § 2.3.5.

Responsibility for Information - Students are responsible for knowing and understanding all information contained in this syllabus. If you do not understand some portion of this document, please contact the professor for clarification. All student rights and responsibilities are governed through the MCC Student Handbook; students should be aware of all policies contained therein.

Contact Information:

Office Hours – feel free to drop by my office any time if you wish to chat or discuss any material you do not fully understand. During office hours, my doors are always open to you! I am located in the building 43a.

MTWRF 2:00 – 2:50pm; or by appointment

Phone: Office/voicemail: 480- 461-7620

Email: barry.vaughan@mesacc.edu (*the most reliable and fastest way to get in touch with me*)

Website: <http://www.mesacc.edu/~barsp59601> (or just Google: Barry Vaughan). On the course website you will find a large amount of useful information including a complete set of course notes, study guides, an electronic library of classic texts in Philosophy, an interactive dictionary, syllabi (*just in case you loose this one*), a forum area for your class, as well as links to other philosophy web sites.

Alternation of Syllabus Information:

The information contained in this syllabus is subject to change. Students will be notified in class of any alteration of schedule, assignment, or grading policy.

MCC Early Alert Program (EARS)

Mesa Community College is committed to the success of all our students. Numerous campus support services are available throughout your academic journey to assist you in achieving your educational goals. MCC has adopted an Early Alert Referral System (EARS) as part of a student success initiative to aid students in their educational pursuits. Faculty and Staff participate by alerting and referring students to campus services for added support. Students may receive a follow up call from various campus services as a result of being referred to EARS. Students are encouraged to participate, but these services are optional. Early Alert Web Page with Campus Resource Information can be located at: <http://www.mesacc.edu/students/ears>.

Tentative Daily Reading Schedule

In teaching for several years I have discovered that each class moves at its own pace and that flexibility is an academic virtue. I have therefore omitted specific dates for each of the readings and exams below. However, exam dates will be announced *at least* one week in advance. Your specific reading assignments will be announced at the end of each class (and remind me if I forget!). Below are the topics for each unit and the assigned readings which should be completed BEFORE you come to that day's class. If there are no page numbers listed next to a topic, then there is no assigned reading for that class session.

You will also notice that the reading assignments for this class are generally short. This is because Philosophy is HARD to read. Ten pages of a philosophical essay are equivalent to fifty pages of History, or a hundred pages of a novel. You will discover that you may have to read an assignment **MORE THAN ONCE** to understand it. Don't be discouraged if this is the case; it is normal. Give yourself ample time to read and digest your assignments (fifteen minutes before class is *not* adequate).

UNIT 1: What is God?

An Overview of Philosophy of Religion	
Definitions of God	2-5
Theism:	
Omniscience	24-37
Omnipotence/Omnibenevolence	59-63
Necessity Impassibility/Simplicity	6-8, 9-12, 76-80
An Alternative view of God's Transcendence	81-87

Exam I

UNIT 2: Does God Exist? Arguments for God's existence

An Overview	90-94
Ontological:	
Anselm	95-101
Immanuel Kant	104-108
Cosmological:	
St. Thomas	126-132
David Hume	137-140
Teleological:	
William Paley	155-161
David Hume	162-172
Ethical:	
Immanuel Kant	184-193
J.L. Mackie	194-196

Exam II

UNIT 3: The Problem of Evil

An Overview	210-215
David Hume	224-233
William Rowe	242-251
John Hick	251-259

Exam III

UNIT 4: Faith and Reason: Epistemological Issues in the Philosophy of Religion

An Overview	430-435
William James	461-472
William Clifford	456-461
David Hume	492-499
Paul Tillich	507-509

Exam IV

HOW TO SUCCEED IN COLLEGE

“How can I be successful in a college course?” This is perhaps the most important practical question you can ask yourself at this point in your life. Whether you have just finished secondary school, or whether you are returning to education after a lengthy period, it is important for you to recognize that your success in higher education depends *entirely on you*. Higher education is not like secondary school. You are NOT required to attend college, and you are not required to succeed. You are here because you have chosen to be. You will be successful in college if, and only if, you CHOOSE to be. However, desiring to be successful will not guarantee your success. YOU MUST ACT IN YOUR OWN SELF-INTEREST. The following are some helpful suggestions on what you should be doing if you wish to be successful.

1. Read and understand your course syllabus. Your syllabus is a learning contract and it should spell out all the requirements for the course you have enrolled in. All MCC faculty are required to provide you with a syllabus that spells out the learning objectives for the course, the method of assessment for the course (i.e., how you will be graded), and any and all class policies that are required for your successful completion of the course (these are policies that go beyond the standard policies articulated in the Student Hand Book which are common to all MCC courses). It is YOUR responsibility to know and understand the content of your course syllabus.

2. Attend all scheduled class meetings. Your success in a particular class is strongly correlated with your attendance. The more you attend, the more likely you are to succeed.

3. Read all assigned materials. Unlike secondary school, higher education requires students to become independent learners. It is YOUR responsibility to read and understand ALL assigned material whether or not it is discussed in class. Just because something is not discussed in class does not mean it is not important or that you will not be evaluated on that material. You are responsible for completing all the assigned reading in your class.

4. Observe all due-dates. Complete all outside-class assignments and projects *prior to* their due date. The due date of an assignment is the time at which you are required to submit your work for evaluation by your professor. It is NOT the time to turn in a first draft or a cursory reading, or an incomplete project or worksheet.

5. Be prepared for class. It is expected that you will spend two (2) hours outside of class preparing for each one (1) hour you spend in class. Obviously the amount of time required to prepare for a particular class may vary based on subject matter and your abilities. However, it is the general expectation in higher education that you are adequately prepared for all classes. Thus, if you are enrolled in four three credit-hour courses (a twelve credit-hour load), you should expect to spend a minimum of twenty-four hours *outside of class*, preparing *for* class. Your total weekly time budget should therefore include thirty-six hours per week *dedicated solely to your education*. The degree of your success in college is directly correlated to the time you spend on your education both inside and outside the classroom. Do not take more courses than your time budget will allow. If you spend more money than you make, you will be in debt. If you attempt to take more classes than you have time for, you will not succeed.

6. ASK QUESTIONS! In college you are expected to share responsibility for your learning. Your professor is supposed to be an expert in the content of their field. They are there to guide you in your learning. But your professor cannot learn for you. If you do not understand something in your reading, ask for it to be explained. If you do not understand something in the lecture, ask for it to be explained. Professors are content experts, not psychics. If you don't ask a question, they will likely assume you understand what is being read or discussed.

7. Take advantage of office hours. Your professor is required to provide academic support hours to support you. If you are having difficulty understanding your reading, if you are having difficulty with assignments, quizzes, exams, papers or projects, go to your professor's office hours and ASK FOR HELP. Your professor cannot help you if you do not ask for assistance.

8. Do not multi-task while studying. It is common for all of us to multi-task in our lives. We have cell phones, Facebook, Twitter, email, iPods, TV, radio and an endless list of other distractions constantly calling upon our attention. These are great tools and you should use them. **HOWEVER**, the more things you attempt to do at once, the less competent you will be at each task. I know you *think* you can multi-task well; but **you are wrong!** Our brains did not evolve to multi-task in the ways you think and we are becoming aware of the limitations of our

cognitive abilities as we invent new and more complex tools. Do not experiment with your time, money, and education. When you study you need to be focused. Follow these rules for success when you study.

Do not interrupt your reading/studying to:

- answer the phone or text,
- check Facebook,
- instant message,
- read or post a Tweet.

Do not have the Television/radio/iPod playing when you are reading/studying. If you must have some background sound, use music (at a low volume) that does NOT have lyrics. Classical, jazz, even techno can provide background noise that allows your brain to focus on complex tasks like reading and problem solving. *Lyrics are the key.* Your brain is wired to pay attention to language. This priority has evolved over millions of years and it has not changed with the advent of micro-computing (though it is certainly probable that we will continue to evolve and our descendants may have abilities we do not). When there is language in the background, it WILL lower your level of concentration and limit your ability to solve problems, read complex material, and perform difficult tasks.

Following these guidelines will not ensure that you will succeed in college, but they will help! Do yourself a favor, take this information to heart and follow these suggestions.

COVENANT ON CLASS DECORUM

The object of this course is for the student to become familiar with academic Philosophy. This goal includes not only theory but also rhetorical practice to be carried out in the classroom. In order to foster an acceptable atmosphere of educational edification the following maxims will be agreed to by **all** participants (*including* the professor):

1. I shall refrain from making personal attacks upon fellow interlocutors; likewise, I will not mistake an attack *upon an argument* I present as a personal attack.
2. I reserve the right to disagree with *any* argument on *any* subject regardless of whether or not it reflects my own, or the majority opinion. In like manner, I will *not assume* that an argument presented by a classmate or the professor necessarily represents their personal opinion.
3. I hereby agree to disagree *agreeably* so as to avoid personal injury or vendettas.
4. I reserve the right to participate in class discussions and arguments, and I shall endeavor to engage ideas and opinions that differ from my own thus enhancing my academic pilgrimage.
5. I hereby agree not to pout about or refrain from engaging arguments which seem weak or problematic. I accept as part of *my* academic responsibility the obligation to speak up whether I agree or disagree.
6. I reserve the right to take all classroom grievances to the person with whom I have the grievance, regardless of whether it is a student *or the professor* (if we cannot work out the problem there is an official grievance process which we can follow – details are in your student handbook).
7. I shall attempt to be open to, and respect all persons in the classroom even when we disagree.
8. I shall, to the best of my ability, respect and incorporate the maxims of this covenant and endeavor to uphold my end of all agreements made herein.

If you do not feel that you can live up to the terms of this agreement, you should drop this course immediately!