

**University of Guelph  
Philosophy 2130 DE  
Instructor J. C. Robinson**

### Description

This course considers various philosophical questions concerning religion, such as arguments for the existence of God, the problem of evil, the meaning of religious language, the significance of mystical experience and human immortality. (Offered in even numbered years.)

### Objectives

The goal of this course is to familiarize you with the central philosophical issues involved in the religious tradition of Christianity. Readings and instructional materials will focus on the following topics: the nature and attributes of God; grounds for belief in the existence of God; grounds for disbelief in the existence of God; religious faith and religious belief; religious experience; mysticism; the nature of religious language and symbolism; the problem of religious knowledge.

This course has a little of everything. The first part of the course is a little more analytic in nature as it closely examines important arguments and asks you to consider their various parts. The second part of the course will feel a little less formal and more organic, as it deals with symbolic language, existentialism, mysticism, etc. Hopefully you will find something that you can enjoy and that suits your personality.

### Grading Scheme

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Weight %</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Weekly Conference Participation	6% Peer Evaluation, 9% Instructor's Evaluation	Ongoing, mark announced during Week 12
Mid-term Exam 1	15%	Week 4
Essay Assignment 1	15%	Week 5
Mid-term Exam 2	15%	Week 8
Essay Assignment 2	15%	Week 10
Final Exam	25%	Exam Period: TBA

*Specific due dates will be posted to the course website.*

### Course Topics

- Unit One - Introduction to Philosophy & Philosophy of Religion, The Concept of God, The Nature of the Dispute over the Existence of God
- Unit Two - St. Anselm: Ontological Argument, Ontological Argument & "Necessary Existence" Argument, Gaunilo's Criticisms
- Unit Three - St. Thomas Aquinas' Five Ways Hume's Criticisms of the Design Argument
- Unit Four - Introduction to the Problem of Evil, St. Augustine on the Problem of Evil, The Problem of Evil & God's Foreknowledge
- Unit Five - The Sociological Criticism of Religion

- Unit Six - The Psychological Criticism of Religion
- Unit Seven - Introduction to Existentialism, Kierkegaard & Non-Rational Theism
- Unit Eight - Paul Tillich & the Existential Approach
- Unit Nine - William James on Mysticism & Religious Experience
- Unit Ten - William James & "The Will to Believe"
- Unit Eleven - J.H. Randall, Jr. on Religious Belief & Religious Language
- Unit Twelve - The Bertrand Russell & F. C. Copleston Debate

## Course Prerequisites

2.00 credits or (1 of PHIL\*1000, PHIL\*1010, PHIL\*1050)

## Textbooks

**Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion** (Tentative)

Edition: 3rd

Author(s): John H. Hick

Published by: Prentice Hall in 1989