Course Overview

PHIL3030 - Reason and Religion
Course Outline

Course Coordinator  John Wright  
Semester  Semester 2 - 2009  
Unit Weighting  10  
Teaching Methods  Lecture

Brief Course Description
Examines a number of issues in philosophical theology which came to the fore in the medieval and early modern periods. Issues to be discussed may include proofs for the existence of God, the nature of deity, God's knowledge of the future and predestination, the nature of religion, the relation of religion and science, and the sources of the concept of deity. Philosophers and theologians to be considered in the discussion of one or more of these issues may include St Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Descartes, the Cambridge Platonists, Locke and Hume.

Contact Hours
Lecture for 2 Hours per Week  for the Full Term

Learning Materials/Texts
All required materials will be placed on Short loans.
Course Objectives
(1) Impart to students familiarity with, and knowledge of, the main issues addressed and approaches taken by Western philosophers and theologians in the medieval and early modern periods.

(2) Impart to students critical skills to deal with these issues in their historical forms and to prepare them to employ these approaches in their assessment of the current philosophical discussion of these matters.

(3) Develop high level written and oral skills in understanding and presenting philosophical issues in their historical contexts.

(4) Develop an understanding and appreciation of the ways in which historical context can help generate but not exhaust the ways in which an issue can appear and reappear in the history of philosophy.

Course Content
The content focuses on the presentation of particular issues in philosophical theology as they came into prominence in the medieval and early modern period. The issues are those surrounding the existence, nature, and attributes of God, the source of the concept of God, the nature of religion, ways of understanding the relation between God and the created order from a scientific perspective. There will be some variation in emphases within this framework from year to year as appropriate to student needs. The lectures and discussions in class will focus on interpreting the texts, examining the philosophic issues, discussing how the historical context helps shape the issues, and indicating the contemporary relevance of the matters discussed.

Assessment Items
| Essays / Written Assignments | 2 x 2000 word essays, worth 50% each; the first due around week 8, the second at the end of semester. |

Assumed Knowledge
At least 10 units of PHIL courses at 1000 level, or 40 units of any courses at any level.

Callaghan Campus Timetable
PHIL3030
REASON AND RELIGION
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 2 – 2009
Lecture Monday 11:00 - 13:00 [V105]

IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Academic integrity, honesty, and a respect for knowledge, truth and ethical practices are fundamental to the business of the University. These principles are at the core of all academic endeavour in teaching, learning and research. Dishonest practices contravene academic values, compromise the integrity of research and devalue the quality of learning. To preserve the quality of learning for the individual and others, the University may impose severe sanctions on activities that undermine academic integrity. There are two major categories of academic dishonesty:

Academic fraud is a form of academic dishonesty that involves making a false representation to gain an unjust advantage. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it can include:

a) falsification of data;

b) using a substitute person to undertake, in full or part, an examination or other assessment item;

c) reusing one's own work, or part thereof, that has been submitted previously and counted towards another course (without permission);

d) making contact or colluding with another person, contrary to instructions, during an examination or
other assessment item;

e) bringing material or device(s) into an examination or other assessment item other than such as may be specified for that assessment item; and

f) making use of computer software or other material and device(s) during an examination or other assessment item other than such as may be specified for that assessment item.

g) contract cheating or having another writer compete for tender to produce an essay or assignment and then submitting the work as one's own.

Plagiarism is the presentation of the thoughts or works of another as one's own. University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include:

a) copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment;

b) using another person's ideas without due acknowledgment;

c) collusion or working with others without permission, and presenting the resulting work as though it were completed independently.

Turnitin is an electronic text matching system. During assessing any assessment item the University may -

· Reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University; and/or

· Communicate a copy of this assessment item to a text matching service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future checking).

· Submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking

RE-MARKS AND MODERATIONS

Students can access the University's policy at: http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000769.html

MARKS AND GRADES RELEASED DURING TERM

All marks and grades released during term are indicative only until formally approved by the Head of School.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING ASSESSMENT ITEMS

Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations items must be submitted by the due date in the Course Outline unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension. Unapproved late submissions will be penalised in line with the University policy.

Requests for Extensions of Time must be lodged no later than the due date of the item. This applies to students:

· applying for an extension of time for submission of an assessment item on the basis of medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; or

· whose attendance at or performance in an assessment item or formal written examination has been or will be affected by medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment.

Students must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, as outlined in the Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure at: http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html

Note: different procedures apply for minor and major assessment tasks.

Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:

· Special Consideration Requests must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the due date of submission or examination.
Rescheduling Exam requests must be received no later than 10 working days prior the first date of the examination period.

Late applications may not be accepted. Students who cannot meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak firstly to their Program Officer or their Program Executive if studying in Singapore.

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS

University is committed to providing a range of support services for students with a disability or chronic illness. If you have a disability or chronic illness which you feel may impact on your studies please feel free to discuss your support needs with your lecturer or course coordinator.

Disability Support may also be provided by the Student Support Service (Disability). Students must be registered to receive this type of support. To register contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 02 4921 5766, email at: student-disability@newcastle.edu.au. As some forms of support can take a few weeks to implement it is extremely important that you discuss your needs with your lecturer, course coordinator or Student Support Service staff at the beginning of each semester. For more information on confidentiality and documentation visit the Student Support Service (Disability) website: www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability.

CHANGING YOUR ENROLMENT

Students enrolled after the census dates listed in the link below are liable for the full cost of their student contribution or fees for that term.

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/fees/censusdates.html

Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of term. Any withdrawal from a course after the last day of term will result in a fail grade.

Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of term, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of term must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with staff in the Student Hubs or with your Program Executive at PSB if you are a Singapore student.

To check or change your enrolment online go to myHub: https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au

STUDENT INFORMATION & CONTACTS

Various services are offered by the Student Support Unit:
www.newcastle.edu.au/service/studentsupport/

The Student Hubs are a one-stop shop for the delivery of student related services and are the first point of contact for students studying in Australia. Student Hubs are located at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Callaghan Campus</th>
<th>Port Macquarie students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shortland Hub: Level 3, Shortland Building</td>
<td>contact your program officer or <a href="mailto:EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au">EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter Hub: Level 2, Student Services Centre</td>
<td>Phone 4921 5000</td>
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<tr>
<td>City Precinct</td>
<td>Singapore students</td>
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<tr>
<td>City Hub &amp; Information Common, University House</td>
<td>contact your PSB Program Executive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Coast Campus (Ourimbah)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Hub: Opposite the Main Cafeteria</td>
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OTHER CONTACT INFORMATION

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<tr>
<th>Faculty Websites</th>
<th>General enquiries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/business-law/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/business-law/</a></td>
<td>Callaghan, City and Port Macquarie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/</a></td>
<td>Phone: 02 4921 5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au">EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
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This course outline will not be altered after the second week of the term except under extenuating circumstances with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of the change.

**Studentmail and Blackboard:** Refer - [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/](http://www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/)

This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.

**Important Additional Information**

Details about the following topics are available on your course Blackboard site (where relevant). Refer - [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/](http://www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/)

- Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details
- Special Circumstances
- Return of Assignments
- Preferred Referencing Style
- Student Communication
- Essential Online Information for Students

**SCHEDULE OF LECTURES**

**WEEK ONE:**
Introductory issues

*The place of religion in today’s world.*
  - The influence of Religion
  - Attacks on religion
  - Reason and Religion

Is religious belief rationally justifiable?

Arguments for the existence of God - I:

*The first cause argument
*The argument from contingency
*Aquinas and the “five ways”.*
WEEK TWO:
Arguments for the existence of God - II:
  *The arguments from design, Hume's criticisms
  Darwin, evolution and the argument from design
  *Intelligent design. The controversy over intelligent design.
  Is it science? Ought it be taught as science?
  *Modern versions of the argument from design from theoretical
  physics.

WEEK THREE:
Arguments for the existence of God - III:
  *The ontological argument. Anselm's initial statement of the argument.
  The criticisms of Kant and Gaunilo. Modern versions of the argument.
  Norman Malcolm and necessary existence.

WEEK FOUR:
Arguments for the existence of God - IV:
  *The Moral Argument
  *The argument from our knowledge of other minds.
  *The argument from miracles. Are miracles a conceptual possibility?

WEEK FIVE:
Attempts to justify belief in God by appeal to practical rationality.
  *Pascal's wager
  *William James and the will to believe.

WEEK SIX:
Attempts to disprove the existence of God - I
The problem of evil.
  *Attempts to solve the problem of evil
  *Should the concept of God be modified in response to the problem of
  evil?

WEEK SEVEN:
Attempts to disprove the existence of God - II
  *Is the notion of God logically coherent?
    *Mackie on omnipotence
  *Omniscience. God and foreknowledge. Freewill.

WEEK EIGHT:
Arguments against the existence of God
  *Attempts to explain religion psychologically or sociologically:
    Durkheim and Freud.
  *Dawkins and the "meme" of religion
WEEK NINE:
Arguments against the existence of God.
  *The irrationality of religious belief. Clifford and the ethics of belief.

WEEK TEN:
Appeals to religious experience and emotion rather than reason - I
  *Taylor and the argument from religious experience. Otto on the nature of
    religious experience.

WEEK ELEVEN:
Appeals to religious experience and emotion rather than reason - II
  *Plantinga and the claim that, for the believer, belief in God is properly
    basic. The claim that "there is no need for an argument". The "Great
    Pumpkin" Objection.
  *Tillich on the nature of our knowledge of God.

WEEK TWELVE:
The idea that rationality is irrelevant to religious belief - I
  *Kierkegaard on the absurdity of religious belief. The idea that one
  proves one’s faith by believing that which one knows to be absurd.
    Reason as irrelevant to religious belief. Subjectivity and objectivity in
    Kierkegaard.
  *Wittgensteinian Fideism