

**Introduction to Philosophy of Religion PHIL5300**  
**New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary**  
**Theological and Historical Division**  
**Professor: Robert B. Stewart**  
**Bunyan 102**  
**Dodd 112, extension #3245**  
**rstewart@nobts.edu**  
**Fall 2015**  
**Tuesday & Thursday**  
**9:30-10:50 a.m.**

### **Seminary Mission Statement**

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

### **Core Values Focus**

The course will address the core value of *Doctrinal Integrity* and *Mission Focus* directly and *Spiritual Vitality* indirectly. Reflection on the philosophical issues is intimately related to reflection on the nature of God, Scripture, Christian faith, evangelism, and the doctrine of Creation. For the Christian, philosophy is ultimately a matter of loving God with the mind (Matthew 22:37-40). **The core value for the 2015-2016 academic year is Mission Focus.**

### **Curriculum Competencies Addressed**

The Seminary has seven key competencies in its academic program. They are: Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Discipleship Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual and Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. The key competency addressed in this course is Christian Theological Heritage.

### **Course Description**

A philosophical examination of the fundamental religious beliefs and concepts of Christian theism. Lectures and readings address classical and contemporary perspectives on the relationship of faith and reason, arguments for the existence of God, religious experience, the nature and persistence of evil, miracles, death and immortality, the nature of religious language, and issues related to postmodernism, pluralism, and truth. The course constitutes a call to intellectual reflection and accountability in relation to issues of ultimate concern to Christian faith.

## Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will read broadly on issues in philosophy of religion.
2. Students will become familiar with issues related to philosophy of religion by completing course assignments.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to think philosophically by completing Philosophy of Religion worksheets.

### Textbooks

#### Required

- Brian Davies, *Philosophy of Religion: A Guide and Anthology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003.
- Robert B. Stewart, *Can Only One Religion Be True?: Paul Knitter and Harold Netland in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013.

#### Optional

- James Beilby, *For Faith and Clarity: Philosophical Contributions to Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.
- Philip Clayton, *Religion and Science: The Basics*. New York: Routledge, 2011.
- William Lane Craig, *The Only Wise God: The Compatibility of Divine Foreknowledge & Human Freedom*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1999.
- Jeremy A. Evans, *The Problem of Evil*. B&H Studies in Christian Apologetics. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2013.
- Mark Foreman, *Prelude to Philosophy: An Introduction for Christians*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2013.
- Gregory Ganssle, *God and Time: Essays on the Divine Nature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Meghan Griffith, *Free Will: The Basics*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Michael Hanby, *No God, No Science?: Theology, Cosmology, Biology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2013.
- Tim Labron, *Wittgenstein's Religious Point of View*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013.
- Robert B. Stewart, *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.
- Robert B. Stewart, *The Quest of the Hermeneutical Jesus: The Impact of Hermeneutics on the Jesus Research of John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2008.

Charles Taliaferro, *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Philosophical Theology*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

### **Additional Optional Texts**

\*Not on text request order—the Lifeway bookstore may or may not have these books, and generally will not have them in the section with other optional texts. Nevertheless, students may review these books without seeking professor’s permission.

Mortimer J. Adler, *Truth in Religion: The Plurality of Religions and the Unity of Truth*. NC: Touchstone, 1990.

Stephen M. Barr, *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006.

Oliver D. Crisp and Michael C. Rea, *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Oliver D. Crisp, *A Reader in Contemporary Philosophical Theology*. London and New York: T & T Clark, 2009.

Millard J. Erickson, *Truth or Consequences: The Promise and Perils of Postmodernism*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002.

Millard J. Erickson, *What Does God Know and When Does He Know It? The Current Controversy over Divine Foreknowledge*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.

Garrett DeWeese, *God and the Nature of Time*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004.

Gregory Ganssle, *Thinking about God: First Steps in Philosophy*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004.

Douglas Groothuis, *On Jesus*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, 2002.

C. S. Lewis, *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996.

Alister McGrath, *Darwinism and the Divine: Evolutionary Thought and Natural Theology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2011.

Michael L. Peterson, *God and Evil: An Introduction to the Issues*. Boulder: Westview, 1998.

Robert B. Stewart, *The Future of Atheism: Alister McGrath and Daniel Dennett in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008.

Robert B. Stewart, *Intelligent Design: William A. Dembski and Michael Ruse in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007.

### **Course Requirements and Class Policies**

**Late Work will be penalized 10 points per office day late.** No assignment will be accepted more than one week late.

Grades will be assigned on the basis of the NOBTS grading scale.

The final grade will be determined accordingly:

Quiz Average	10%
Book Review	20%
Worksheet #1	35%
<u>Worksheet #2</u>	<u>35%</u>
	100%

Borderline Grades will be determined by the numerical grade received, unless the professor's subjective evaluation of the student's promptness and faithfulness in class attendance, positive attitude and contribution in class discussions, and preparedness and attentiveness in class warrants special consideration.

## Course Requirements

1. Philosophy of Religion Worksheets. Students will complete 2 worksheets of not less than 22 pages nor more than 30 pages in length (1 inch margins, 12 Times New Roman or comparable font) over assigned questions related to course reading and lectures. Students may cite other sources where appropriate. Citations from the primary sources (Brian Davies or Melville Stewart or Moreland & Craig) are to be parenthetical, while other sources are to be documented in footnotes according to Turabian. **Worksheets are to be submitted to the professor IN CLASS on the due date. Late worksheets will be penalized 10 points per office day late.**

Here is a rough guide to paper grades.

**A Paper:** Demonstrates a *superior* grasp of ideas, arguments, or theories it discusses, and presents very good, clear, and thoughtful arguments, with very few, if any, significant grammatical and/or form and style problems.

**B Paper:** Demonstrates a *good* grasp of ideas, arguments, or theories it discusses, presents an argument that exhibits good reasoning, with minimal significant grammatical and/or form and style problems.

**C Paper:** Demonstrates an adequate though perhaps limited understanding of ideas, arguments, or theories it discusses, mixed with a significant number of incorrect claims, presents weak arguments, contains significant grammatical or structural problems.

**D Paper:** Demonstrates significant misunderstandings of factual matters, uses poor logic or fallacious reasoning (if any) to argue points (e.g., merely makes a series of unconnected assertions), fails significantly with respect to technical specifications.

**F Paper:** Failure to submit a paper, a paper that commits plagiarism, or a paper that presents no argumentation.

2. Quizzes will be given over the course lectures and assigned readings in the primary text. They will be graded in class. One or more quiz grades will be dropped. **Under no circumstances will any quiz ever be given in advance or as a make-up!**

3. *Book Review*. Students are required to write a book review on one of the optional texts for the class during the semester. The review must be of a book listed by the instructor for reading reviews unless the instructor has approved another book. Reviews may be written over the optional texts. The review should include: (1) biographical data concerning the author; (2) an identification of the major elements of content; (3) an assessment of the author's aim or purpose; (4) an evaluation of the degree of its fulfillment; and (5) a critical evaluation of the book which includes some documented research on the general topic. Students should cite the work of others in the critique section. Guidelines for research papers are given in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition. A thorough review should be in the neighborhood of 8-12 pages. **Book reviews are to be submitted to the professor IN CLASS on the due date. Late book reviews will be penalized 10 points per office day late.**

4. *Reading Inventories* listing all required and optional reading done for the course will be due with the final worksheet. Failure to read all assigned readings will result in a decrease in the final score for the course.

### Extra Credit

Extra Credit may be earned in several ways. All extra credit will be added to the final grade.

(1) *Additional Reading*. Extra credit may be earned for significant reading over and above the class assignments within the field. Consideration will be given not only to the amount but also to the quality of material read. **No extra credit will be given for additional reading if all the assigned readings have not been read.**

(2) *Critiquing Movies*. Extra credit may be earned for critiquing movies that have particular issues related to philosophy or philosophy of religion. See professor for more information.

(3) *Special Events* sponsored by various NOBTS divisions may also be considered for extra credit with the approval of the professor. **Registering and attending the SW Regional ETS/EPS meeting (Friday afternoon parallel papers and Saturday plenary) will earn students 6 points.**

(4) *Research Paper*. Students may write a research paper on a topic agreed upon by the professor and the student. The paper should be not less than 12 pages nor more than 15 pages of text, double-spaced with footnotes and bibliography. The font chosen should be no more than 12 and no less than 10 with margins of 1 inch. Guidelines for research papers are given in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Guidelines for research papers are given in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition.

(5) *Book Reviews*. Students may write an **extra** book review. The same guidelines apply.

**All extra credit is due with the final worksheet.**

**Students may receive more than 6 points total extra credit.**

An effort will be made to follow the schedule as closely as possible but the schedule is only a guide.

<b>Schedule</b>			
<b>CLASS SESSION</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>CLASS DISCUSSION TOPIC</b>	<b>READING ASSIGNMENT</b>
1.1	8/25	Introduction to the Course, What Is Philosophy of Religion?	
1.2	8/27	Introducing Logic	<b>M&amp;C 28-67</b>
2.1	9/1	How Do We Know That We Know What We Think We Know?	<b>M&amp;C 71-170</b>
2.2	9/3	How Do We Know That We Know What We Think We Know?	
3.1	9/8	Representative Approaches to Epistemology	
3.2	9/10	A Little Lesson in Logic	
4.1	9/15	A Little Lesson in Logic	<b>M&amp;C 28-67</b>
4.2	9/17	Representative Approaches to Ontology/Metaphysics	
5.1	9/22	Worldviews	
5.2	9/24	Atheism (Naturalism) Defined and Critiqued	
6.1	9/29	<b>Atheism (Naturalism) Critiqued</b>	<b>Book Reviews Due</b>
6.2	10/1	The Value and Nature of Arguments for God's Existence	
7.1	10/6	Arguments for God's Existence	
7.2	10/8	Arguments for God's Existence	
8.1	10/13	The Problem of Evil Introduced	<b>M&amp;C 536-53</b>
8.2	10/15	The Problem of Evil	<b>Worksheet #1 Due</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>10/19-23</b>	<b>FALL BREAK (NO CLASS)</b>	
10.1	11/3	Attributes of God	<b>M&amp;C 501-35</b>
10.2	11/5	Attributes of God	
11.1	11/10	Science and Christianity	
11.2	11/12	Science and Christianity; Miracles	
12.1	11/17	Miracles	
12.2	11/19	The Resurrection of Jesus	
<b>13</b>	<b>11/23-27</b>	<b>THANKSGIVING BREAK (NO CLASS)</b>	
14.1	12/1	Religious Pluralism	<b>M&amp;C 615-26</b>
14.2	12/3	Religious Pluralism	
14.1	12/8	Mind-Body Problem/Life after Death	<b>M&amp;C 228-66; 285-303</b>
14.2	12/10	Mind-Body Problem/Life after Death	
15.1	12/15		<b>Worksheet #2; Reading Reports Due</b>

## Bibliography

- Mortimer J. Adler, *Truth in Religion: The Plurality of Religions and the Unity of Truth*. NC: Touchstone, 1990.
- Stephen M. Barr, *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006.
- Bartholomew, David J. *Uncertain Belief: Is It Rational to Be a Christian?* New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Colin Brown, *Philosophy and the Christian Faith*. London: Tyndale, 1969.
- Russ L. Bush, *Classical Readings in Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Academie, 1983.
- Russ L. Bush, *A Handbook for Christian Philosophy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991.
- Oliver D. Crisp and Michael C. Rea, *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Oliver D. Crisp, *A Reader in Contemporary Philosophical Theology*. London and New York: T & T Clark, 2009.
- Stephen T. Davis, *Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1981.
- Stephen T. Davis, *God, Reason, and Theistic Proofs*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.
- Garrett DeWeese, *God and the Nature of Time*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004.
- Millard J. Erickson, *Truth or Consequences: The Promise and Perils of Postmodernism*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002.
- Millard J. Erickson, *What Does God Know and When Does He Know It? The Current Controversy over Divine Foreknowledge*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.
- Mark Foreman, *Prelude to Philosophy: An Introduction for Christians*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2013.
- Gregory Ganssle, *Thinking about God: First Steps in Philosophy*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004.
- Gregory Ganssle, *God and Time: Essays on the Divine Nature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Norman Geisler, *Philosophy of Religion*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974.
- Douglas Groothuis, *On Jesus*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, 2002.
- Michael Hanby, *No God, No Science?: Theology, Cosmology, Biology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2013.
- Tim Labron, *Wittgenstein's Religious Point of View*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013.
- C. S. Lewis, *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996.
- Michael Loux, *Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction*. Second Edition. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- E. J. Lowe, *A Survey of Metaphysics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

- Alister McGrath, *A Fine-Tuned Universe: The Quest for God in Science and Theology*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2009.
- Alister McGrath, *Darwinism and the Divine: Evolutionary Thought and Natural Theology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2011.
- Alister McGrath, *The Open Secret: A New Vision for Natural Theology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell-Wiley, 2008.
- J. P. Moreland and John Mark Reynolds, *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999.
- Ronald H. Nash, *Faith and Reason*. Grand Rapids: Academie, 1988.
- Alan G. Padgett, *God, Eternity, and the Nature of Time*. Reprint. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2002. St. Martin's, 1992.
- Michael L. Peterson, *God and Evil: An Introduction to the Issues*. Boulder: Westview, 1998.
- Alvin Plantinga, Alvin, and Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*. South Bend: Notre Dame, 1983.
- Louis P. Pojman, *Philosophy of Religion*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 1987.
- Michael C. Rea, *Oxford Readings in Philosophical Theology: Volume 1: Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Michael C. Rea, *Oxford Readings in Philosophical Theology: Volume 2: Providence, Scripture, and Resurrection*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- James Sennett, and Douglas Groothuis, *In Defense of Natural Theology: A Post-Humean Assessment*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005.
- James Sire, *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004.
- Robert B. Stewart, *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.
- Robert B. Stewart, *The Quest of the Hermeneutical Jesus: The Impact of Hermeneutics on the Jesus Research of John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2008.
- Robert B. Stewart, *The Future of Atheism: Alister McGrath and Daniel Dennett in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008.
- Robert B. Stewart, *Intelligent Design: William A. Dembski and Michael Ruse in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007.
- Charles Taliaferro, *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion: An Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998.
- Charles Taliaferro, *Dialogues About God*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009.