



**BRISBANE COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY
UNIT OUTLINE**

**GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN THEOLOGY
MASTER OF THEOLOGY**

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| UNIT TITLE | PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION |
| UNIT CODES | H74067 |
| UNIT STATUS | Elective |
| HOST FIELD | H |
| PREREQUISITE/S | H51060 or H73060 Introduction to Philosophy |
| INCOMPATIBLES | H52067 is incompatible with H74067 |
| CREDIT POINTS | 10cp |
| REQUIREMENTS | 3 hours per week contact and 7 hours per week study over a 13-week semester, plus participation in 3 postgraduate colloquiums spread across the semester |
| FREQUENCY OF OFFERING | Odd years – Semester 1 |
| PREPARED BY | Mr Richard Colledge |
| UNIT COORDINATOR | Dr Richard Colledge |
| TEACHING STAFF | Dr Richard Colledge; Revd Dr Greg Moses |
| DATE PREPARED | 20 February 2004 |

Rationale

In the west there is a long and rich tradition of rational reflection upon the nature and value of religious belief, and within the Christian tradition the creative tension between faith and rationality, religion and philosophy, has been particularly productive. Over the last century and a half, philosophical reflection on the meaning, structure and epistemological status of religious faith claims has been particularly intense, so much so that no intellectually credible contemporary theology can afford to avoid such debates. These units give students of theology the opportunity to familiarise themselves with both traditional problems in the philosophy of religion, as well as some of the latest debates in the field. In this context, students are invited to consider three types of philosophical issues: (a) those which are raised within and during the unit of theological reflection; (b) those which are raised by discipline of theology itself; as well as more generally (c) those which are raised concerning the phenomenon of religious experience per se.

Relation to Program

This unit plays a valuable role within the programs of the BCT in helping *undergraduate* students to understand, and *postgraduate* students to explore at some depth, the philosophical underpinnings of theological reflection as pursued elsewhere in their program, and to reflect upon the phenomena of religious experience and faith. This is particularly valuable given the increasingly hermeneutical approach taken by recent theological discourse, and the sustained dialogue that this has opened

between theology and philosophy. The unit therefore provides a useful companion to a range of units in other fields, including: B74054 Feminist Studies in Theology, C74043 Introduction to Moral Theology, C74240 Doctrine and Truth after Modernity, and C74080 Contemporary Christian Spirituality.

Aims

The unit aims to give students of theology the opportunity to confront some major issues within traditional and contemporary philosophy of religion, and thereby to provide useful philosophical background for an insightful and intellectually credible theology and spirituality. *Undergraduate students* are encouraged to recognise and reflect upon traditional and some current debates in the philosophy of religion, through engaging with a range of secondary works and key primary texts. *Postgraduate students* are further enabled to recognise the distinctive voices of major figures in the history of philosophical reflection on theology, through sustained direct encounter with key primary texts and with a focus on two issues in particular. In this way, the unit seeks to enrich students' studies in theology, and to prepare them for further work in philosophy and philosophical theology, that they may wish to pursue.

Learning Outcomes

| | |
|---|---|
| On the successful completion of this unit, the student will be able to: | |
| 1. | Demonstrate a developed understanding and appreciation of the significance of two major issues in the philosophy of religion. |
| 2. | Critically discuss and evaluate the differing arguments of philosophers concerning such issues, and in this way demonstrate a developed understanding and appreciation of the distinctive responses to these issues developed by key figures and schools of thought in recent philosophy of religion. |
| 3. | Demonstrate a proficiency in dealing with both the primary texts themselves, as well as major secondary works dealing with these authors. |
| 4. | Apply a range of independent research skills. |

Content

The unit is divided into five sections, as outlined below. The following list gives a *sample* of topics addressed. While undergraduates and postgraduates are introduced to the same basic topics, the latter are required to delve into each topic at greater depth (see below).

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. <i>Arguments for and against the existence of God</i> | • Design arguments |
| | • Cosmological arguments |
| | • Ontological argument(s) |
| | • Value arguments |
| 2. <i>Models of God</i> | • Traditional theism |
| | • Deism |
| | • Pantheism |
| | • Panentheism |
| 3. <i>Religious discourses</i> | • Process theology |
| | • Three theological discourses: kataphatic, apophatic, hyperontic |
| | • Medieval analogy approach |
| | • Language game approach (Wittgenstein et al) |
| 4. <i>God and the problem of evil</i> | • Evocation approach (Ramsey, de Pater) |
| | • Defining evil and suffering |
| | • Epicurus' statement of the problem |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five traditions of theodicy: Classical, Neoplatonic, Augustinian, Irenaean and Process |
| 5. <i>Religious experience</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining religious experience • Varieties of religious experience • The problem of interpretation • The value of religious experiences for others |

Organisation and Teaching Strategies

Each week a 2 hour (2x 50 min) lecture is given to the *postgraduate* and *undergraduate* students concurrently. These lectures introduce the major themes of the unit and flesh out some of the more important debates involved. While these lectures are fairly introductory in nature, frequent asides (of a content and bibliographical nature) are made for the benefit of postgraduate students which indicate directions for possible further research. Lecture notes, distributed each week, contain sections dealing specifically with postgraduate content concerns.

During the third hour, postgraduates meet separately for the tutorial in which set readings that deal with the previous week's topic, are discussed. In addition to tutorial readings shared with undergraduates, postgraduate students typically have 4-6 additional readings, compiled in a separate "book of readings", and which are discussed in conjunction with the shared material. These additional readings are generally primary texts that deal with either a current scholarly debate and/or with primary historical texts in the philosophy of religion (in translation where applicable). Three times a semester, postgraduate students also participate in a postgraduate colloquium in which students discuss current research, and are given guidance on suitable further reading.

In addition to the 3 hour face-to-face mode, all students are encouraged to make use of electronic means of communication with the lecturer and with other enrolled students. From 2005, it is envisaged that the unit webpage will incorporate a link to either a closed list serve facility or a weekly chat room facility for students wishing to discuss the readings or current research.

Assessment

| | Type of assessment | No of words | Weighting % | Due date | Learning Outcomes covered |
|----|---|-------------|-------------|----------|---------------------------|
| 1. | <p><i>Commentary on Scholarly Debate:</i> The commentary essay is designed to stretch the postgraduate student's grasp of one major issue in contemporary philosophy of religion with reference to two scholarly articles (or book chapters) which engage the same issue while coming to contrasting conclusions. Excepting lecturer approval, one of the articles should be taken from the postgraduate book of readings. The issue chosen should be clearly distinct from the major essay. The essay should: (a) provide an outline of the problem being wrestled with by the authors, and why it is considered an important issue; (b) introduce the two articles, broadly outlining the contrasting arguments of each; (c) highlight and critically analyse the main steps in the case being put by the respective authors, and the main conclusions they respectively reach; and (d) state where the student currently sits in terms of the issues raised by the articles. The essay is written in the</p> | 3000 | 40% | TBA | 1, 2 and 3 |

| | Type of assessment | No of words | Weighting % | Due date | Learning Outcomes covered |
|----|---|-------------|-------------|----------|---------------------------|
| | student's own time during the semester, and is to be submitted before or on the final night of lectures. | | | | |
| 2. | <i>Major essay:</i> The student is to research more deeply and then critically discuss one clearly defined philosophical problem at issue in contemporary philosophy of religion, and present his/her work in a well-structured and coherent essay. The issue chosen must be clearly distinct from that considered in the comparative essay. While an extensive list of research topics is provided, students are encouraged to frame a research question of their own which emerges out of their reading. The higher standards of scholarship expected of postgraduate students are indicated in the wording of the objectives (above). The essay is written in the student's own time, and is submitted during or before the exam block. | 4500 | 60 | | 1, 2, 3, and 4 |

Generic Attributes

- The ability to apply critical reasoning to issues through independent thought and informed judgement.
- Willingness to deal with ambiguity and to initiate and participate in change as appropriate.
- The ability to collect, analyse and organise information and ideas and to convey those ideas clearly and fluently, in both written and spoken forms.
- The ability to collect, analyse and organise information and ideas and to convey those ideas clearly and fluently, in both written and spoken forms.
- Consolidation and adaptation of academic skills and knowledge acquired in previous undergraduate and postgraduate studies.
- The ability to work and learn independently.
- Development of skills underpinning scholarly discourse in philosophy and theology.
- Development of skills needed to undertake significant graduate-level research in philosophy and theology.

Bibliography

Textbooks

Required

A Book of Readings is supplied at the first class.

Recommended

Davies, Brian. *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. 2nd ed. Oxford England; New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Jackson, Roy. *God of Philosophy: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. Sutton, Surrey: TPM (The Philosophers' Magazine), 2001.

Academic & General Resource Requirements

References – Books

(PG) – indicates an advanced text, more suited for postgraduates.

- Abraham, William J. *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1985.
- Andersen, Svend, *Theism and Its Modern Alternatives*, Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1994.
- Anderson, Pamela Sue. *A Feminist Philosophy of Religion: The Rationality and Myths of Religious Belief*. Oxford; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1998.
- Angeles, Peter Adam. *Critiques of God: Making the Case against Belief in God*. Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1997.
- Bailey, Edward I. *The Secular Faith Controversy: Religion in Three Dimensions, Issues in Contemporary Religion*. London ; New York: Continuum, 2001. **(PG)**
- Baker, Deane-Peter, Patrick Maxwell. *Explorations in Contemporary Continental Philosophy of Religion (Value Inquiry Book Series)*. Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2003.
- Barbour, Ian G. *Myths, Models and Paradigms: The Nature of Scientific and Religious Language*. London: S.C.M. Press, 1974.
- _____. *Nature, Human Nature, and God*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002.
- Billington, Ray. *Religion without God*. New York: Routledge, 2002. **(PG)**
- Blond, Phillip. *Post-Secular Philosophy: Between Philosophy and Theology*. London; New York: Routledge, 1998. **(PG)**
- Brooke, John Hedley. *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives, Cambridge History of Science*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Brooke, John Hedley, and G. N. Cantor. *Reconstructing Nature: The Engagement of Science and Religion: Glasgow Gifford Lectures*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998.
- Buckley, Michael J. *At the Origins of Modern Atheism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987.
- Cahn, Steven M., and David Shatz. *Questions About God: Today's Philosophers Ponder the Divine*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Caputo, John D., Mark Dooley, and Michael J. Scanlon. *Questioning God, Indiana Series in the Philosophy of Religion*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.
- Charlesworth, M. J. *Philosophy and Religion: From Plato to Postmodernism*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2002.
- Clayton, Philip. *God and Contemporary Science, Edinburgh Studies in Constructive Theology*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 1997.
- _____. *The Problem of God in Modern Thought*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2000. **(PG)**
- Corbett, Julia Mitchell. *Through a Glass Darkly: Readings on the Concept of God*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989.
- Cupitt, Don. *Creation out of Nothing*. London; Philadelphia: SCM Press, Trinity Press International, 1990.
- Davies, P. C. W. *God and the New Physics, Pelican Books*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1984, 1983.
- _____. *The Mind of God: Science and the Search for Ultimate Meaning*. Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, 1992.
- Davis, Stephen T. *God, Reason, and Theistic Proofs, Reason and Religion*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1997.
- Dembski, William A. *Intelligent Design: The Bridge between Science & Theology*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1999.
- Derrida, Jacques, John D. Caputo, and Michael J. Scanlon. *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism, The Indiana Series in the Philosophy of Religion*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999. **(PG)**
- Dombrowski, Daniel A. *Analytic Theism, Hartshorne, and the Concept of God, Suny Series in Philosophy*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996. **(PG)**
- Drees, Willem B. *Religion, Science, and Naturalism*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Feinberg, John S. *The Many Faces of Evil: Theological Systems and the Problem of Evil*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1994.
- Flew, Antony. *God and Philosophy, Philosophy at Work*. London: Hutchinson, 1966.
- Flood, Gavin D. *Beyond Phenomenology: Rethinking the Study of Religion*. London; New York: Cassell, 1999.

- Ford, Lewis S. *Transforming Process Theism, Suny Series in Philosophy*. Albany; Great Britain: State University of New York Press, 2000.
- Gale, Richard M. *On the Nature and Existence of God*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Görman, Ulf, and Niels Henrik Gregersen. *Design and Disorder: Perspectives from Science and Theology, Issues in Science and Theology*. London: T&T Clark, 2002.
- Griffin, David Ray. *Reenchantment without Supernaturalism: A Process Philosophy of Religion, Cornell Studies in the Philosophy of Religion*. Ithaca, N.Y.; London: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Groenhout, Ruth E., and Marya Bower. *Philosophy, Feminism, and Faith, Indiana Series in the Philosophy of Religion*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003.
- Hart, Ray L. *Trajectories in the Study of Religion: Addresses at the Seventy Fifth Anniversary of the American Academy of Religion, Scholars Press Studies in Religious and Theological Scholarship*. Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1987.
- Heelas, Paul, David Martin, and Paul Morris. *Religion, Modernity, and Postmodernity, Religion and Modernity*. Oxford: Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1998. (PG)
- Hick, John. *Philosophy of Religion*. 4th ed, *Prentice Hall Foundations of Philosophy Series*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall, 1990.
- Hinde, Robert A. *Why Gods Persist: A Scientific Approach to Religion*. London; New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Howard-Snyder, Daniel. *The Evidential Argument from Evil*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1996.
- Hudson, Yeager. *The Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings*. Mountain View, Calif.: Mayfield Pub., 1991.
- Kearney, Richard. *The God Who May Be : A Hermeneutics of Religion, Indiana Series in the Philosophy of Religion*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001. (PG)
- Kenny, Anthony John Patrick. *The God of the Philosophers*. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Larrimore, Mark J. *The Problem of Evil: A Reader*. Oxford; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2001.
- Le Poidevin, Robin. *Arguing for Atheism: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. London ; New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Long, Eugene Thomas. *Twentieth-Century Western Philosophny of Religion, 1900-2000, Handbook of Contemporary Philosophy of Religion; V. 1*. Dordrecht; Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000. (PG)
- McGhee, Michael. *Philosophy, Religion, and the Spiritual Life, Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement 32*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Mackie, J. L. *The Miracle of Theism: Arguments for and against the Existence of God*. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1982.
- Macquarrie, John. *God-Talk: An Examination of the Language and Logic Of Theology*. London: SCM Press, 1967.
- _____, *In Search of Deity: An Essay in Dialectical Theism: The Gifford Lectures Delivered at the University of St. Andrews in Session 1983-4*. London: SCM Press, 1984.
- Manson, Neil A. *God and Design: The Teleological Argument and Modern Science*. Routledge: New York, 2003. (PG)
- Marion, Jean-Luc. *God without Being: Hors-Texte, Religion and Postmodernism*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991. (PG)
- Martin, Michael. *Atheism: A Philosophical Justification*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990.
- Miethe, Terry L., and Antony Flew. *Does God Exist?: A Believer and an Atheist Debate*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991.
- Morris, Thomas V. *God and the Philosophers: The Reconciliation of Faith and Reason*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Nielsen, Kai. *Naturalism and Religion*. Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2001.
- Pals, Daniel L. *Seven Theories of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Peters, Ted, Gaymon Bennett, *Bridging Science and Religion*. London: SCM, 2002.
- Plantinga, Alvin. *Warranted Christian Belief*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. (PG)
- Pratt, Douglas, and Forum Australian Theological. *Rethinking Religion: Exploratory Investigations, Atf Series ; 6*. Hindmarsh, S. Aust.: Australian Theological Forum, 2003.

- Rogers, Katherin A. *Perfect Being Theology, Reason and Religion (Edinburgh, Scotland)*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000.
- Rowe, William L., and William J. Wainwright. *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings*. 2nd ed. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989.
- Schrag, Calvin O. *God as Otherwise Than Being: Toward a Semantics of the Gift, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology & Existential Philosophy*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2002. **(PG)**
- Sharpe, R. A. *The Moral Case against Religious Belief*. London: SCM, 1997.
- Smart, J. J. C., and John Haldane. *Atheism and Theism, Great Debates in Philosophy*: Oxford; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell.
- Southgate, Christopher. *God, Humanity and the Cosmos: A Textbook in Science and Religion*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999.
- Stone, Jerome Arthur. *The Minimalist Vision of Transcendence: A Naturalist Philosophy of Religion, Suny Series in Religious Studies*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.
- Swinburne, Richard. *The Christian God*. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press Oxford University Press, 1994.
- . *The Coherence of Theism*. Rev. ed, *Clarendon Library of Logic and Philosophy*. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1993.
- . *The Existence of God*. Rev. ed. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1991. **(PG)**
- . *Providence and the Problem of Evil*. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1998.
- . *Revelation: From Metaphor to Analogy*. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1992. **(PG)**
- Thrower, James. *Western Atheism: A Short History*. Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2000.
- Trigg, Roger. *Rationality and Religion: Does Faith Need Reason?* Oxford; Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 1998.
- Vardy, Peter. *The Puzzle of God*. 2nd expanded ed. London: Fount, 1995.
- Vries, Hent de. *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.
- Westphal, Merold, *Postmodern Philosophy and Christian Thought, The Indiana Series in the Philosophy of Religion*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press. 1999. **(PG)**
- Wynn, Mark. *God and Goodness: A Natural Theological Perspective*. London; New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Yandell, Keith E. *God, Man, and Religion: Readings in the Philosophy of Religion*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973.
- . *Philosophy of Religion: A Contemporary Introduction, Routledge Contemporary Introductions to Philosophy*. London; New York: Routledge, 1999.

References – Journal Articles

- Almeida, Michael J; Judisch, Neal D. "A New Cosmological Argument Undone" *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*. Feb 2002; 51(1): 55-64.
- Chambers, Timothy. "On Behalf of the Devil: A Parody of Anselm Revisited" *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*. 2000; 100: 93-113.
- Desmond, William. "God, Ethos, Ways". *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*. Feb 1999; 45(1): 13-30.
- Gale, Richard M. "Swinburne on Providence". *Religious Studies*. June 2000; 36(2): 209-219.
- Gale, Richard M; Pruss, Alexander R. "A New Cosmological Argument". *Religious Studies*. Dec 1999; 35(4): 461-476.
- Klein, Charles J. "On the Necessary Existence of an Object with Creative Power". *Faith and Philosophy*. July 2000; 17(3): 367-370.
- Leslie, John. "Fine Tuning and Divine Design". *Maritain Studies Etudes Maritainiennes*. 2002; 18: 3-13.
- Oppy, Graham. "Paley's Argument for Design". *Philo*. Fall-Win 2002; 5(2): 161-173.
- Quinn, Philip L, "Epistemology in Philosophy of Religion" in *The Oxford Handbook of Epistemology*, Moser, Paul K (ed), Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2002. 512-538.

References – Online and Other IT Resources

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Western Concepts of God.

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/g/god-west.htm>

Philosophy of Religion Website. http://www3.baylor.edu/~Scott_Moore/Phi_Rel_info.html

Ars Disputandi: The Online Journal for Philosophy of Religion. <http://www.arsdisputandi.org/>

Lowder, Jeffery. Is a Proof of the Non-Existence of a God Even Possible?

http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/jeff_lowder/ipnegep.html