

Foundational Studies Integrative Upper-Division Elective

Philosophy 313—Philosophy of Religion

- 1. Use a thematic approach to a particular topic or issue that integrates multiple ways of knowing**—Philosophy of Religion integrates the ways of knowing characteristic of philosophy, religion, cultural diversity, and literature. Philosophy approaches topics by means of logic, which is the tool of philosophy. Logic is the study of argument, a study that rationally examines how claims follow from premises. Religion uses a way of knowing that incorporates both faith and revelation. Literature is another approach to the course material that is utilized. For instance, students read C. S. Lewis and Dostoevsky. Further, this course studies not only material relevant to the Judeo-Christian tradition, but also Buddhist, Hindu, and Mesoamerican ways of knowing. The Mesoamerican way of knowing is presented through *The Four Agreements*, a non-fiction book by a native American shaman. Thus cultural diversity is an important theme of this course.
- 2. Engage in a project or conduct research that makes use of multiple ways of knowing to address a particular topic or issue**—Students will work on a project that involves ways of knowing in composition, communication, social or behavioral sciences, cultural diversity, as well as more normative ways of knowing. (The culminating project is found at the end of this proposal).
- 3. Analyze and write at an advanced level**—Each of the three required papers for the class requires a great deal of analysis. For example, if a student writes about the existence of God, he or she must not only state each premise of an argument, but must analyze each premise in a separate paragraph, followed by a rigorous evaluation. In order that they may meet the exacting writing standards of this course, students are encouraged to write rough drafts of each of their papers,

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SYLLABUS

Phil 313 - Philosophy of Religion

General Description and Approach

This Foundational Studies course, an Integrative Upper-Division elective offers an examination of the various aspects of religious experience and of related theological concepts and theories. **(LO 1)** Special emphasis will be given to arguments for the existence of God, the Problem of Evil and Challenges to Faith, Death and Immortality, and Religion and Ethics. Students will consider such questions as: What kind of event is religious experience? Can religious experience justify religious beliefs? Is there any reason to believe that God exists? How can an all-powerful, all-good God allow evil to take place? Is life after death possible? Is there any evidence that people live subsequent to their death? Should religion have an impact on the way we live our lives? **(FSO 3, 8)** In studying these topics, students will use ways of knowing from philosophy, religion, and literature. **(FSO 3)** You will also apply your composition **(LO 3)** and communication skills **(FSO 10)** to this topic. Looking at various religious beliefs, cultural diversity will be very emphasizes in the course. **(FSO 8)** The culminating project will also include ways of knowing inherent to the social or behavioral sciences. **(LO 2)**

Foundational Studies Program Outcomes

In this course, you will:

- Critically evaluate the ideas of others
- Apply knowledge and skills within and across fundamental ways of knowing
- Demonstrate the skills for effective stewardship
- Demonstrate than understanding of diverse cultures within and across societies
- Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical implications of decisions and actions
- Express yourself effectively and persuasively both orally and in writing

OBJECTIVES: Integrative Upper-Division Electives—including Philosophy 313—have these specific learning objectives:

- Use a thematic approach to a particular topic or issue that integrates multiple ways of knowing;
- Engage in a project or conduct research that makes use of multiples ways of knowing to address a particular topic or issue;

- Analyze and write at an advanced level.

SKILL AND LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

Every Foundational Studies designated course must assist students in developing and improving their critical thinking, information literacy, and written communication skills. In this course, you will complete assignments that will help you to develop these skills through a culminating project, three papers, as well as in oral participation. In each paper you will be required to focus on a particular issue, showing reflection and employing analysis. You will have the opportunity to write drafts of each paper, receive feedback, make changes, and submit a final draft.

FURTHER INFORMATION: For information about the Foundational Studies program—specifically the “Sycamore Standard,” academic freedom and the rights and responsibilities of students with disabilities—consult the Foundational Studies website (<http://www.indstate.edu/gened/newfoundationalstudiesprogram.htm>) (FS Syllabus)

COURSE CONTENT

TEXTBOOKS

Philosophy of Religion by Pojman

The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz

Prof Pack available at Goetz Printing, 16 South 9th Street, Terre Haute (SW corner of Wabash and 9th).

TEACHING METHOD

This course is a lecture course in which participation and discussion is expected. Your communication skills will be sharpened by clarifying and explaining your oral responses. **(FSO 10)** I encourage intelligent and lively, well-supported debates. Be sure to complete the assigned reading prior to each class; otherwise, you will be unable to take effective notes and enter into discussion. The lectures and reading material are designed to complement each other. **(FS Syllabus)**

CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

The Code of Student Conduct insists that all students are expected to maintain professional behavior, which includes the highest standards of integrity and honesty. The following are examples of academic dishonesty: Plagiarism; Cheating; Fraud; Using another person’s material as one’s own; Knowingly allowing another person to use one’s work or signature as his/her own. Students risk course failure if there is any violation of this code. **(FS Syllabus**

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TARDINESS

Generally, tardiness is a form of disrespect for the people waiting for you. When you enroll in this course, you must arrive at or before 2 p.m., unless you have a good reason for being late. My respect for you also requires me to arrive at or before 2 p.m.

Additionally, out of respect for you if you have any classes following this class, I agree to end the class no later than 3:15 p.m. Although I recognize that occasionally people may have a good reason to be late, I take perpetual tardiness very seriously. If there are specific circumstances that may make you late on a regular basis, please let me know about it.

CLASS ATMOSPHERE

Any true discussion involves personal exposure and thus the taking of risks. Your ideas may not conform to your neighbors'. However, as long as your points are honest and supportable, they need to be respected by everyone in the classroom. Encouragement, questions, discussion and laughter are a part of this class, but ridicule is never allowable.

Laptop Policy: laptops are permitted only for note-taking purposes. **(FS Syllabus)**

Evaluation and Grades (FS Syllabus)

1. You will be expected to participate in class discussions. **(FSO 10)** It must be noted that you cannot participate unless you attend classes. Thus, attendance is mandatory. If you have three unexcused absences, your grade will be lowered by one full letter. Five absences, whether excused or unexcused, warrant automatic failure. An absence is excused if I am informed of your absence at least half an hour **before** class, either by telephone or message. Please **do not hand me written medical excuses** after an absence. If you are absent, you are responsible for obtaining class information. If a student signs the attendance sheet for another student, both students will be penalized, which will be reflected in their participation grades.
2. The **culminating project** for the course (**LO 2, 3, FSO 2, 3, 6, 8, 10 and SALR**) will include ways of knowing in composition, communicate, social or behavioral sciences, and cultural diversity, as well as more normative ways of knowing. You will be given the project about halfway through the semester. The project involves both interviewing and writing, paying attention to cultural diversity in choosing the people you interview.
3. All students are required to write three papers on a particular issue. (**LO 2, 3, FSO 2, 3, 6, 8, 10 and SALR**) Each must be at least 4 pages long. These papers should adhere to instructions provided on the Philosophy Paper requirement sheet provided in the Prof Pack.

4. If you keep up with the readings, follow the written instructions on both papers and take responsibility for attendance in class, you should receive a passing grade in this course. If you have trouble with the readings please come to see me.

5. Extra credit (0.30) will be given to any student who wishes to write a minimum of 3 pages on any assigned reading. **(LO 2, 3, FSO 2, 3, 6, 8, 10 and SALR)** The paper should consist of an explanation of a main topic within the reading (about half of the paper) and should be followed by either an evaluation, or an evaluation (about ¼ the paper) and your own personal view of the topic (about ¼ of the paper). Extra credit opportunities are due a week after they are discussed in class. No late extra credit papers will be accepted. No more than 3 extra credit papers will be accepted.

6. I reserve the right to adjust and or revise the daily syllabus when appropriate to course progress. I will inform you of the adjustments when they occur.

7. **Late Policy.** The first two papers may be handed in late, but the grade will decrease the later it is turned in to the professor. The final paper should not be handed in late. Failure to turn it in on time will result in the grade being lowered by two letter grades. For example an 'A' paper will become a 'C' and a 'C' will become an 'F.'

8. Grading will be calculated as follows:

Paper 1	(4 page minimum)	20%
Paper 2	(4 page minimum)	20%
Paper 3	(4 page minimum)	20%
Project	(10 page minimum)	30%
Participation		10%

Grade Chart

A+ = 4.2	A = 4.0	A- = 3.7
B+ = 3.3	B = 3.0	B- = 2.7
C+ = 2.3	C = 2.0	C- = 1.7
D+ = 1.3	D = 1.0	D- = .7

To determine your grade:

- Find the numerical grade your letter grade corresponds to.
- Multiply that grade by the percentage it is worth of your overall grade. For example, an 'A-' on paper 2 corresponds to eight (8) points. Multiply 8 by 20% (the

percentage of your overall grade the paper is worth) and you will find you have achieved a total of 1.6 points for that paper.

- c. Add up all your grades using the same process for each grade.
- d. A missed assignment will subtract points from your overall grade.

COURSE OUTLINE OF ASSIGNMENTS

- January**
- 12 Introduction to the Course
- 14 **ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD**
St. Thomas Aquinas, pp. 3-5 and Prof Pack (LO1, FSO 1,2)
Aquinas, the patron saint of theologians, presents five ways of arguing for God's existence.
- 19 Explanation of all papers for the course
- 21 William Paley, pp. 50-52; David Hume, pp. 52-54 and Prof Pack (LO1, FSO 1,2) Paley rests his argument for God's existence on an extended analogy; Hume argues against our ability to know whether or not God exists.
- 26 Hume, pp. 55-58
- 28 Anselm, pp. 70-72 and Prof Pack (LO1, FSO 1,2) Anselm presents a deductive argument for God's existence based on reason alone.
- February**
- 2 William James, pp. 93-108 (LO1, FSO 1,2, 3, 7) James examines mystical states of consciousness in various cultures/religions to see whether or not there are any commonalities.
- 4 Buber, Prof Pack; This Jewish philosopher approaches the existence of God from the standpoint of a personal encounter.
- 9 THE PROBLEM OF EVIL**
- Dostoevsky, Prof Pack (LO1, FSO 1,2, 3) This Russian novelist illustrates the many horrors of this life, particularly the suffering of children, which he contends a loving God would not permit.
- 11 Augustine, Prof Pack (LO1, FSO 1,2, 3) Augustine analyzes various kinds of evil, concluding that they are necessary for the good of creation.
- 16 Hume, pp. 141-146 (LO1, FSO 1,2, 3) Hume presents his atheistic views through a dialogue between a traditional believer, a theologian and a skeptic.
- 18 John Hick, pp. 152-156 (LO1, FSO 1,2) This contemporary philosopher attempts to reconcile the problem of suffering with a loving God by discussing life on earth as a "vale of soul-making."
- 23 C. S. Lewis, Prof Pack (LO1, FSO 1,2, 3) This novelist explains how it is impossible for God to create free beings without the possibility of evil.
- 25 DEATH AND IMMORTALITY**
- Plato, pp. 310-314: **first paper due on either the Existence of God or the Problem of Evil** (LO 2, 3, FSO 2, 3, 6, 8, 10 and SALR)
- March**
- 2 Hick, pp. 317-323 (LO1, FSO 2, 3) Hick uses the evidence from parapsychology to support the hypothesis of continued existence.
- 4 Prasannatma Das, pp. 333-336 (LO1, FSO 1, 2, 3, 7) This Hindu thinker discusses both karma and reincarnation. **Discussion of Culminating Project**

- 16 Price, Prof Pack (LO 1, FSO 1, 2, 3) In this reading, Price offers an account of what a disembodied existence may be experienced.
- 18 Troisfontaines, Prof Pack (LO 1, FSO 1, 2) This reading explains how the curve of physical existence is opposite the curve of spiritual existence, suggesting the continuation of life after death.

FAITH AND REASON

- 23 Flew, Hare, and Mitchell, pp. 339-344 (LO 1, FSO 1, 2, 3) In this three way dialogue between noted contemporary philosophers, each expresses a different view of how reasonable it is to have faith in an unseen God.
- 25 Pascal, pp. 361-363 (LO 1, 2) Pascal's wager regarding God existence is a pragmatic cost-benefit analysis
- 30 Kierkegaard, Prof Pack (LO 1, 2, 3) Using the Abraham and Isaac story in Genesis, the reading focuses on what it means to make a "leap of faith."

April RELIGION AND ETHICS

- 1 Euthyphro, pp. 549-550; (LO 1, FSO 1,2, 3, 8) **second paper due on either Death and Immortality or Faith and Reason (LO 2, 3, FSO 2, 3, 6, 8, 10 and SALR)**
- 6 The Four Noble Truths, Prof Pack (LO 1, FSO 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8) The Buddha claims that all life is suffering, which is caused by attachment. However, suffering can be overcome.
- 8 The Noble Eight-fold Path, Prof Pack (LO 1, FSO 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8) The Eight-fold Path gives us 8 steps, ways to approach life, that culminate in enlightenment.
- 13 The Noble Eight-fold Path, Prof Pack (LO 1 FSO 1,2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8)
- 15 The Four Agreements: pp. 1-21 (LO 1 FSO 1, 2, 3, 5, 5 7, 8) A Native American shaman explains a Mesoamerican perspective of life
- 20 The Four Agreements: pp. 21-37 (LO 1 FSO 1,2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8) The first agreement involves how we use language and the effect it has on others
- 27 The Four Agreements: pp. 37-53 (LO 1 FSO 1,2, 3, 5,6, 7, 8) The second agreement counsels us to take nothing anyone says or does to us personally
- 29 The Four Agreements: pp. 53-61 (LO 1 FSO 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8) The third agreement urges us to avoid making assumptions and substitute asking questions.

FINAL PAPER IS DUE MAY 6th on RELIGION AND ETHICS (LO 2, 3, FSO 2, 3, 6, 8, 10 and SALR)

Your Project is also due at this time. (LO 2, 3, FSO 2, 3, 6, 8, 10 and SALR)

Philosophy Paper Requirements

FORM OF PAPER

1. Papers should be typed, double-spaced. Do not skip four lines between paragraphs.
2. Margins should be approximately one inch from all four sides of the paper.
3. The first paragraph should contain the point you are making and the method you will employ to prove your point.
 - a. Mention the philosopher and topic you are writing on.
 - b. State your general view of the philosopher on the issue. For instance, "I mostly agree with (Kant) on . . . although I think his argument about . . . is too weak to merit my support."
 - c. Specify the order in which you will present your paper. For example, "I will first present (Kant's) position on . . . followed by his views of . . . I will then evaluate his arguments and give my own position on this issue. In conclusion, I will indicate the points of agreement and disagreement between (Kant's) view and my own view."
4. A good paragraph should have one central point and its lesser points should be related to the main point. If your paragraphs run a page or more in length, they probably need to be broken up into more coherent units. Each paragraph, other than the introductory paragraph and the concluding one, should consist of the following:
 - a. The point being made;
 - b. A definition(s), if appropriate;
 - c. At least 2 sentences explaining each point;
 - d. An example of the point.
5. If you use a philosophical term make sure its meaning is clear by giving a definition or using an example. Do not use the term "rationalization" without looking it up in a dictionary.
6. Use concrete examples to make your meaning clearer.
7. If you are asked to evaluate, below are some questions you can incorporate into your evaluation. Use a point-by-point refutation or support, building up to an overall evaluation of the theory:
 - a. Is the answer he gives a good one—does it really answer the question? Does he really prove his point?
 - b. Has he met all the objections that might bear the other way?
 - c. Has he overlooked any facts he should have considered?
 - d. Does the answer fit the facts the philosopher is trying to explain?
 - e. Support and justify with evidence and reasons all your contentions about the philosopher's theory as fully as you can.

8. Everything you write in the explanation section should also be found in your evaluation section. Other material is irrelevant to the topic. On the other hand, do not write anything in the evaluation section that you have not discussed in the explanation section of your paper.

9. Good writers give internal organization to their paragraphs by using transitions such as "also," "in addition," and "moreover." These words indicate that you are introducing information that will expand on a previous point. Expressions like "for instance" and "for example" prepare readers for illustrations and examples. Contrast is indicated by such expressions as "on the one hand . . . on the other hand," "however," "on the contrary," and similar expressions.

10. When you explain the philosopher's arguments, identify each claim he/she is making and the evidence used to support that claim.

11. In a comparison and contrast paper, you should only write on material that can be used to compare and contrast the 2 philosophers you are writing about. That is, everything you write in the explanation section should also be found in your evaluation section and your comparison and contrast section. Other material is irrelevant to the topic. On the other hand, do not write anything in the evaluation section or the comparison and contrast section that you have not explained in the explanation section of your paper.

AVOID

1. Biographical material.
2. Mention of the historical importance of this problem.
3. Quotes over 3 lines long or more than 3 quotes per page. If they are necessary to your paper, put the entire quote in an endnote.
4. Do not write on any reading not contained in the syllabus. If you do not comply, you will receive an 'F' on your paper and will not be allowed to rewrite it. This prohibition includes any readings which are removed from the syllabus during the course of the semester.
5. Repetition.
6. **Plagiarism:** Do not pass off as your own the words of another. If you do not give the author credit by putting his words in quotation marks, citing his name, and footnoting the quote, you will receive an 'F' for the paper. It is also likely that you will receive an 'F' for the class. There is no specific style that is required for citation other than what is listed.

CULMINATING PROJECT (10 page minimum)

Interview 8 people who don't mind being asked questions about their religious beliefs. Try to find as broad a range of beliefs as possible; that is, don't ask 8 people who are likely to give the same answers. Ask at least one person from a completely different faith. For instance, if you are a Christian, interview someone who is Jewish. Also, make sure to ask someone from a different culture, perhaps someone who was raised as a Hindu. Aim to interview an equal number of men and women. Ask each person the following questions:

1. Do you believe in God?
2. What are your reasons?
3. What is your conception of the God you do or do not believe in?
4. What sort of data or experience (if any) might cause you to change your belief? Why?
5. Does your belief influence the way you live your daily life? If it does impact your daily life, in what way does it do so?

After you've recorded the answers, go back over the answers and see how they can be cataloged according to the arguments we have discussed. Did anyone give a reason for their belief in God that is similar to either the cosmological, teleological, or ontological arguments? Did anyone's answer seem similar to such answers as James, Kierkegaard and Pascal give? Did anyone mention the problem of evil or undeserved suffering. What reasons were given (if any) for not believing in God? Were there any significant differences in the 8 answers to question 3? Evaluate the reasons that were provided for the answers. Which reasons do you think were the best ones? Which reasons were the weakest?