



El Camino College
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD – Official

Course Acronym:	PHIL
Course Number:	107
Descriptive Title:	Philosophy of Religion
Division:	Behavioral and Social Sciences
Department:	Philosophy
Course Disciplines:	Philosophy
Catalog Description:	This course is an introduction to traditional philosophical problems connected with religious belief. Prominent issues include whether God, souls, and an afterlife exist, the paradox of an all-good God and so much suffering in the world, the nature of religious language, the clash between religion and science, religious faith, the existence of miracles, religious experience, and mysticism.
Prerequisite:	
Co-requisite:	
Recommended Preparation:	Eligibility for ENGL C1000 or equivalent
Enrollment Limitation:	
Hours Lecture (per week):	3
Hours Laboratory (per week):	0
Outside Study Hours:	6
Total Course Hours:	54
Course Units:	3
Grading Method:	Letter Grade only
Credit Status:	Credit, degree applicable
Transfer CSU:	Yes
Effective Date:	Prior to July 1992
Transfer UC:	Yes
Effective Date:	prior to fall 1992
General Education: ECC	Area 3 - Humanities
Term:	
Other:	
CSU GE:	Area C2 - Arts and Humanities - Humanities: Literature, Philosophy, Languages other than English

	Term:	
	Other:	
	IGETC:	Area 3B - Humanities
	Term:	
	Other:	
	CalGETC:	
	Term:	
	Other:	
Student Learning Outcomes:	SLO #1 Distinguishing Foundations Students will be able to distinguish the foundations of belief in physical objects vs. metaphysical concepts, such as a God, souls, and heaven and hell, and how this understanding fosters both tolerance toward the religious beliefs of others and a deeper understanding of their own religious beliefs. SLO #2 Belief in Immortal Souls Students will be able to articulate the arguments for and problems regarding the beliefs in immortal souls, heaven and hell. SLO #3 Existence of God Students will be able to describe and explain the major arguments for the existence of God, and the primary criticisms of each argument.	
Course Objectives:	1. Recognize and explain the difference between the literal and metaphorical use of language occurring in religious discourse and texts. 2. Identify and discuss the main areas of philosophical conflict that presently exist between religion and science. 3. State, analyze, and assess traditional arguments both for and against the existence of God. 4. Analyze traditional arguments both for and against the existence of miracles. 5. Evaluate the differing viewpoints concerning the appropriate interpretation of divine inspiration of scripture. 6. Examine the problem of evil, and critique the various theistic defenses that have been offered in response to it. 7. Explain and describe the phenomenon of mysticism, and recognize particular examples of it in various religious traditions and literary sources throughout the world. 8. Discuss and evaluate proposed attempts to reconcile apparent differences between the doctrines, dogmas, and practices of major religions throughout the	

	world. 9. Evaluate the dominant themes and issues in religious philosophy. 10. Analyze the philosophical problems relating to religion. 11. Recognize and evaluate the degree of certainty that it is possible to achieve regarding religious metaphysical claims. 12. Identify and discuss the metaphysical beliefs of the existence of God, souls, heaven and hell, reincarnation, karma, merging with the all, and another reality. 13. Recognize and evaluate the motivations to believe in an all-good God, and distinguish these from arguments or reasons regarding why one should believe in God. 14. Assess the concept of faith, distinguish faith from fact, and analyze how this understanding moves one toward an attitude of tolerance.
Major Topics:	I. Symbolic and Literal Uses of Language (5 hours, lecture) A. Definitions and Examples of Linguistic Phenomena 1. Analogy 2. Metaphor 3. Simile 4. Allegory 5. Parable 6. Model 7. Myth B. Recognition and Interpretation of Linguistic Uses in Religious and Secular Contexts II. Alleged Conflicts Between Science and Religion (6 hours, lecture) A. Causes and Reasons B. Proposed Solutions C. Critiques of Proposed Solutions D. Miracles 1. A Suspension of Natural Universal Laws

2. Hume's Critique of Miracles

III. Motivations to Believe in God (2 hours, lecture)

A. For Ultimate Justice

B. For the Hardships in Life

C. To Give Purpose to Humans

D. As a Basis for Morality

E. For Hope

F. To Explain the Unexplainable

1. Historically

2. Pre-Modern Science

G. To Temper the Thought of Death as Scary and Depressing

IV. Traditional Arguments For God's Existence: The Ontological and Moral Arguments, and Problems Surrounding These Arguments (6 hours, lecture)

A. The Ontological Argument

1. The Argument

2. Strengths and Weaknesses

3. Kant's Critique

B. Moral Argument

V. Traditional Arguments For God's Existence: The Cosmological and Teleological Arguments, and Problems Surrounding These Arguments (8 hours, lecture)

A. The Cosmological Argument

1. Thomistic

2. Kalam Cosmological Argument

3. Strengths and Weaknesses

4. Ockham's Razor

B. Teleological/Design Argument

1. Creationism Versus Evolution

2. Hume's and Dawkins' Critiques

VI. Traditional Arguments For God's Existence: Religious Experience and Argument From Scripture, and Problems Surrounding These Arguments (6 hours, lecture)

A. Argument from Religious Experience

1. The Argument
2. Strengths and Weaknesses

B. Argument from Scripture

1. Meaning of Divine Inspiration of Scripture
2. Nature, Evidence, Possibility, and Probability of Miracles

VII. An Argument Against God's Existence: The Problem of Evil (6 hours, lecture)

A. The Problem

B. Theist Defenses

C. Responses to Defenses

VIII. Fideism (2 hours, lecture)

A. Pascal's Wager

B. William James

IX. Mysticism (4 hours, lecture)

A. The Psychology of Mysticism

B. The Philosophy of Mysticism

1. Thought as Symbol
2. The Nature of Meaning

C. Evaluation of Mystical Claims

X. Other Religious Metaphysical Claims (5 hours, lecture)

A. Souls

B. Heaven and Hell

C. Karma

D. Reincarnation

	E. Merging with the All: Moksha or Nirvana F. An Underlying Reality XI. Religious Pluralism (2 hours, lecture) A. Exclusivism B. Inclusivism XII. Faith and Tolerance (2 hours, lecture) A. Faith Versus Fact B. The Uncertainty of Religious Claims Leads to Tolerance
Total Lecture Hours:	54
Total Laboratory Hours:	0
Total Hours:	54
A.1. Primary Methods of Evaluation (Part 1 - CCN courses only):	
A.2. Primary Method of Evaluation (Part 2 - all courses; choose one):	1) Substantial writing assignments
Typical Assignment Using Primary Method of Evaluation:	Read the chapter in your text on the problem of evil. In a three- to five-page essay, explain why or why not any feasible theistic answer to the problem of evil must rely somehow on a <i>greater-good</i> line of reasoning.
Critical Thinking Assignment 1:	In a three- to five-page essay, describe and analyze the similarities and differences between the two versions of the cosmological argument. Next, take one of the two versions, note its critical premises, and give an argument for or against those premises.
Critical Thinking Assignment 2:	In a three- to five-page essay, choose an argument for or against God's existence. Explain, evaluate, and defend your position.
Other Evaluation Methods:	Essay Exams, Multiple Choice, Term or Other Papers, True/False, Written Homework
Instructional Methods:	Discussion, Lecture, Multimedia presentations
If other:	
Work Outside of Class:	Answer questions, Required reading, Study, Written work (such as essay/composition/report/analysis/research)
If Other:	
Up-To-Date Representative Texts:	Michael L. Peterson, Raymond J. Vanarragon. Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Religion. 2nd ed. Wiley Blackwell, 2019. (Discipline standard)

	Lois P. Pojman, Michael Rea. <i>Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology</i>. 7th ed. Cengage Learning, 2014. (Discipline standard) Steven M. Cahn. <i>Exploring Philosophy of Religion: An Introductory Anthology</i>. 2nd ed. Oxford University Press, 2015. (Discipline standard) Jeffrey K. McDonough. <i>Saints, Heretics, and Atheists: A Historical Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion</i>. 1st ed. Oxford University Press, 2022.
Alternative Texts:	
Required Supplementary Readings:	Huston Smith. <i>The World's Religions</i> revised and updated ed. Harper Collins, 1991. (Discipline Standard) Philip Novak. <i>The World's Wisdom: Sacred Texts of the World's Religions</i>. Harper San Francisco. 1995. (Discipline Standard) Gregory Paul. <i>Theodicy's Problem: A Statistical Look at the Holocaust of the Children, and the Implications of Natural Evil for the Free Will and the Best of All Worlds Hypotheses</i>. <i>Philosophy & Theology</i> 19, (1/2): 125-149 (2007) (Discipline Standard)
Other Required Materials:	
Requisite:	
Category:	
Requisite course(s): List both prerequisites and corequisites in this box.	
Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).	
Requisite Skill:	
Requisite Skill and Matching Skill(s): Bold the requisite skill(s). If applicable	
Requisite course:	
Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).	
Requisite Skill:	Eligibility for ENGL C1000
Requisite Skill and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding	This course involves reading college level textbooks, developing projects, and answering essay questions. A student's success in this class will be enhanced if they have these skills.

course objective under each skill(s). If applicable	Summarize, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize college-level texts. Write a well-reasoned, well-supported expository essay that demonstrates application of the academic writing process.
Enrollment Limitations and Category:	
Enrollment Limitations Impact:	
Course Created by:	Paul Shepard
Date:	02/01/1963
Original Board Approval Date:	
Last Reviewed and/or Revised by:	Roberto Garcia
Date:	09/26/2025
Last Board Approval Date:	12/16/2025
Effective Term:	FA 2026