



**I. GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION**

**Subject and Number:** Philosophy 107  
**Descriptive Title:** Philosophy of Religion  
**Course Disciplines:** Philosophy  
**Division:** Behavioral and Social Sciences

**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.

**Conditions of Enrollment:**

**Recommended Preparation:** English 1 or eligibility for English 1A or qualification by appropriate assessment

<b>Course Length:</b>	<b>X Full Term</b>	<b>Other (Specify number of weeks):</b>
<b>Hours Lecture:</b>	<b>3.00 hours per week</b>	<b>TBA</b>
<b>Hours Laboratory:</b>	<b>0 hours per week</b>	<b>TBA</b>
<b>Course Units:</b>	<b>3.00</b>	

**Grading Method:** Letter  
**Credit Status:** Associate Degree Credit

**Transfer CSU:** X Effective Date: Prior to July 1992  
**Transfer UC:** X Effective Date: Prior to July 1992

**General Education:**

**El Camino College:**  
**3 – Humanities**  
 Term: Other: Approved

**CSU GE:**  
**C2 - Humanities**  
 Term: Other: Approved

**IGETC:**  
**3B - Humanities**  
 Term: Fall 1991 Other:

## II. OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

### A. COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (The course student learning outcomes are listed below, along with a representative assessment method for each. Student learning outcomes are not subject to review, revision or approval by the College Curriculum Committee)

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.
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.
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.

The above SLOs were the most recent available SLOs at the time of course review. For the most current SLO statements, visit the El Camino College SLO webpage at <http://www.elcamino.edu/academics/slo/>.

### B. Course Student Learning Objectives (The major learning objective for students enrolled in this course are listed below, along with a representative assessment method for each)

1. Recognize and explain the difference between the literal and metaphorical use of language occurring in religious discourse and texts.
  - Essay exams
2. Identify and discuss the main areas of philosophical conflict that presently exist between religion and science.
  - Essay exams
3. State, analyze, and assess traditional arguments both for and against the existence of God.
  - Essay exams
4. Analyze traditional arguments both for and against the existence of miracles.
  - Essay exams
5. Evaluate the differing viewpoints concerning the appropriate interpretation of divine inspiration of scripture.
  - Essay exams
6. Examine the problem of evil, and critique the various theistic defenses that have been offered in response to it.
  - Essay exams
7. Explain and describe the phenomenon of mysticism, and recognize particular examples of it in various religious traditions and literary sources throughout the world.
  - Essay exams
8. Discuss and evaluate proposed attempts to reconcile apparent differences between the doctrines, dogmas, and practices of major religions throughout the world.
  - Essay exams
9. Evaluate the dominant themes and issues in religious philosophy.
  - Essay exams
10. Analyze the philosophical problems relating to religion.
  - Essay exams
11. Recognize and evaluate the degree of certainty that it is possible to achieve regarding religious metaphysical claims.
  - Essay exams

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.
  - Essay exams
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.
  - Essay exams
14. Assess the concept of faith, distinguish faith from fact, and analyze how this understanding moves one toward an attitude of tolerance.
  - Essay exams

**III. OUTLINE OF SUBJECT MATTER (Topics are detailed enough to enable a qualified instructor to determine the major areas that should be covered as well as ensure consistency from instructor to instructor and semester to semester.)**

Lecture or Lab	Approximate Hours	Topic Number	Major Topic
Lecture	5	I	Symbolic and Literal Uses of Language 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
Lecture	6	II	Alleged Conflicts Between Science and Religion 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
Lecture	2	III	Motivations to Believe in God 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
Lecture	6	IV	Traditional Arguments For God's Existence: The Ontological and Moral Arguments, and Problems Surrounding These Arguments A. The Ontological Argument 1. The Argument 2. Strengths and Weaknesses

			3. Kant's Critique B. Moral Argument
Lecture	8	V	Traditional Arguments For God's Existence: The Cosmological and Teleological Arguments, and Problems Surrounding These Arguments 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
Lecture	6	VI	Traditional Arguments For God's Existence: Religious Experience and Argument From Scripture, and Problems Surrounding These Arguments 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
Lecture	6	VII	An Argument Against God's Existence: The Problem of Evil A. The Problem B. Theist Defenses C. Responses to Defenses
Lecture	2	VIII	Fideism A. Pascal's Wager B. William James
Lecture	4	IX	Mysticism A. The Psychology of Mysticism B. The Philosophy of Mysticism 1. Thought as Symbol 2. The Nature of Meaning C. Evaluation of Mystical Claims
Lecture	5	X	Other Religious Metaphysical Claims A. Souls B. Heaven and Hell C. Karma D. Reincarnation E. Merging with the All: Moksha or Nirvana F. An Underlying Reality
Lecture	2	XI	Religious Pluralism A. Exclusivism B. Inclusivism
Lecture	2	XII	Faith and Tolerance A. Faith Versus Fact B. The Uncertainty of Religious Claims Leads to Tolerance

<b>Total Lecture Hours</b>	54
<b>Total Laboratory Hours</b>	0
<b>Total Hours</b>	54

#### IV. PRIMARY METHOD OF EVALUATION AND SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

##### A. PRIMARY METHOD OF EVALUATION:

Substantial writing assignments

##### B. 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 *greater-good* line of reasoning.

##### C. COLLEGE-LEVEL CRITICAL THINKING ASSIGNMENTS:

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.
2. In a three- to five-page essay, choose an argument for or against God's existence. Explain, evaluate, and defend your position.

##### D. OTHER TYPICAL ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION METHODS:

Essay exams  
Written homework  
Term or other papers  
Multiple Choice  
True/False

#### V. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Discussion  
Lecture  
Multimedia presentations

**Note: In compliance with Board Policies 1600 and 3410, Title 5 California Code of Regulations, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Sections 504 and 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act, instruction delivery shall provide access, full inclusion, and effective communication for students with disabilities.**

#### VI. WORK OUTSIDE OF CLASS

Study  
Answer questions  
Required reading  
Written work

**Estimated Independent Study Hours per Week: 6**

**VII. TEXTS AND MATERIALS**

**A. UP-TO-DATE REPRESENTATIVE TEXTBOOKS**

Michael L. Peterson, Raymond J. Vanarragon. Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Religion. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Wiley Blackwell, 2019.  
 Lois P. Pojman, Michael Rea. Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Cengage Learning, 2014.  
 Steven M. Cahn. Exploring Philosophy of Religion: An Introductory Anthology. Oxford University Press, 2009.

**B. ALTERNATIVE TEXTBOOKS**

**C. REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS**

Huston Smith. The World’s Religions revised and updated ed. Harper Collins, 1991.  
 Philip Novak. The World’s Wisdom: Sacred Texts of the World’s Religions. Harper San Francisco. 1995.  
 Gregory Paul. 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. Philosophy & Theology 19, (1/2): 125-149 (2007)

**D. OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS**

**VIII. CONDITIONS OF ENROLLMENT**

**A. Requisites (Course and Non-Course Prerequisites and Corequisites)**

Requisites	Category and Justification
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**B. Requisite Skills**

Requisite Skills
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**C. Recommended Preparations (Course and Non-Course)**

Recommended Preparation	Category and Justification
English 1	Category: Course Justification: This course involves reading college level textbooks, articles, and primary sources for written homework, term papers, and essay questions. A student’s success in this class will be enhanced if they have these skills.
Eligibility for English 1A or qualification by appropriate assessment	Category: Non-Course Justification: This course involves reading college level textbooks, articles, and primary source documents for written homework, term papers, and essay questions. A student’s success in this class will be enhanced if they have these skills.

**D. Recommended Skills**

Recommended Skills
Students need well-developed reading skills in order to understand and interpret information in their textbooks and writing skills to develop term papers, essay exams, and written homework.
ENGL 1 – Summarize, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize college-level texts.
ENGL 1 – Write a well-reasoned, well-supported expository essay that demonstrates application of the academic writing process.

**E. Enrollment Limitations**

<b>Enrollment Limitations and Category</b>	<b>Enrollment Limitations Impact</b>
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**Course created by Paul Shepard on 02/01/1963.**

**BOARD APPROVAL DATE:**

**LAST BOARD APPROVAL DATE: 11/18/2019**

**Last Reviewed and/or Revised by: Randy Firestone  
18057**

**Date: 9/26/2019**