

PHIL2030: Philosophy of Religion

Online

Semester 1 - 2024



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

The School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Sciences is committed to providing an inclusive environment in which all cultures are accorded respect and all students and staff are expected to act with honesty, fairness, trustworthiness and accountability in dealings with others. The School recognises and respects the unique histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their unbroken relationship with the lands and the waters of Australia over millennia, and the validity of Aboriginal ways of knowing. We are dedicated to reconciliation and to offering opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to access and succeed in higher education.

OVERVIEW

Course Description	The course examines a number of issues in philosophy of religion which came to the fore in the ancient, medieval, early modern, enlightenment, and later periods. Topics to be discussed may include proofs for the existence of God, various conceptions of transcendence, the nature of the self, the concept of religion, and the relation between religious and scientific forms of inquiry. Diverse philosophical movements will be explored such as Platonism, Aristotelianism, phenomenology, existentialism, and hermeneutics.
Academic Progress Requirements	Nil
Requisites	This course replaces PHIL3030. If you have successfully completed PHIL3030 you cannot enrol in this course.
Contact Hours	Online Lecture Online 2 hours per week for 12 weeks
Unit Weighting	10
Workload	Students are required to spend on average 120-140 hours of effort (contact and non-contact) including assessments per 10 unit course.

CONTACTS

Course Coordinator	Online Dr Timothy Stanley timothy.stanley@newcastle.edu.au (02) 4921 7927 Consultation times can be booked on my Outlook booking page .
Teaching Staff	Other teaching staff will be advised on the course website.
School Office	School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Sciences Social Sciences Building, Callaghan HCISS@newcastle.edu.au 02 4985 4500

COURSE OUTLINE

SYLLABUS

Course Content

Each week will focus on interpreting the texts, examining the philosophical issues, discussing how the historical context helps shape the issues, and indicating the contemporary relevance of the matters discussed. Thinkers to be considered may include Aurelius Augustine, Avicenna, Moses Maimonides, Anselm, René Descartes, Immanuel Kant, G.W.F. Hegel, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Sigmund Freud.

Course Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Evaluate the main issues addressed and approaches taken by philosophers with respect to religion;
2. Apply critical skills to interact with these issues in their historical forms and assess their relevance to contemporary philosophical discussion of these matters;
3. Analyse the historical contexts that help generate but not exhaust the ways in which an issue can appear and reappear in the history of philosophy;
4. Demonstrate writing, research and information technology skills appropriate to studies of philosophy, religion, and the history of ideas.

Course Materials

The course studies philosophy of religion with reference to a diverse range of thinkers. Weekly materials analyse their works to model student success in assessments due throughout the course. For instance, the week one lecture on Augustine explicates his primary written works as well as introduces secondary commentary on his impact upon subsequent scholarly debate. The course interacts with written texts akin to a lab space designed to explore the history of ideas. Historical context fosters critical perspective to reconsider contemporary challenges. Studying philosophy in this way aims to foster cognitive empathy for different viewpoints with the capacity to see religion through the eyes of others.

All materials and interactive feedback on student writing will be provided on the website canvas.newcastle.edu.au. Unless otherwise noted, the readings listed below are linked to the university library's digital holdings of the five-volume Philosophy of Religion series edited by Graham Oppy and Nick Trakakis, which covers the Ancient, Medieval, Early Modern, Nineteenth-Century and Twentieth-Century periods.

SCHEDULE

Part I: Sources of the Self

Week 1 – Introduction [APR, vol. 1](#), Ch. 1 – Augustine (354-430), [APR, vol. 1](#), Ch. 18

Week 2 – Avicenna (c. 980-1037), [MPR, vol. 2](#), Ch. 5

Week 3 – Anselm (1033-1109), [MPR, vol. 2](#), Ch. 6

Part II: The Limits of Language

Week 4 – Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) Ch. 2 in Andrea Dickens, [The Female Mystic: Great Women Thinkers of the Middle Ages](#)

Week 5 – Maimonides (1135-1204), [MPR, vol. 2](#), Ch. 11

Week 6 – Aquinas (1225-1274) [MPR, vol. 2](#), Ch. 13

Part III: After the Sublime

Week 7 – Kant (1724-1804), [EMPR, vol. 3](#), Ch. 21

Week 8 – Schleiermacher (1770-1831) [NCPR, vol. 4](#), Ch. 3

Week 9 – Kierkegaard (1813-1855) [NCPR, vol. 4](#), Ch. 13

Part IV: Transcendence (Again)

Week 10 – Buber (1878-1965) [TCPR vol. 5](#), Ch. 8

Week 11 – Weil (1909-1943) [TCPR vol. 5](#), Ch. 16

Week 12 – Derrida (1930-2004) [TCPR vol. 5](#), Ch. 21

ASSESSMENTS

This course has 3 assessments. Each assessment is described in more detail in the sections below.

	Assessment Name	Due Date	Involvement	Weighting	Learning Outcomes
1	Essay One	5pm Mon 8 April	Individual	35%	1, 2, 3, 4
2	Essay Two	5pm Mon 3 June	Individual	35%	1, 2, 3, 4
3	Online Learning Task	5pm Mon 18 Mar and 13 May	Individual	30% (2x15%)	1, 2, 3, 4

Late Submissions The mark for an assessment item submitted after the designated time on the due date, without an approved extension of time, will be reduced by 10% of the possible maximum mark for that assessment item for each day or part day that the assessment item is late. Note: this applies equally to week and weekend days.

Assessment 1 – 1500 Word Essay One 35%

Assessment Type	Essay
Description	This task requires students to conduct research into scholarly primary and secondary sources and draw upon their findings to present an argument in essay form. For the first essay students should choose one of the thinkers discussed in weeks 1-6. Further advice, readings and examples will be provided in each lecture and at canvas.newcastle.edu.au .
Weighting	35% contribution to your final grade.
Length	1500 Words (+/-10%)
Due Date	5pm Mon 8 April
Submission Method	Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au
Assessment Criteria	Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au
Return Method	Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au
Feedback Provided	Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au
Referencing Style	Chicago author-date: chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html

Assessment 2 – 1500 Word Essay Two 35%

Assessment Type	Essay
Description	This task requires students to conduct research into scholarly primary and secondary sources and draw upon their findings to present an argument in essay form. For the second essay students should choose one of the thinkers discussed in weeks 7-12. Further advice, readings and examples will be provided in each lecture and at canvas.newcastle.edu.au .
Weighting	35% contribution to your final grade.
Length	1500 Words (+/-10%)
Due Date	5pm Mon 3 June
Submission Method	Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au
Assessment Criteria	Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au
Return Method	Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au
Feedback Provided	Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au
Referencing Style	Chicago author-date: chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html

Assessment 3 – 2x500 Word Online Learning Task 30% (2x15%)

Assessment Type	Online Learning Task (Discussion)
Description	Two online learning tasks will be structured as discussions where students demonstrate knowledge of topics and readings covered in weeks 1-3 and 7-9. You must post at least one response to the discussion topic provided at canvas.newcastle.edu.au . Posts should reflect knowledge of the required readings and cite page-numbered references. As well, you must post at least one response to another student's post. All posts must add up to 500 words.
Weighting	30% (2x15%) contribution to your final grade.
Length	2 x 500 word discussions (+/-10%)
Due Dates	5pm on Mon 18 March and 13 May
Submission Method	Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au
Assessment Criteria	Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au
Return Method	Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au
Feedback Provided	Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au
Referencing Style	Chicago author-date: chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Grading Scheme

Specific rubrics used to mark assessments will be provided on the course website. A general indication of grading bands is included here.

*Skills are those identified for the purposes of assessment task(s).

Range of Marks	Grade	Description
85-100	High Distinction (HD)	Outstanding standard indicating comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an outstanding level of academic ability; mastery of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
75-84	Distinction (D)	Excellent standard indicating a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a very high level of academic ability; sound development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
65-74	Credit (C)	Very Good standard indicating a high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a high level of academic ability; reasonable development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
50-64	Pass (P)	Satisfactory standard indicating an adequate knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an adequate level of academic ability; satisfactory development of skills*; and achievement of most assessment objectives.
0-49	Fail (FF)	Failure to satisfactorily achieve assessment objectives or compulsory course requirements. A fail grade may also be awarded following disciplinary action.

Communication Methods

Communication methods used in this course include the Canvas course site and email via university accounts.

Course Evaluation

Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the University for the purposes of identifying areas of excellence and potential improvement. Constructive comments are always welcome.

Oral Interviews (Vivas)

As part of the evaluation process of any assessment item in this course an oral examination may be conducted. The purpose of the oral examination is to verify the authorship of the material submitted in response to the assessment task. The oral examination will be conducted in accordance with the principles set out in the [Oral Examination Guidelines](#). In cases where the oral examination reveals the assessment item may not be the student's own work the case will be dealt with under the [Student Conduct Rule](#).

Academic Misconduct

All students are required to meet the academic integrity standards of the University. These standards reinforce the importance of integrity and honesty in an academic environment. Academic Integrity policies apply to all students of the University in all modes of study and in all locations. For the Student Academic Integrity policy, refer to <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=35>.

Adverse Circumstances

The University acknowledges the right of students to seek consideration for the impact of allowable adverse circumstances that may affect their performance in assessment item(s). Applications for special consideration due to adverse circumstances will be made using the online Adverse Circumstances system where: 1) the assessment item is a major assessment item; or 2) the assessment item is a minor assessment item and the Course Co-ordinator has specified in the Course Outline that students may apply the online Adverse Circumstances system; 3) you are requesting a change of placement; or 4) the course has a compulsory attendance requirement. Before applying you must refer to the Adverse Circumstance Affecting Assessment Items Procedure available at: <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=236>.

Important Policy Information

The Help button in the Canvas Navigation menu contains helpful information for using the Learning Management System. Students should familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures at <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-students/no-room-for/policies-and-procedures> that support a safe and respectful environment at the University.

This course outline was approved by the Head of School. No alteration of this course outline is permitted without Head of School approval. If a change is approved, students will be notified and an amended course outline will be provided in the same manner as the original. © 2024 The University of Newcastle, Australia.