

**PHIL 2601/RELI 2738 Philosophy of Religion**  
**Carleton University**

**Term:** Fall 2025

**Time:** Fridays 8:30 AM to 11:30 AM

**Instructor:** Philippe-Antoine Hoyerck

**TA:** Corey Mckibbin

**Office:** PA 3156

**Office hours:** Fridays 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

**Email:** [PhilippeAntoin.Hoyerck@carleton.ca](mailto:PhilippeAntoin.Hoyerck@carleton.ca)

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**Course Description**

A study of philosophical issues arising from religion. Topics may include: arguments for and against the existence of God, religious experience, death and the afterlife, miracles, God and evil, the relationship between religion and science, and the relationship between religion and ethics. Please note that taking this course as PHIL 2601 precludes receiving additional credit for it as RELI 2738 and vice-versa.

**Learning Outcomes**

This course will have two broad objectives. The first will be to familiarize students with the most influential questions, arguments, and debates in Western philosophy of religion from antiquity to the present day. We will consider enduring debates about the existence of God, about the relationship between religion and the good life, and about the nature and rationality of religious belief.

The second objective will be to get students to think critically about these debates. We will place a special emphasis on reconstructing arguments by identifying their premises and conclusions as well as on evaluating the strength of said arguments by considering objections and replies. No prior familiarity with philosophy is required.

**Course Discussion Disclaimer**

In this class we will be reading, thinking about, and discussing controversial ideas. If you choose to stay enrolled in the class, then you are consenting to be exposed to ideas that may make you uncomfortable. Doing philosophy is all about examining and challenging the assumptions, deeply held beliefs, and even the way of life that we and others take for granted to see whether they are well founded. If we aren't doing that, we aren't doing philosophy.

Philosophy is done dialectically, that is, in conversation with others. To do this effectively, we must adhere to some ground rules. First, all must be welcome to express their thoughts freely even if they are unpopular. Second, all must be respectful in engaging in conversation. We are here to examine and challenge ideas, not to critique individuals. Both rules are necessary for fostering a productive learning environment in the classroom.

**Course Materials**

All readings for this course will take the form of journal articles, book chapters, and excerpts from larger works. They will all be available online for free via the MacOdrum Library website. Students do not need to purchase any books or course packs for this course.

**Course Requirements**

Attendance in this class is mandatory. Although attendance is not graded directly, evaluations will primarily be on material covered in the lectures. It is therefore virtually impossible to pass this course without attending the

lectures. Students are expected to come to class regularly and to keep up with course materials. Students who miss class are expected to catch up by obtaining notes from a classmate.

### **Evaluations:**

Test #1 (Sept 26, 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of lecture)	25%
Test #2 (Oct 31, 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of lecture)	25%
Final exam	30%
Online Practice Quizzes (x12)	20%

### **Course Policies**

1. While in the classroom, electronic devices are to be used *solely* for course-related purposes like taking notes and accessing readings. Cell phones are to be put away at all times. This is to avoid distracting other students and the instructor.
2. The instructor reserves the right to change the content in the course outline, including readings, as well as the order in which it is presented. Students will always be notified ahead of time in the event of a change.
3. Students have the responsibility to inform the instructor in a timely manner—ideally ahead of time—if they must miss an evaluation. Adequate documentation may be required depending on a student's reasons for missing the evaluation.
4. No make-up work will be assigned to supplement the course evaluations under any circumstances and no evaluations will be reweighed under any circumstances. However, alternate evaluations will be provided to students who miss evaluations for good reasons.

## **Tentative Course Calendar**

Sept 5            **Course Introduction**

### **I. Arguments for God**

Sept 12            **Does the Appearance of Design Show There's a God?**

Sept 19            **Does the Existence of the Universe Show There's a God?**

Sept 26            **Does the Very Idea of God Show There's a God?**

### **II. Arguments for Atheism**

Oct 3:            **Can a Good God Allow Suffering?**

Oct 10:           **Don't Theists Have the Burden of Proof?**

### **III. Religion and the Good Life**

Oct 17:        **Do We Need God to Be Good?**

Oct 31:        **Is There Life After Death?**

Nov 7:         **Can We Be Free if the Future is Predetermined?**

### **IV. Religious Belief**

Nov 14:       **Is it Rational to Believe in Miracles?**

Nov 21:       **Is it Wrong to Believe with Insufficient Evidence?**

Nov 28:       **Why One Religion and Not Another?**

## **Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2025-26)**

### **Assignments:**

Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically. We no longer allow hard copies to be placed in the department's essay box.

### **Evaluation:**

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

### **Deferrals for Term Work:**

If students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, they should contact their course instructor no later than three working days of the due date. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of the term. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

### **Deferrals for Final Exams:**

Students are expected to be available for the duration of a course including the examination period. Occasionally, students encounter circumstances beyond their control where they may not be able to write a final examination or submit a take-home examination. Examples of this would be a serious illness or the death of a family member. If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a take-home examination by the due date, you may apply for a deferral no later than three working days after the original due date (as per the University Regulations in Section 4.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar). Visit the Registrar's Office for further information.

### **Plagiarism:**

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. (Section 10.1 of the Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations)

### **Academic Accommodation:**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term:

- **Pregnancy or religious obligation:** write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the EIC website.
- **Academic accommodations for students with disabilities:** The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class test or exam requiring accommodation. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.
- **Survivors of Sexual Violence:** As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy.

- **Accommodation for Student Activities:** Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

### **Important Dates:**

Sept. 3	Classes start.
Sept. 16	Last day for registration and course changes for fall term and fall/winter (two-term) courses.
Sept. 30	day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from fall term or two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Oct. 13	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 20-24	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 21	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, before the official examination period.
Dec. 5	Last day of fall term classes. Classes follow a Monday schedule. Last day for academic withdrawal from fall term courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for a fall term course.
Dec. 6-7	No classes or examinations take place.
Dec. 8-20	Final examinations for fall term courses and mid-term examinations in two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 20	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 5	Classes begin.
Jan. 16	Last day for registration and course changes in the winter term.
Jan. 31	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter term courses or from the winter portion of two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Feb. 16	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 16-20	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 15	Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter courses.
Mar. 25	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in winter term or fall/winter courses before the official examination period.
Apr. 3	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 8	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. Classes follow a Friday schedule. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for winter term courses.
Apr. 9-10	No classes or examinations take place.
Apr. 11-23	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 23	All take-home examinations are due.

### **Addresses:**

Department of Philosophy:  
[www.carleton.ca/philosophy](http://www.carleton.ca/philosophy)  
 520-2110

**Registrar's Office:**

[www.carleton.ca/registrar](http://www.carleton.ca/registrar)  
520-3500

**Academic Advising Centre:**

[www.carleton.ca/academicadvising](http://www.carleton.ca/academicadvising)  
520-7850

**Writing Services:**

<https://carleton.ca/csas/support/>  
520-3822

**MacOdrum Library**

<http://www.library.carleton.ca/>  
520-2735