

COURSE OUTLINE: PHIL 2601A / RELI 2738A

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Winter 2022: Mondays-Wednesdays, 2:35 PM – 3:55 PM, Online Blended

Professor M. Frankel

Office: Paterson Hall 3A53 – but for Winter 2022, my “office” will be virtual

Office Hours: online (see Brightspace for the link); time TBA

Email: Melissa.frankel@carleton.ca, or through Brightspace

General course description (from the Undergraduate Calendar):

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.

Prerequisite(s): a course in philosophy or second-year standing.

Course description for Winter 2022:

We will cover the following topics this semester (this list is subject to revision and expansion):

God's existence

In this course, we will take neither theism nor atheism as a starting point, but rather, will begin by critically examining arguments both for and against the existence of God. We will also discuss whether arguments are sufficient or even necessary for belief in the existence of God in the first place. Do most people believe that God exists on the basis of an argument? Should they?

Divine attributes

We will discuss the various attributes that God is supposed to have, including omnipotence, omniscience, and benevolence. We will address such questions as: what does it mean to say that God is omnipotent? Can God be omniscient and still allow for human free will? Are God's attributes consistent with one another – can one and the same Being have all of the attributes that God is supposed to have? Does it even make sense for humans to attribute attributes to God at all, or should we simply refrain from doing so?

The problem of evil

The divine attribute that we will discuss at greatest length is benevolence. A recurring question in the philosophy of religion is whether or not it is possible for God to be good, given the existence of evil. In fact, some people have taken the existence of evil as a definitive argument against the existence of God. We will look at various versions of the problem of evil, as well as theistic attempts to solve the problem.

Required text:

Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings, fifth edition, ed. Michael Peterson, William Hasker, Bruce Reichenbach, and David Basinger (Oxford University Press, 2014)

You can find the textbook at the Carleton Bookstore. It is also available online, through booksellers like amazon.ca. (You'll want to do some price comparisons...)

Please note: you may come across a *fourth* edition of the textbook (from 2009) that is also readily available, e.g., through these online bookstores. The fourth edition contains many but not all of the same readings that we'll be doing for this course, so please be sure to purchase the fifth edition. If you decide to purchase the fourth edition, you will need to find a way to access the readings that are in the fifth edition as well.

Technology requirements:

This course will be a blended course. Although many elements of the course will be asynchronous – they will be available online, for students to work through at a time of their choosing during a given week – **some elements of the course will be synchronous:** I will expect you to complete them live, during regularly scheduled course hours, that is, Mondays or Wednesdays from 2:35 PM to 3:55 PM, Eastern time. These will include both Zoom meetings as well as tests that will be available through Brightspace only during the designated class times.

For both the synchronous and asynchronous elements of this course, you will need access to a computer or to some other device that allows you to access the internet. It will be helpful if this computer or alternative device also has a camera and microphone. You will need to be able to access Brightspace; you will also need a pdf reader to be able to read articles linked through Brightspace or Ares, which will sometimes be in pdf format. **In addition, since you will sometimes need to complete tests during class time through Brightspace, you will need to have steady internet access during those times.**

If you anticipate having any problems with technology or internet access, especially for the synchronous elements of the course, please email me as soon as possible so that we can discuss possible solutions.

Brightspace:

This course will be supported by Brightspace. It is important for you to regularly check the Brightspace page, because it is where you will find (among other things) the most up-to-date information regarding schedules of readings and dates for quizzes and tests, all of which are open for revision through the semester.

The Brightspace page for this course will be divided into weekly sections. In each of these weekly sections, you will find a list of the resources and activities that are meant to be either begun or completed during that week, as well as links to those resources and activities, if such links are needed. On a weekly basis this will include readings, lecture videos, and video questions (see evaluation section, below.) Sometimes this will also include Zoom links and tests.

Students will be fully responsible for reading and responding appropriately to all information distributed through Brightspace. Information provided on Brightspace will be considered to have been provided to all registered students within 24 hours of posting.

Schedules of readings:

You can find the readings for this course listed in the weekly sections on Brightspace. In each weekly section, the readings for that week will be clearly indicated, including page numbers from the textbook.

Sometimes I will assign readings that are not in the required textbook. When I do this, I will be sure to indicate it clearly, and will make the reading available either through a direct link on Brightspace or through the library reserves system, Ares, which is also linked on Brightspace. If you aren't sure where to find Ares, let me know.

Zoom meetings:

In this course, we will occasionally have synchronous online meetings, using Zoom. You will always be able to find the Zoom links on the Brightspace page for the course.

Zoom meetings for this course will be scheduled during regular class hours. You are expected to attend these meetings, but they will also be recorded. These recordings will be made available on Brightspace.

The first Zoom meeting for this class will take place on the first day of class (**Monday, January 10th**); you will find the link on Brightspace. Other than the first day of class, Zoom meetings will take place prior to tests; we may also meet by Zoom on the final day of class.

Tentative Zoom dates:

- **Monday, January 10th** at 2:35 PM Eastern (first class)
- **Monday, February 14th** at 2:35 PM Eastern (review for test 1)
- **Wednesday, March 23rd** at 2:35 PM Eastern (review for test 2)
- **Monday, April 11th** at 2:35 PM Eastern (final class)

Evaluation:

Here is a short breakdown of the evaluation structure for this course, followed by a more detailed breakdown:

(1) Short quizzes on video lectures (20%)

10 x short quizzes, each worth 2% of your final grade, due at the end of each month

(2) Midterm tests (50%)

2 x midterm tests to be completed synchronously online, each worth 25% of your final grade

(3) Final take-home test (30%)

1 x take-home exam, due at the end of exam period, worth 30% of your final grade

Detailed breakdown:

(1) Video lectures and questions (20%)

I will be uploading pre-recorded video lectures on a weekly basis. Typically, I will make videos available on Mondays at the beginning of the scheduled class time, but on occasion this may change; see Brightspace for the most updated schedules of lecture uploads.

Every week, ***including the very first week of the course, but excluding those weeks during which you have a test***, I will also upload a short quiz with a few questions on the material (typically 4-8; typically multiple choice or T/F questions) to make sure that you are following the content of the video lectures. Each week's questions will be worth a total of **2%** of your final grade; there will be ten sets of questions, for a total of **20%**.

Ideally, each set of questions should be answered during the week in which the video lectures associated with those questions are uploaded; this will allow you to stay on top of the course content. To allow for some flexibility, however, questions will remain open and available until the last day of each month in which those questions are assigned (other than the video questions for week 12, which will be due on the final day of classes.)

Tentative due dates for video questions:

- Questions from weeks 1-3, inclusive: due **Monday, Jan 31st**, 11:59 PM
- Questions from weeks 4-5, inclusive: due **Monday, Feb 28th**, 11:59 PM
- Questions from week 7-10, inclusive: due **Thursday, Mar 31st**, 11:59 PM
- Questions from week 12: due **Tuesday, Apr 12th**, 11:59 PM

(2) Midterm tests (50%)

There will be two **non-cumulative** online tests, based on the readings and the video lectures. Each of the tests will be worth **25%** of your final grade.

Tests will take place online (on Brightspace), during **regularly scheduled class times**. That is, tests will open at 2:35 PM Eastern time, and will close at 3:55 PM Eastern time. Each test will be comprised of a few (4 to 6) short essay-style questions. You are permitted to use the entire class period (1 hr 20 mins) to complete the test. Tests will be discussed further during our live class meetings, which will take place the class before each test.

Tests will be **open book**, since they are online; you are permitted to use your course textbook, as well as any notes you may have taken from the video lectures.

Note however that tests are **not open internet**: in other words, you are not permitted to use online resources for your answers. Use of online resources will be considered cheating. This includes use of Discord.

In addition, tests are **non-collaborative**: they must be the result of individual work.

Tentative test dates:

- Test 1: **Wednesday, February 16th** at 2:35 PM Eastern (covers material from weeks 1 through 5, inclusive)
- Test 2: **Monday, March 28th** at 2:35 PM Eastern (covers material from weeks 7 through 10, inclusive)

(3) Final exam (30%)

There will be one take-home examination, due at the end of final exam period (**Apr 28th, 2022.**) The exam will be *cumulative* and *non-collaborative*. It will be essay-based and will count towards **30%** of your final grade. You will receive more instructions about this final exam towards the end of the semester.

It is university policy that no student work may be accepted after April 28th, 2022. As such, I will not be accepting late take-homes, and no extensions will be granted. If you require extra time, you will need to obtain a deferral through the Registrar's Office. Please feel free to let me know if this is the case, as I will be glad to support you through the deferral process, if such support is desired.

Policies:

For Philosophy department and university policies, see the final page of this course outline.

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2021-22)

Assignments:

Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically. There will be NO hard copies placed in the essay box this coming year.

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 [EDC](#) 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 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. 8	Classes start.
Sept. 22	Last day for registration and course changes for fall term and fall/winter (two-term) courses.
Sept. 30	Last 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. 11	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 25-29	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 26	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. 10	Last day of fall term classes. <i>Classes follow a Monday schedule.</i> 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. 11-23	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. 23	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 10	Classes begin.
Jan. 24	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. 21	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 22-25	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 29	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. 12	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. <i>Classes follow a Friday schedule.</i> Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter 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 two-term and for winter term courses.
Apr. 13	No classes or examinations take place.
Apr. 14-28	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 15	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 28	All take-home examinations are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:
www.carleton.ca/philosophy
520-2110

Registrar's Office:
www.carleton.ca/registrar
520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:
www.carleton.ca/academicadvising
520-7850

Writing Services:
<http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>
520-3822

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