

**CARLETON
UNIVERSITY**

**PHIL 2601:
The Philosophy of
Religion**

**Course Syllabus
Fall Term 2018**

**Professor
Ken Ferguson**

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**Office Hours:
Wed/Fri:
10:00 – 11:00**

Class Time

**Wed/Fri:
8:35-9:55**

**Location:
TBA**

COURSE SUMMARY

Recently there has been an explosion of interest in religion in many different fields, including sociology, psychology, cognitive science, as well as philosophy and religious studies. If there is a difference between the way philosophy and other subjects approach the study religion, it is that philosophy is more normative; it does not merely describe religion but also seeks to evaluate it. We want to ask whether religious beliefs are true? Are there good reasons to believe that God exists? Should we believe in miracles? Should religious experience be seen as the actual perception of divine beings, or should they be explained away as psychological phenomenon? Is God's existence compatible with evil? Why would God remain hidden?

In addition to these core issues, we will also be exploring the relationship between religion and other areas of human culture. What is the relationship between religion and science? Do they conflict or complement each other? Is God's existence essential to ground morality? Does the meaning of life presuppose a religious outlook? What is the best approach to take in trying to explain religion? Is it an essential feature of human psychology? Does it perform some essential function in human societies? In addressing these and other issues, we will be reading selections from some of the foremost researchers in the field, including Plantinga, Swinburne, Dennett and others.

CLASS FORMAT

The emphasis in the course will be on reasoning, analysis and critical evaluation. The role of the Instructor will be to guide students through the readings, and to illustrate the processes of analysis, interpretation and criticism by repeated example in class. Although attendance will not be taken, students are fully responsible for any material missed due to absence.

REQUIRED TEXT

A course pack of readings with the title, *Philosophy 2601*, has been prepared by the Instructor. This course pack can only be purchased at **Haven Books**, located at 43 Seneca Street, Their phone number is: (613) 730-9888.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Midterm: There will be a midterm exam worth 30% of the final grade. The format for the midterm will be as follows: a week or two before the date of the midterm students will be given a list of questions; the instructor will then select some of these for students to answer on the midterm.

Term Paper: Students will be required to write a term paper worth 30% of the final grade. The paper will be 1500 -2000 words in length. It will not be a research paper but will consist of a critical discussion of some topic or issue central to the course. A list of topics, along with guidelines for writing the paper, will be available early in the semester.

Final Examination: There will be a final exam, worth 40% of the final grade, scheduled during the examination period. The format for the final will be similar to the midterm.

SHORT LIST OF TOPICS/ISSUES

- 1) Proving God's existence by reason alone
- 2) Is God necessary to explain the universe?
- 3) The argument from design
- 4) Pascal's Wager
- 5) Hume's argument against miracles
- 6) The nature of religious experience
- 7) Kierkegaard's leap of faith
- 8) The problem of evil
- 9) Is the concept of God coherent?
- 10) Do science and religion conflict?
- 11) Do souls exist?
- 12) Is there an afterlife?
- 13) Does morality depend on religion?
- 14) How is religion to be explained?

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2018-19)

Assignments:

Unless specifically told otherwise by their instructors, students:

- Must not use a plastic or cardboard cover or paper clips.
- Must staple the paper (there is a stapler on the essay box).
- Must include the following on the first page: student name and number; course name and number; instructor's name.
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates below.
- Assignments handed in through the essay box (just inside the glass doors, Paterson Hall, Floor 3A) must be dropped into the box by **4:15** on a regular business day in order to be date-stamped with that day's date. Assignments handed in after 4:15 or on a non-business day will be stamped as having been handed in on the next business day.
- Students are required to keep copies of their assignments. If your paper is lost at any point, you will be considered not to have submitted it if you cannot produce a copy immediately on request.

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 Final Exams:

If you miss a final examination (formally scheduled or take-home) because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral. You must apply within 3 working days after the scheduled date of your formally scheduled exam or within 3 working days after the due date of a take-home exam. Visit the Registrar's Office for more information: <http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv2/#2.5>

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. <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. carleton.ca/pmc

Pregnancy 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 Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

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 Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

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 is survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: students.carleton.ca/course-outline

Important Dates:

Sept. 5	Classes start.
Sept. 18	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. 8	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 22-26	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 23	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. 7	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. 9-21	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. 21	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 7	Classes begin.
Jan. 18	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. 18	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 18-22	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 26	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. 9	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. 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. 12-27	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 19-21	Statutory holiday. University closed. No examinations take place.
Apr. 27	All take-home examinations are due on this day.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:	3A35 Paterson Hall www.carleton.ca/philosophy 520-2110
Registrar's Office:	300 Tory www.carleton.ca/registrar 520-3500
Academic Advising Centre:	302 Tory www.carleton.ca/academicadvising 520-7850
Writing Services:	4 th Floor, Library http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/ 520-3822
MacOdrum Library	http://www.library.carleton.ca/ 520-2735

