

Philosophy of Religion  
PHIL 4303  
The University of Arkansas  
Professor Thomas Senor  
Fall 2008

Office: 318E Old Main  
Office Hours: Tuesday 2-3:30, Friday 2-3:30, and by appointment  
Office Phone: 575-5827  
Philosophy Dept. Phone: 575-3551  
Email: [senor@uark.edu](mailto:senor@uark.edu)  
Course Webpage: [comp.uark.edu/~senor/philrel08.html](http://comp.uark.edu/~senor/philrel08.html)

*Texts:*

Louis P. Pojman and Michael Rea, editors, *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*,  
Fifth Edition (Wadsworth Publishing Co., 2008)  
William Rowe, *Can God Be Free?* (Oxford, 2004)

For Graduate Students Only:

Thomas Flint, *Divine Providence: A Molinist Account* (Cornell, 2006)

Readings will be assigned on a week-to-week basis.

*Written Assignments:*

Undergrads: Three midterm exams (25% each), and a paper (25%). Caveat: If I determine that course readings are not being completed by the assigned day, I will begin giving pop quizzes that will be worth 15% of the course grade—the midterm exam and paper values will then be 20% with the final being worth 25%.

Grads: One midterm exam (20%), one book chapter presentation (10%), a final exam (35%), and a term paper (35%). Attendance at grad-student-only book discussion group is mandatory.

Make-up Exam Policy: Make-up exams will be given only when the following two conditions are met:

- i. The exam has been missed for a legitimate reason.
- ii. The person requesting the make-up exam has contacted me by the time of the exam to tell me that s/he will not be able to take the exam with the class.

*Course Objectives:*

The purpose of this course is to teach you to think philosophically about religious matters. “Thinking philosophically” here simply means “thinking clearly and (at least somewhat) deeply.” It is not the goal of the class to turn a nonbeliever into a believer or a believer into a nonbeliever. We will be reading the reflections of philosophers of various religious commitments (and lack thereof); we will see that there are exceptionally smart and well-educated people on all sides of these debates. What is needed from everyone is the ability and willingness to critically examine even their most cherished beliefs.

### *Course Content*

This course is not a comparative religions course. We will primarily be examining the philosophical issues that arise in the theistic conception of God (it is this conception that is at the heart of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). Among the topics we will be discussing are the following:

- a. arguments for the existence of God
- b. the attributes of God
- c. the relationship between faith and reason
- d. the problem of evil
- e. death and immortality
- f. freedom and creation

### *Classroom Conduct*

Good attendance is not an official requirement of this course, although it is highly recommended. When in class, I expect students to pay attention and I strongly recommend that you take good notes. That rules out chit-chatting with each other, sending text/Facebook messages, playing games/checking email on laptops, reading the newspaper, doing homework for other classes, etc. Seriously. If you can't engage in the content of this course for 80 minutes twice a week, you should drop this class. If on a given day you can't do it, you shouldn't come.

### *Academic Honesty Policy:*

I take academic honesty *very* seriously, and I will report to the Judicial Board any action that appears to me to be an instance of cheating. Actions that constitute cheating include (but are not exhausted by) the use of unauthorized aids during exams (that includes friends and neighbors and their exams) and unauthorized sources for take-home writing exams (should we have them). Furthermore, any source that you use when writing a paper, whether it is a journal article, book, or website, must be cited in the paper; and if you take an idea from a particular source (even if you don't use the exact same wording) you must credit that source with the idea in your paper. Finally, if I find that there is even a single sentence from your paper that is, word for word, on a website or in a book or journal, and you have failed to credit the author of the source for this sentence, I will take this as evidence of plagiarism.

### *Inclement Weather Policy:*

If the weather gets icy or snowy but the University of Arkansas is still open, you should call either the Philosophy Department office or my office phone to find out if our class will be meeting. Should neither our secretary nor I not be in to answer your question, I'll leave an outgoing message on my voicemail (on the x5827 number) telling you whether or not we will have class. If our class will not meet and I am able, I will send out an email to the class announcing the class's cancellation and post an announcement on the course webpage.