Instructor information: Stefan Sencerz, Ph.D.
Office: Faculty Center 261; phone 825-2392; hours: MW 2:00 – 3:15, 6:45-7:15, TR 3:15-5:00 and BA.
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Course description: We will start with the issues analyzed within the traditional western philosophy of religion. For example, what is the nature of God? Are there any good reasons to think that God exists? If God exists and is all-good, all-knowing, and all-powerful, how is it compatible with the existence of evil? Are there any important relationships between religion and morality? We will employ standard philosophical methods to arrive at reasoned answers to this kind of questions.
In the second part, we will explore issues related to religious pluralism as well as differences and similarities between some universal religions, such as Christianity, Buddhism, and so on.

There may be additional readings and handouts I will distribute in class and/or post on the web. Outlines posted on the web are intended primarily as aids to the understanding of the presentations and readings. They do not cover all of the material on which you may be tested, and they do not contain complete accounts of the topics they do cover. Merely memorizing the handouts will not enable you to pass the course.

Learning outcomes: Students taking the course will be expected to
1) demonstrate (on test questions) the understanding of concepts, principles, and theories related to the philosophy of religion and God;
2) apply those theories and principles to arguments studied by philosophers discussing argument related to the existence of God, relations between religion and ethics, and so on
3) develop their reasoning skills, and demonstrate that development on test questions;
4) construct and evaluate arguments in papers and essays.

Graded assignments: Two tests (2 x 25% = 50% of your overall grade.
20% -- attendance-participation, quizzes and homework (there will be 5-7 short quizzes and case studies testing your understanding of the assigned material; one worst grade will be dropped);
October 25 -- the first draft of term paper -- 10%
November 18 -- the final draft of the paper -- 20%
All grades will be assigned on the standard scale: 90%-100%=A, 80%-89%=B, 70%-79%=C, 60%-69%=D, 59% and below=F.

Course organization: Class meetings will consist of both presentations and discussions. I will make an honest effort to maximize the involvement of the students in class. Questions, discussions, disagreements and arguments is expected and strongly encouraged at any time. Thus, we will allow ourselves to spend more time on an issue if we think it deserves the attention.

Attendance and participation: All materials discussed in the lectures and covered in the readings are the potential basis for test and exam questions. Students are therefore expected to attend all class meetings and keep up with assigned readings. In general, if you don’t attend class or don’t read required texts, don’t expect to pass. You can miss 2 classes without penalty. Please use your free passes wisely. Each additional unexcused absence will result in the loss of credit you would have earned during that class. Except for the cases of demonstrable emergency I do not accept late work. However, in the cases of emergency, you can submit your work via e-mail.

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty: As a student at TAMU-CC, you are bound by the student code of conduct. Cheating, plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty is grounds for failing the course.

Freedom of speech and classroom etiquette: You are free to ask any question you please about the material. In many cases if you did not understand something, this is because it was not explained clearly to you, so you will be doing your colleagues and yourself a service if you request clarification. You are also free to argue for any position you find plausible, as long as you provide reasons for your point of view. It is inevitable that during discussions individual points of view will differ. When they do, our reaction will always be to patiently listen to the reasons
offered for a particular ethical conclusion and cooperatively evaluate those reasons.

**E-etiquette:** Please turn off all cell phones, pagers, etc. If your cell phone rings (or sings) during class, I will stop the lecture and answer it for you. If you feel the urge to text message or make a call, please leave the classroom and do not return (until next class). The lectures are for lecturing and discussion. Any student who disrupts a lecture by using a personal electronic device will be asked to leave.

**Academic Advising:** The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Grade appeal process:** Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, [cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html](http://cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

**The fine print:** For all matters concerning course withdrawal, appeal of grades, academic misconduct, etc, students are strongly advised to consult the rules outlined in the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Student Handbook and on the web at: [http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/](http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/).

**An incomplete** for the course is possible only in cases where course work is nearly complete, and the student has a good excuse for not completing the course work by the end of the semester.
TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE: This schedule is provisional and subject to change

W1 08/25 (R): Classes begin: organization and general introduction
The concept of religion

W2 08/30 The Idea of and the Attributes of God; What Does It Mean to Prove that God exists?
Readings: Rowe, Chapter 1

W3 09/06 The Cosmological Argument
Rowe, Chapter 2

W4 09/13 The Design Argument
Rowe, Chapter 4

W5 09/20 The Ontological Argument
Rowe, Chapter 3

W6 09/27 Religious and Mystical Experience
Rowe, Chapter 5

W7 10/04 Test #1 (25% of your grade)
Faith and Reason
Rowe, Chapter 6

W8 10/11 The Problem of Evil
Rowe, Chapter 7

W9 10/18 Miracles and the Modern World View
Rowe, Chapter 9

W10 10/25 A draft of the paper is due (10% of your grade)
Life after Death
Rowe, Chapter 10

W11 11/02 Predestination, Divine Foreknowledge, and Human Freedom
Rowe, Chapter 11

W12 11/09 Many Religions
Rowe, Chapter 12, John Hicks, TBA

W13 11/16 Eastern Religion and Philosophy
Reading TBA

11/22-25 Reading days, Thanksgiving Break

W14 11/29 The Final Draft of the Paper is Due (20% of your grade)
Religious Alternatives to Theism
Rowe, Chapter 13

W15 12/06 TBA

The Final Test (time to be announced) – 25% of your grade