

**Philosophy of Religion
Philosophy 301
Spring 2009**

Instructor: Philip M. Mouch

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Where: MacLean 165

When: MW 3:00-4:15

**Office Hours: M&W: 10:00-2:30, T: 1:30-2:30,
and by appointment**

COURSE OVERVIEW: There are a number of issues arising in connection with religion that historically have been considered by philosophers. We will be looking at a number of these issues, including the nature of the divine, arguments for and against the existence of the divine, the problem of evil, and what the existence of multiple religions might mean for the truth of any of them. We will be looking at these issues critically, so the student will be expected to consider different resolutions. We will also be looking at some of the questions that arise in Buddhism.

READING ASSIGNMENTS AND TEXT: The reading assignments are listed below. You should read assignments before coming to class. Be sure to bring the text to class. The required texts for this class are:

Allen Stairs & Christopher Bernard, *A Thinker's Guide to the Philosophy of Religion*, Pearson Longman (2007)
Walpolia Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (revised edition), Grove Press (1974)

EVALUATION:

(1) There will be three papers/take-home exams due in this class. The due dates are listed on the schedule below. Each will be worth 30% of your grade.

(2) There will be informal writing (reading questions and the like) worth 10% of your grade.

POLICIES:

(1) Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any failure to properly cite a source your use in your paper will result in a failing grade for that paper, and possibly failing the course and/or reporting the incident to the Student Conduct Committee. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, please come talk to me.

(2) You are responsible for all assignments to be handed in. Late assignments will be penalized. Excuses such as you handed in the paper to my mailbox, slid it under my door, or gave it to a friend to hand in are unacceptable. I will take such papers, but if the paper never showed up for whatever reason, it will count as late. You should be in class to hand in all assignments; otherwise you take the risk of not getting credit for your work.

(3) You are expected to be in class and have done the reading for the day. It is simple courtesy to be in class on time and in your seat. If you have to be late for some reason, please enter the room and take your seat quietly, so as not to disturb the class. PLEASE TURN OFF ALL ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT (INCLUDING CELLPHONES, PAGERS, AND IPODS). Do not engage in text messaging during class. Finally, do not stand up and walk out in the middle of the class period. This is distracting and rude to the other students and me. If you must leave early for some reason, please talk to me before class and sit near the door.

Students with disabilities who believe they may need an accommodation in this class are encouraged to contact Greg Toutges, Coordinator of Disability Services at 477-5859 (voice) or 1-800-627-3529 (MRS/TTY), CMU 114 as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Schedule: *These dates are tentative. I will make any necessary changes in class. Assignments should be read before class on the day that they are assigned. Except where noted, all readings refer to the Stairs & Bernard book.*

Week of	Assignment
January 12	Introduction
January 14	Chapter 1: Concepts of God
January 19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - No Class
January 21	Chapter 1 (continued)
January 26	Chapter 2: Argument from Design
February 2	Chapter 3: Cosmological Argument
February 9	Chapter 4: Ontological Argument
February 11	First Paper Assigned
February 16	Rahula: Chapters 1-5 (<i>What the Buddha Taught</i> , pp. 1-50)
February 18	First Paper Due
February 23	Rahula: Chapters 6-8 (<i>What the Buddha Taught</i> , pp. 51-89)
March 2	Chapter 9: Evil
March 9	Chapter 5: Miracles
March 16-18	Spring Break
March 23	Chapter 6: Religious Experience
March 25	Second Paper Assigned
March 30	Chapter 8: Faith and Pragmatism
April 1	Second Paper Due
April 6	Chapter 10: God and Morality
April 13	Non-Instructional Day
April 15	Chapter 12: God & Language
April 20	Chapter 11: Religious Diversity
April 27	Chapter 13: Life after Death
April 29	Third Paper Assigned
May 4	Last Day of Class
May 8	Third Paper Due