

COURSE OUTLINE

Ω Please note: This outline will not be kept indefinitely. It is recommended students keep this outline for your records.

1. Instructor Information

- (a) Instructor: Karen Shirley
- (b) Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday: 12:30 – 2:20; Wednesday: 11:30 – 12:20
- (c) Location: Ewing 218
- (d) Phone: 370 3132 Home: 3838164

2. Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to describe and assess

- a) arguments on the role of reason in arriving at a religious or other position, b) arguments on the existence of God, c) arguments on both sides of the evolution-creationist debate and d) arguments on the possibility of an afterlife.

3. Required Materials

- (a) Texts

Handout called *Philosophy 205* which is sold in the bookstore

4. Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting)

Mid-term Exam (closed-book).....	25%
Final (Final exam period - closed-book).....	25%
Paper (due one week prior to your debate date)	20%
Seminar debate.....	20%
Participation via questions and comments on the seminar presentations.....	10%

5. Grading System

The following percentage conversion to letter grade will be used:

A+ = 95 - 100%	B = 75 - 79%	D = 50 - 59%
A = 90 - 94%	B- = 70 - 74%	F = 0.0 - 49%
A- = 85 - 89%	C+ = 65 - 69%	
B+ = 80 - 84%	C = 60 - 64%	

6. Course Content and Schedule

Mid-term and Final Exams: The mid-term is one hour long, closed-book and worth 25% of your course grade. You are encouraged to bring your course outline, a dictionary and a style guide. You will be asked to answer the two study questions that I pull out of a hat at the beginning of the exam.

The final is not cumulative and is worth 25% of your course grade. The final will be held in the final exam period and will be two hours long. You will be asked to answer three questions that I pull out of a hat at the beginning of the exam.

The kind of answer that will count as good will depend, in part, on what the question is. Some questions call for strong arguments; some call for the application of a position to a situation; some call for careful analysis and some require that you convey someone else's reasoning. On the other hand, the following factors will matter in *all* of the answers: clarity, conciseness, spelling and grammar.

Questions with asterisks beside them are to be answered on your own.

Participation after Debates: Each instance of participation is worth up to 2.5%. Only four instances count and the first four will be the ones that I count (unless you let me know before making the comment that you don't want it to count.) You may provide constructive criticism or praise, suggest alternative arguments, comment on the quality of the contributions and so on. Questions will not usually be sufficient for a participation mark, as they do not usually require much thought.

Debates: You are required to participate in a debate which is worth 20% of your final grade.

During the first class, students will be divided into groups of two to four people. One or two people in each group will take either the pro or con position on a chosen topic. Each group will be given a topic and a date on which to debate.

You will be graded on the strength of your arguments, the knowledge you show on the topic and your ability to present your arguments in a way that helps other students understand the relevant issues.

Do not read out your presentation or any other part of the debate. If you do read, you will automatically lose 5 of the 20 marks. You may *occasionally* refer to notes. Do not give the class handouts.

If you are at a loss as to what arguments have been made on the topic, see the *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (a reference book in the library) for a start. See me, if you need to do so, well in advance, for additional advice. Some of the topics require knowledge of factual information. Ensure that you know this information. Once you have an idea of what issues are at stake and of some of the arguments that have been presented on the topic, you should spend time *thinking for yourself* on the topic. What do *you* think the truth of the matter is? Why?

Structure of Debates

First,

- a) Pro side: *one strong* argument in favour of the claim. (Speak for up to two minutes.)
- b) Con side: objection to the above argument. (Speak for up to thirty seconds.)
- c) Pro side: response to the above objection. (Speak for up to thirty seconds.)
- d) Con side: objection to above response or a second objection to the pro side's original argument. (Speak for up to thirty seconds.)
- e) Pro side: response to the second objection. (Speak for up to thirty seconds.)

Second, repeat steps one through five above, beginning with the con side this time.

Third, pro and con sides now address points put to them by the class.

Paper: 5% will be deducted for each day the paper is late unless a doctor's note is attached to it.

You may rewrite your paper if you do not like the grade you get on it. In order to get a rewrite marked, you must submit both the original paper with the rewrite. If you radically change your paper in the process of rewriting it, some of my comments on the original paper may become redundant. Nevertheless, you must hand in the original paper with the rewrite.

The papers are due exactly one week prior to your debate date. I should get the papers back to you within a week and rewrites must be in one week after that.

No title pages. If your printer allows you to do so, you may use the blank side of used paper or print on both sides of the page. The paper should not be longer than 1500 words; it may be shorter.

Defend your own religious or, if you prefer, 'spiritual' position. If you are an atheist or agnostic, defend that view. If you believe in some sort of special energy, defend that view. It should contain the strongest argument that you can find in defense of your position. It should also contain a response to at least one of the best possible objections to your position. Ensure that you include a thesis statement. You will be marked on the strength of your argument, objections and responses. Clarity and conciseness also matter as do spelling and grammar.

Lecture Schedule

1. Jan. 5 Administration

WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

2. Jan. 7 Stewart and Blocker

FAITH VS. REASON

3. Jan. 12 Pascal

4. Jan. 14 Kierkegaard

5. Jan. 19 Clifford

CLASSIC ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

6. Jan. 21 Anselm Versus Gaunilo

7. Jan. 26 Aquinas

8. Jan. 28 Hume - "Critique of the Design
Argument"

9. Feb. 2 "Hume's 'Of Miracles,'" (Guest
lecturer: Professor J. O. Young, Chair,
U. Vic Philosophy Dept)

10. Feb. 4 William James

11. Feb. 9 Donovan

12. Feb. 11: EXAM

13. Feb. 16 Plantinga

14. Feb. 18 Griffith

15. Feb. 23: Buddhism (Guest lecturer:
Dr. John Conklin from Camosun)

THE ONENESS - OR NOT - OF THE VARIOUS RELIGIONS

16. Feb. 25: Ramakrishna and Buss
Mitchell on Buddhism

THE MEANING OF RELIGIOUS CLAIMS

17. Mar. 1 Flew, Hare, Mitchell and Flew

18. Mar. 3: Flew, Hare, Mitchell and
Flew

THE POSSIBILITY OF AN AFTERLIFE

19. Mar. 8 2 readings: Aurobindo and
Buss Mitchell on "Hinduism"

20. Mar. 10 Price

21. Mar. 15 Swinburne

22. Mar. 17 Badham

CREATIONISM VS. EVOLUTION

23. Mar. 22 Murphey and "Genesis,
Chapter I"

24. Mar. 24 Murphey, continued

25. Mar. 29 Gish

26. Mar. 31 Kitcher

27 Ap. 5 Kline

THE DEATH OF GOD

28. Ap. 7 Nietzsche

Study Questions for Midterm

1. What is the difference between an argument based on prudence and one based on evidence? Describe a prudential argument for a religious or spiritual position.
2. How does the fact that Pascal assumes that there are only two options form the basis of an objection to his position?
3. The following sentence is from *Fear and Trembling*: "Faith is precisely the paradox that the single individual as the single individual is higher than the universal, is justified before it, not as inferior to it but as superior - yet in such a way, please note, that it is the single individual who, after being subordinate as the single individual to the universal, now by means of the universal becomes the single individual who as the single individual is superior, that the single individual as the single individual stands in an absolute relation to the absolute." What does it mean?
4. Is Clifford's ship owner analogous to the person considering religious belief? In light of your answer, does Clifford establish his conclusion? Why or why not?
5. Could an argument similar to Anselm's be used to prove that an omni-malevolent devil exists who is the supreme?
6. What is a strong objection to Aquinas's second way?
7. Briefly convey Philo's main objection to arguments from analogy for the existence of God.
8. Briefly convey Philo's main objection to *a priori* arguments for the existence of God.
9. Briefly convey Philo's main objection to part/whole arguments for the existence of God.
10. Under what circumstances would one have good reason to believe in the existence of a supernatural being on the basis of the testimony of someone else's mystical experience?
11. Under what circumstances should we believe a report of a miracle?
12. What four reasons does Hume give for saying there have never been good grounds for believing a report of a miracle?
13. Has James successfully met Clifford's objections to religious belief, or has he confused self-creating beliefs with wishful thinking? A self-creating belief is a belief that makes what is believed more likely to be true. For example, by getting one's self into the state where one believes he or she is capable of winning a race (although there's not enough evidence to decide the likelihood of the matter), one may actually increase one's chances of winning the race. Wishful thinking is a belief that doesn't change the probability of what is believed being true. For example, by getting one's self into the state where one believes that fairies exist, one doesn't change the probability that they do exist..
14. Assess Clifford's view on belief acquisition in light of what James says in section VII.
15. In Section X, James defines the religious hypothesis. Is refusing to believe it analogous to refusing to believe that someone one has just met likes one and/or like refusing to ask a person to marry one on the grounds that one cannot be certain that the person is "an angel"?
16. Explain the difference between psychological certainty and rational certainty.
17. What would Donovan say is the one objection to the following claims? 1) I had an awareness of God; 2) I encountered God; 3) I apprehended a spiritual force; 4) I responded to an energy in the universe.
18. What is the difference between accepting that there is a God on the basis of intuitive awareness and accepting that there are other minds?
19. What does Donovan conclude from his discussion of Adam and Eve?
20. What does Donovan conclude from his discussion of two doctors, "one a man and one a woman, the latter of whom has also given birth"?
21. Characterize classic foundationalism and the evidentialist objection.
22. What does Plantinga mean by 'evidence'? How is it different from 'grounds' or 'justification'?
23. How can a reformed epistemologist hold that belief in God is properly basic but that belief in the great pumpkin is not?
24. What does what Donovan says about sense perception and the existence of other minds suggest in the way of an objection to Plantinga's view that the following claims are properly basic:

'I see a tree', 'that person is pleased' or 'I had breakfast more than an hour ago'?

25. Describe and illustrate the distinction Griffith makes between the syntactic and semantic functions of a claim?

26. What are the five central features of religious doctrine?

What does Griffith think his analysis of religious doctrine suggests about the pluralist option?

27. Why does Griffith think it is important to construct a referent for 'Christian doctrine'?

Study Questions for Final

1. What would Flew say about the following claim: people have souls, distinct from their minds. (Ignore the question of whether or not the brain and the mind are one and the same.)

2. Consider Hare's view that "differences between bliks about the world cannot be settled by observation of what happens in the world" in light of his blik about the reliability of his steering.

3. Mitchell says the partisan can admit that many things may and do count against the view that the Stranger is on his side but the partisan can still maintain "He is on my side," as a significant article of faith. He says that this is different from making an unfalsifiable and so meaningless utterance. Is he right?

4. In light of your assessment of the strength of related arguments covered in the course, does Auronbindo give a satisfactory reason for claiming that "the soul needs no proof of its rebirth any more than it needs proof of its immortality"?

5. Does Swinburne try to establish that there is an afterlife?

6. Compare and contrast Price and Badhan's views on what personal identity consists in.

7. Assess Badham's "out-of-the-body eye" objection to one proof of life after death.

8. How does Murphey characterize foundationalism?

9. What are the three camps that modern theologians fall into with respect to foundationalism?

10. Describe holism and distinguish between Quine, Kuhn and Lakatos's versions of holism. Ensure that you characterize theories of instrumentation.

11. Describe MacIntyre's circularity argument.

12. What is the difference between Catherine of Siena and Teresa of Avila's criteria for distinguishing an authentic experience of God from an inauthentic one?

13. Explain how Wittgenstein's arguments against private language are relevant to distinguishing between a divine encounter and a self-induced inauthentic divine encounter.

14. How does Murphey show that a Christian theory is falsifiable?

15. Assumeing that there are inconsistencies between the reasearch programs of science and Christianity, which program is better in light of Lakatos's criteria for choosing among competing research programs?

16. Murphey says that "it is necessary to show that the discipline of theology aims at *knowledge* of a reality independent of the human subject. If theology is really only about human values or meanings, then there is no more reason to think that theology and science can engage in dialogue than to think that science ought to dialogue with ethics or art or literary theory." Arguably, science does dialogue with ethics and art. What does this tell us about Murphey's position?

17. Is Gish's conception of 'observed' the same as that of the scientist? When he claims no one has ever observed evolution and so "is not amenable to the methods of experimental science"? (See also Kline.)

18. Is evolutionary theory unfalsifiable?

19. How can the evolutionist respond to Gish's claim that 1) evolution would take "billions of times longer than the assumed five billion years of earth history" and that 2) life forms appear too abruptly in the fossil record to support evolutionary theories?

20. How can the evolutionist respond to Gish's claim that evolution contradicts the Second Law of Thermodynamics?

21. Which of Kitcher's objections to Flood Geology is strongest in your view?

22. Explain the difference between theory_O and theory_S.

Seminar Topics

1. Jan. 13/15

‘Soul’ and ‘mind’ are words that refer to the same thing. (Note: looking in the dictionary is not likely to be enough as the statement is about reference and two words can *refer* to the same thing while having different *meanings*)

2. Jan. 20/22

Spirituality is, overall, better than religion.
(Note: use what you believe to be the lexical definitions of ‘spiritual’ and ‘religious’. Hint: ‘Spiritual’ doesn’t refer to someone who believes in spirits; it refers to the view many youngish people attribute to themselves when they say things like, “I’m not religious but I’m spiritual.”)

3. Jan. 27/29

Religious commitment improves mental health.

4. Feb. 3/5

Morality cannot exist without religion.

5. Feb. 10/12

The following argument is strong:

P1. We can only be judged for what we have control over

P2. We have control only over our actions.

P3. Beliefs are not actions.

C4. Therefore, we cannot be judged for our beliefs, but only for our actions.

6. Feb. 17/19

If, in the afterlife, one is rewarded with infinite bliss for believing in the true god and punished with infinite pain for not doing so, then religious tolerance is immoral.

7. Feb. 24/26

Come with any questions. No points lost for not attending.

8. Mar. 3/5

If God is omnipotent and omnibenevolent, there can be no evil.

9. Mar. 10/12

If god is omniscient then humans have no free will.

10. Mar. 17/19

If god is omniscient and omnibenevolent, no sense can be made of the standard belief that prayer influences God to do what he otherwise would not have done.

11. Mar. 24/26

When one person morally wrongs another person, a third party cannot somehow ‘neutralize’ the moral wrong. Thus, Christ couldn’t make up for our sins by dying on the cross.

12. Mar. 31/ Ap. 2

The concept of a Holy Trinity can be reconciled with the view that God is incomposite.

13. Mar. 7/9- Review

Note that failing to follow the following rules may cost you marks.

1. Do not use the first or second person on your exams. Here are two examples of the first person: “**We** cannot pass students who cannot use the English language adequately,” and “**I** cannot pass students who cannot use the English language adequately.” Here is an example of the second person: “**You** don’t realise that it is not our fault that we were not taught how to write in high school.” The following are examples of sentences written in the third person. “**People** cannot pass the buck forever.” “**One** will find that a style guide is essential in university.”
2. Do not ask rhetorical questions.
3. Do not use a pronoun which disagrees with the noun it refers to. You should try to use gender neutral language in this course, although failure to do so will not result in a lower grade. At first, this effort may result in a number of cases of pronoun disagreement. In many cases, pronoun disagreement can be avoided through the use of plural nouns. Here is an example of a sentence in which the pronoun disagrees with the noun: “**A philosopher** should not be so picky about English; **they** are not English teachers.” Here is the corrected version: “**Philosophers** should not be so picky about English; **they** are not English teachers.”
4. Do not confuse “its” with “it’s.” Since you are not allowed to use contractions, you should never use “it’s.”
5. Do not confuse “their” with “there.”
6. Do not add “ly” to “first,” “second” and so on.
7. Do not forget possessive apostrophes and do not put them in the wrong place.
8. Do not use abbreviations or a contractions.
9. Do not use “e. g.”; use “for example.”
10. Do not use “etc.”; use “and so on.”
11. Do not use “i.e.”; use “that is.” Better yet, say it clearly the first time.
12. Do not use the upper-case where the lower case is standard. 5% will be deducted from a student’s exam if he or she makes this mistake.
13. Do not misspell the following words:
 - despite
 - argument (*one* “e”)
 - philosophy
 - Socrates
 - Descartes

MARKING NOTATION

ambig: ambiguous; there is more than one way to reasonably interpret what you are saying here

awk: your choice of words or your sentence structure make it unnecessarily difficult for the reader to get your point.

cl: you haven't made your point clearly enough.

dm: dangling modifier

frag: sentence fragment

gr: grammar; this is a general term indicating that something is wrong with the grammar.

illeg: illegible handwriting

no: what you've said here is false

parallelism: lack of parallel structure

pd: pronoun disagreement

punct: error in punctuation

ro: run on sentence

sp: spelling error

tense: wrong tense

trite: you have used a phrase or expressed an opinion that writers have worn out by constant repetition

weak: the argument is weak

wordy: the sentence is cluttered with unnecessary words or is overly complex or you are choosing 10 words where 10¢ ones would be just as effective.

ww: wrong word

LEARNING SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

There are a variety of services available for students to assist them throughout their learning. This information is available in the College Calendar, Registrar's Office or the College web site at <http://www.camosun.bc.ca>

ACADEMIC CONDUCT POLICY

There is an Academic Conduct Policy. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of this policy. The policy is available in each School Administration Office, Registration, and on the College web site in the Policy Section.

www.camosun.bc.ca/divisions/pres/policy/2-education/2-5.html