7AAN2071 Philosophy of Religion

Syllabus – Academic year 2012/13

Basic information

Credits: 15
Module Tutor: Chris Hughes
Office: 709
Consultation time: Wednesday 3:00 – 4:00
Semester: 1
Lecture time and venue*: Tuesday, 18:00-20:00

*Please note that tutorial times and venues will be organised independently with your teaching tutor

Module description (plus aims and objectives)

We'll try to get stuck into some of the (many and varied) problems in the philosophy of religion. This year the emphasis will be on an area of the philosophy of religion that overlaps with metaphysics and philosophical logic. Questions will concern how God, and God's knowledge, are related to time.
### Assessment methods and deadlines

- **Formative assessment**: one essay of around 2,000-3,000 words

- **Summative assessment**: one 4,000 word essay

**NB** Please note that for semester I-only Study Abroad students, assessment requirements may vary. In particular, May exams will be replaced by summative essays to be submitted by the end of term (date TBC)
Outline of lecture topics (plus suggested readings)

**Week One**: God as temporal and God as atemporal

**Week Two**: Presentism & divine temporality

**Week Three**: Becoming, Omniscience and Divine Temporality

**Week Four**: More on Becoming, Omniscience, Temporality
Suggested reading: D. Lewis, “Attitudes *De Dicto and De Se*”, in his *Philisophical Papers*, v. 1

**Week Five**: Openness and the limits of divine knowledge
Suggested Reading: William of Ockham, *Tractatus de Praedestinatione*, Question II, Article 2

READING WEEK – NB FIRST FORMATIVE ESSAY DUE -

**Week Six**: Worries about Occamism: openness and truth-value gaps I
Suggested reading: A. Prior, “Time and Determinism”, in his *Essays on Time and Tense.* (don’t worry about the very technical bits; just get the gist)

**Week Seven**: Worries about Occamism: openness and truth-value gaps II
Suggested Readings: J. Burgess, “The Unreal Future”, *Theoria* v. 44, no. 3 (1978) (again; don’t worry about the technical bits; just get the gist).

**Week Eight**: Worries about Occamism: knowledge and stability

**Week Nine**: Worries about Occamism: knowledge and stability II

**Week Ten**: Atemporality and the Omniscience-Openness Problem

NB SECOND FORMATIVE ESSAY DUE - DATE
(2) Do arguments for presentism show that God exists in time, if He exists at all?

(2) Are there things only a temporal being can know? If so, does it follow that no being is both atemporal and omniscient?

(3) When it comes to the open future, is there anything for God to know?

(4) “Truths about the open future, if such there be, are unknowable (even by God).” Discuss.
Suggested essay questions

(2) “Because presentism is true, God exists in time or not at all”. Discuss.

(2) What is the best argument for supposing that an atemporal being could not be omniscient? How good is it?

(3) “Because there are no truths about how the open future will go, there’s nothing for God to know about how the open future will turn out.”

(4) “Assuming there are truths about the open future, not even God can know them.” True?
Suggested additional readings

There’s enough to go on with in the main list.