6AANB025 PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION
Syllabus – Academic year 2013/14

Basic information

Credits: 15
Module Tutor: chris hughes
Office: level 7 (two floors above departmental office)
Consultation time: tba
Semester: 1
Lecture time and venue*:

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

Module description (plus aims and objectives)

This year we’ll be looking at a bit of natural theology (the cosmological argument); some natural atheology (arguments for atheism from naturalism and evil), a brief glance at an issue about God’s attributes (omniscience), and finally some issues about faith, reason, and belief.

Assessment methods and deadlines

- Formative assessment: 2 x 1500 word essays, (due nov 8, dec 20)

- Summative assessment: 1 2-hour exam

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:** Natural Theology and the Cosmological Argument


**Week Two:** More on the Cosmological Argument

Suggested Reading: Peter van Inwagen, *Metaphysics*, ch. 6 (“Necessary Being: the Cosmological Argument”)

**Week Three:** Natural Atheology: from Naturalism to Atheism

Suggested readings: N. R. Hanson, “What I Don’t Believe” in *What I Don’t Believe & Other Essays*

S. Shalkowski, “Atheological Apologetics”, *American Philosophical Quarterly* 1989

**Week Four:** Mackie on the Incomposibility of (a perfect) God and evil


**Week Five:** arguments for the compossibility of (a perfect) God with evil 1

Suggested reading: A. Plantinga, “Natural At theology” in *God, Freedom, and Evil*


READING WEEK – NB FIRST FORMATIVE ESSAY DUE - DATE

**Week Six:** arguments for the compossibility of (a perfect) God with evil 2


**Week Seven:** “Friendly Atheism & the “evidential argument from evil”

Suggested readings: W. Rowe, “The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism”

D. Howard-Snyder, “God, Evil, & Suffering” in Murray, ed., *Reason for the Hope Within*

**Week Eight:** Omniscience

- R. Adams, “Primitive Identity and Primitive Thisness and Primitive Identity
Outline of lecture topics (plus suggested readings) – continued if necessary

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<th>Week 9: Faith and (un?)reason</th>
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<td>Suggested Reading: David Hume, “Of Miracles” (in the <em>Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</em>)</td>
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<th>Week 10: Faith and Belief</th>
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Suggested essay questions

- How good is the modal cosmological argument?
- How and how well does Hanson argue for atheism?
- Does the free will defence work?
- Is there a good way of arguing for the compossibility of (a perfect) God and evil, without making any assumptions about the nature and value of free will?
- What does Rowe take himself to have shown about the rationality of belief in (a perfect) God? Has he shown either more or less than he takes himself to have shown?
- Is faith as such epistemically unreasonabler?