

**WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER COLLEGE**  
**LIBERAL ARTS DIVISION**  
**GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE**

PHI Course Prefix	220 Course Number	Philosophy of Religion Course Title	3-0 (Lec-Lab)	3 Semester Hours
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Examines the nature and presuppositions of Western religions, especially the reasons which can be given for and against the existence of God. Selected further topics: the problem of evil, life after death, the nature of religious experience, language, knowledge, and authority, religion and science, and major philosophical theories on the nature of religion. IAI H4 905

**TOPICAL OUTLINE**

- I. Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion
- II. Phenomenology of Religion
  - A. Object of religion
  - B. Subject of religion
  - C. Relation of subject and object in religion
- III. Comparative Religion and Cognitive Appraisal
  - A. Mystical experience
  - B. Numinous experience
  - C. Criteria for appraisal in comparative religion
- IV. Problem of Evil
  - A. Traditional solutions
  - B. Contemporary solutions
- V. Theistic Arguments
  - A. Ontological
  - B. Cosmological
  - C. Teleological
- VI. Primordial Tradition
  - A. Notion of hierarchy in science and religion
  - B. Levels of reality
  - C. Levels of selfhood

**METHODS OF PRESENTATION**

1. Lecture
2. Discussion
3. Small group work
4. Student presentations
5. Student debates
6. Videotapes/movies

**STUDENT OUTCOMES** (*The student should . . .*)

**Attitudes:**

1. appreciate theistic, atheistic, and agnostic positions.
2. discuss critically discuss philosophical problems in religion with others who possess different views.
3. tolerate opposing views on religion.
4. appreciate the role of religious experience in the formation of religious beliefs and concepts.
5. understand what philosophy is as applied to religion.

**Skills:**

1. develop critical thinking skills regarding problems within the philosophy of religion.

2. demonstrate orally and in writing a knowledge of philosophical problems in religion.
3. explain positions not personally held.
4. indicate adequate and inadequate reasons for a particular philosophical position.

Content:

1. traditional arguments for God's existence, including the ontological, cosmological, and teleological arguments; in addition, arguments against God's existence.
2. traditional theories on God's divine attributes, and the philosophical problems which these attributes present, e. g., omnipotence, omniscience, omnibenevolence, etc.
3. the issues surrounding the problem of evil and proposed solutions to the problem.
4. the role of religious experience as grounds for theistic belief
5. the issues surrounding the roles of faith and reason in religious belief.
5. the problems inherent within the use of religious language, e.g., the problem of verification and falsification.
6. alternative notions of the divine reality as found in process thought, non-Western thought, etc.
7. S. key authors within the philosophy of religion, e.g. Aquinas, Anselm, Augustine, Hume, Swinburne, Pike, Hick, Ayer.
8. fundamental concepts and beliefs within Western religious thought.

### SOME METHODS OF EVALUATION

1. Quizzes
2. Exams (may be oral)
3. Written reading responses
4. Debates
5. Homework
6. Class activities
7. Participation

### SOME TEXTBOOKS/INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Hick, John, *Philosophy of Religion*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed, 1990

Peterson, Hasker, Reichenbach, Basinger, *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings*, Oxford University Press, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2009

Peterson & Hasker, *Reason and Religious Belief: An Introduction*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2008.

Cahn, Steven ed., *Exploring Philosophy of Religion: An Introductory Anthology*, Oxford University Press, 2008.

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