

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

PHI	220	Philosophy of Religion	3-0	3
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Course Prefix	Course Number	Course Title	(Lec-Lab)	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 . . .*)

1. Demonstrate an understanding of multiple philosophical positions on at least three of the central issues in the philosophical study of religion. These may include, but are not limited to:
  - o Arguments concerning the existence of the divine
  - o Arguments concerning the attributes of the divine
  - o Attempted solutions to the problem of evil
  - o Arguments concerning the nature and possibility of the afterlife

2. Be able to identify arguments of specific philosophers regarding the issues in the philosophical study of religion.
3. Be able to explain the arguments given in defense of particular philosophical position on these issues.
4. Be able to evaluate arguments for particular philosophical positions on these issues.
5. Articulate one's own views concerning at least one issue in the philosophical study of religion.
6. Recognize potential criticisms of one's own views, and respond to them.
7. Demonstrate the use of at least three primary texts in the service of the above outcomes.
8. Write a total of ten pages (of approximately 300 words each) of college-level writing in the service of the above outcomes in addition to more conversational written or oral discussion.

### 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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Semester      Fall      Year 2015 / 2020

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