



Online Course Syllabus

PHI502OL-L1

Philosophy of Religion

Spring 2022

Contact Information

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Course Description and Prerequisites

An advanced study of historical and contemporary worldviews and philosophical issues relevant to Christian ministry, such as religious pluralism, the problem of evil, and the relationship between faith and reason.

Course Objectives

- Understand basic philosophical concepts and terminology.
- Get introduced to and engage with important and scholarly philosophical sources on the subject of philosophy.
- Learn how to apply philosophy in accordance with a Christian worldview.
- Articulate the Christian view of important philosophical subjects.
- Employ Scripture effectively in building philosophical arguments.
- Quickly and properly identify biblical passages which determine these perspectives.
- Precisely and concisely articulate an organized biblical perspective on key philosophical issues.
- Biblically and scholastically support their philosophical positions.
- Prepare to engage contemporary culture on philosophical issues with the goal of transforming the culture from an informed biblical perspective.
- Apply Christian philosophical understanding and wisdom in their personal preaching, pastoral, and disciplining environments and contexts.

Required Textbooks

<i>Philosophy of Religion</i>	Evans, C. Stephen	978-0830838769	2009
<i>Philosophy of Religion: Select</i>	Peterson, Michael	978-0199303441	2014

Course Requirements and Assignments

Refer to the appropriate **Grading and Schedule** Excel spreadsheet for details. Each week's classroom material will focus on the topics covered throughout the assigned weekly reading.

Requirements, Assignments, Weighting

Weekly Reading
1x Exam, Final (25%)
6x Papers, Position (30%)
1x Thesis, Abstract, Outline, Bibliography (TAOB) (10%)
1x Paper, Research (35%)

Reading, Weekly

Students are expected to have completed all the assigned readings prior to the class meeting.

Exam, Final

The final exam will be online and taken via Canvas. It will be comprehensive, covering the content covered during the semester. It may consist of a mixture of essays, T/F, multiple-choice, matching, place in proper order, fill in the blank and related types of questions.

Papers, Position

When scheduled, these are due to be submitted by 23:30 CST on the date stated on the Class Calendar and Schedule.

Each and every primary response to a prompt is to be between 300–325 content words and should adequately summarize your view and understanding of the philosophical and biblical position on the issue. Edit accordingly. Grades will be reduced if the content word limit is exceeded or not met.

Papers should consist of three (3) to six (6) paragraphs of content. A paragraph should indicate a distinct argument and line of thought. Large sections of Scripture quoting (> five (5) words) should not appear in these papers. Each paragraph is to be indented 0.5". Any and all biblical references must be parenthetical only. For example, do not type the entire parable of the Good Samaritan. Simply insert (Luke 18:25–37). If you do not parenthetically reference the reference correctly will not be counted, and you will be marked down accordingly.

The position paper does not have a title page or numbered pages. It is to be single-line spaced. It is to have a line of blank space between each paragraph. The Bible may be employed and referenced. No extra-biblical sources/citations are to be used outside of the classroom textbooks. The student is to supply a Word Count: ### in bold three (3) lines after the final sentence.

The professor reserves the right to cancel a scheduled Position Paper assignment.

A model (pattern) of a position paper that is indicative of an excellent grade will be discussed in class.

Style for Position Paper Submissions

- 12-point Times New Roman for all text.
- No page numbering.
- Bold only used for thesis sentence and headings.
- No underlining in any part of the paper.

- Any and all Scripture parenthetically referenced.
- Your Name, Due Date, Assignment Title, and Class ID are to be on all submissions, located in the header, and in Bold.
- **Word Count: ###** supplied a few lines after the last sentence.
- Failure to follow any mandatory style requirements will not be accepted and is subject to receiving a do-over or a failing grade.

Thesis/Abstract/Outline/Bibliography (TAOB)

In advance of their research paper, students will submit a Thesis/Abstract/Outline/Bibliography (TAOB) of their proposed research paper. When scheduled, these are due to be submitted by 23:30 CST on the date stated on the Class Calendar and Schedule. A sample of a well-executed TAOB will be discussed in class. This assignment will consist of a (T) well-formed thesis statement, (A) 290–310 content word abstract, (O) skeletal outline of the macrostructure of the research paper, and a (B) bibliography (at least five (5) qualified sources). Completing and incorporating grading feedback on the TAOB will ensure students are tracking for a successful research paper.

Style for TAOB Submissions

- 12-point Times New Roman for all text.
- No page numbering.
- Bold only used for thesis sentence, headings, and subheadings.
- No underlining in any part of the paper.
- Any and all Scripture parenthetically referenced.
- Your Name, Due Date, Assignment Title, and Class ID are to be on all submissions, located in the header, and in Bold.
- **Word Count: ###** supplied a few lines after the last sentence of the abstract.
- Failure to follow any mandatory style requirements will not be accepted and is subject to receiving a do-over or a failing grade.

Paper, Research

Each student is responsible for preparing a research paper between 2,900–3,100 content words that conform to proper research paper writing formats. Each paper should have a proper bibliography and footnotes. The paper's grade will be affected by how well it complies with college style as well as its content. Papers will be evaluated based upon philosophical and theological content (communication of orthodox philosophy and theology), research (communication of orthodox philosophy and theology), thesis & development of argument (cogently argued), support for claims or critiques (cogently argued), and clarity of style (stylistically clear). Consult the *Criswell College Manual of Style (MoS)* or a close equivalent (Turabian 9th Edition) for the proper form and style.

The topic is to be taken from the list of philosophical issues directly discussed during the semester. Any deviation from this list must be approved by the professor.

Submitting a passing research paper is a requirement of the class. You will not receive a passing mark for the course if a research paper is not received.

A research paper must contain a stated thesis. **A good thesis statement will be specific, signaling the reader how to understand the author, and will make a particular claim that is open to dispute.** The thesis must be only one (1) sentence in length. The thesis must be located as the first sentence of text. Students will bold their entire thesis statement sentence for easy identification by the professor.

The word “research” implies that the paper is not merely to be a sermon on the subject, but demonstrates the student’s careful exploration of the significant views on the topic. After an introduction (150 words, nominally), the bulk of the paper should be given to a simple presentation of the various views, their primary spokespersons, and the rationale for their positions. High-quality papers contain an average of at least two (2) high-quality primary source footnotes per page to show good interaction with appropriate research sources.

This paper must be an analysis of the biblical perspective regarding a philosophical issue. Do not simply do an exegesis, although proper interpretation will be an integral part of the paper. Give an analysis of both sides of the issue at hand, using a good balance of sources. It should be a point-counterpoint type of paper. Use critical thinking, and let your paper reflect where you stand on the issue. Carefully articulate, and do not vacillate. The Wallace Library has many resources to mail or to photocopy for the student as well as many online resources.

This research paper should be primarily philosophical with appropriate biblical research and argumentation. Overemphasizing history, sociology, psychology, politics, law, or economics is a pitfall to avoid. When discussing the philosophical ideas and concepts, stay on topic with the specific philosophical issue, not external theological issues such as soteriology and eschatology, unless they specifically apply to the philosophical issue. Refrain from making pastoral-related arguments and conclusions.

Employ ample parenthetical Scripture referencing throughout the paper. Persuasive papers will have approximately five (5) or more parenthetical Scripture references for every one thousand (1,000) words of content text. Parenthetical Scripture referencing should be done in conformance with the MoS.

The student’s philosophical and biblical conclusions should comprise approximately the final ten percent (10%, 290–310 content words) of the paper.

Include section headings throughout the paper and include a bibliography. Bibliographies should contain at least five (5) cited primary sources. Commentaries are not to be employed. One (1) internet sources is allowed. Bibles are not put into the bibliography. Prudent students will utilize and engage both required classroom texts and suggested texts as appropriate.

Possible Research Topics

A thesis statement needs to make a specific claim. It is to state what will be demonstrated or proved within the context of the research paper. For instance, an ethical thesis statement might be as follows: “It will be asserted that active homosexual engagement is not an acceptable alternative lifestyle for a

Christian.” In a similar manner demonstrated in the provided example of the thesis statement above, students are to develop a unique philosophical thesis statement that makes a specific claim. Students will and must then examine various sides of the issue in the paper.

Students may also select from the appropriate philosophers or philosophical concepts under study and develop a particular perspective and thesis upon appropriate prior approval from the professor. Students may also consider comparing and contrasting two (2) philosophers, but not more, on one of their big philosophical ideas, concepts, and expressions.

Style for Research Paper Submissions

- 12-point Times New Roman for all text.
- Page numbering.
- Bold only used for thesis sentence, headings, and subheadings.
- No underlining in any part of the paper.
- Any and all Scripture parenthetically referenced.
- Your Name, Due Date, Assignment Title, and Class ID are to be on all submissions, located in the header, and in Bold.
- **Word Count: ###** supplied a few lines after the last sentence of the paper.
- Bibliography
- Failure to follow any mandatory style requirements will not be accepted and is subject to receiving a do-over or a failing grade.

Attendance

Students are responsible for enrolling in courses for which they anticipate being able to participate weekly during the weeks appearing on course schedules, and then making every effort to do so. Such participation may include the following: completing quizzes or exams; emailing faculty or class members as part of an assignment; discussion board posting or response; turning in an assignment; or other communication reflecting ongoing learning in the course. When unavoidable situations result in non-participation, students are responsible for acquiring any information missed. Instructors are not obliged to allow students to make up missed work. Per their independent discretion, individual instructors may determine how participation affects students’ ability to meet course learning objectives and whether participation affects course grades.

Grading Scale

			Grade Definitions (optional)
A	93-100	4.0 grade points per semester hour	
A-	90-92	3.7 grade points per semester hour	
B+	87-89	3.3 grade points per semester hour	
B	83-86	3.0 grade points per semester hour	
B-	80-82	2.7 grade points per semester hour	
C+	77-79	2.3 grade points per semester hour	
C	73-76	2.0 grade points per semester hour	
C-	70-72	1.7 grade points per semester hour	

D+	67-69	1.3 grade points per semester hour	
D	63-66	1.0 grade point per semester hour	
D-	60-62	0.7 grade points per semester hour	
F	0-59	0.0 grade points per semester hour	

Incomplete Grades

Students requesting a grade of Incomplete (I) must understand that incomplete grades may be given only upon approval of the faculty member involved. An “I” may be assigned only when a student is currently passing a course and in situations involving extended illness, serious injury, death in the family, or employment or government reassignment, not student neglect.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructors prior to the end of the semester, plus filing the appropriate completed and approved academic request form with the Registrar’s Office. The “I” must be removed (by completing the remaining course requirements) no later than 60 calendar days after the close of the term or semester in which the grade was awarded, or the “I” will become an “F.”

Academic Honesty

Absolute truth is an essential belief and basis of behavior for those who believe in a God who cannot lie and forbids falsehood. Academic honesty is the application of the principle of truth in the classroom setting. Academic honesty includes the basic premise that all work submitted by students must be their own and any ideas derived or copied from elsewhere must be carefully documented.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- cheating of any kind,
- submitting, without proper approval, work originally prepared by the student for another course,
- plagiarism, which is the submitting of work prepared by someone else as if it were his own, and
- failing to credit sources properly in written work.

Institutional Assessment

Material submitted by students in this course may be used for assessment of the college’s academic programs. Since programmatic and institutional assessment is done without reference to specific students, the results of these assessments have no effect on a student’s course grade or academic standing at the college. Before submitting a student’s work for this type of assessment, the course instructor redacts the work to remove anything that identifies the student.

Institutional Email Policy

All official college email communications to students enrolled in this course will be sent exclusively to students’ institutional email accounts. Students are expected to check their student email accounts regularly and to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to all communications from faculty and administrative departments.

Students are permitted to setup automatic forwarding of emails from their student email accounts to one or more personal email accounts. The student is responsible to setup and maintain email forwarding without assistance from college staff. If a student chooses to use this forwarding option, he/she will continue to be responsible for responding appropriately to all communications from faculty and administrative departments of the college. Criswell College bears no responsibility for the use of emails that have been forwarded from student email accounts to other email accounts.

Identity Verification

Students enrolled in Distance Education courses are required to present a photo ID to verify their participation in each course at the beginning of the term. Confirmation will occur through live-streamed meetings, video assignments, scheduled video conference calls, and/or another online video medium the instructor assigns.

Disabilities

Criswell College recognizes and supports the standards set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and similar state laws, which are designed to eliminate discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. Criswell College is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualifying students, faculty, and employees with disabilities as required by applicable laws. For more information, please contact the Student Services Office.

Intellectual Property Rights

Unless otherwise specifically instructed in writing by the instructor, students must neither materially nor digitally reproduce materials from any course offered by Criswell College for or with the significant possibility of distribution.

Resources and Support

Canvas and SONIS: Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based learning tool and SONIS for student data. Students needing assistance with Canvas should contact the Canvas Help Support line at (844) 358-6140. Tech support is available at this number, twenty-four hours a day. Students needing help with SONIS should contact the Campus Software Manager at studenttechsupport@criswell.edu.

Student Services: The Student Services Office exists to foster and encourage success in all areas of life—physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional. Students are encouraged to reach out for assistance by contacting the office at 214.818.1332 or studentservices@criswell.edu. Pastoral and certified counseling services are also available to Criswell students. Appointments are scheduled through the Dean of Students, at deanofstudents@criswell.edu.

Wallace Library: Students can access academic resources and obtain research assistance by contacting or visiting the Wallace Library, which is located on campus. For more information, email the Wallace Library at library@criswell.edu. Offsite login information is available in Canvas in the “Criswell Student Training Course” under “Library Information.”

Tutoring Center: Students are encouraged to consult with tutors to improve and enhance their skills and confidence in any subject matter taught at the college. Tutors have been recommended by the faculty to ensure that the tutor(s) are qualified to serve the student body. Every tutor brings experience and expertise in an effort to provide the proper resources for the subject matter at hand. To consult with a tutor, students can visit the Tutoring Center located on the second floor in room E203, or schedule an appointment by emailing tutoringcenter@criswell.edu or by calling 214.818.1373.

Distance Education

Students participating in courses through Distance Education, with or without live interaction, must complete the academic requirements for those courses with the integrity and commitment necessary to participate in and benefit from all of the exercises provided by the instructor for learning the subject matter of the course. Therefore, credit for Distance Education courses is the same as credit for courses taken on campus.

Online Class Discussions

It will be endeavored to have once-a-month discussions. These will take place by way of Zoom (or equivalent). Through an Announcement, the professor will provide the Invitations to the students before the meeting. This is being done to ensure student-to-student interaction. It will also accomplish a need to verify the identity of the students. If a student does not participate live, the student will be required to make other Zoom arrangements with the professor.

Course Outline/Calendar

				Read	Read	25%	30%	10%	35%
Date	DoW	Class	Part/Section/Subject Matter	Peterson	Evans	Exam	PP	TAOB	Research
19-Jan	Wed	1	The Nature of Religion	1	1				
26-Jan	Wed	2	Religious Experience	2	4				
2-Feb	Wed	3	Faith and Reason	3	8		PP-1		
9-Feb	Wed	4	Arguments about God's Existence	4	3				
16-Feb	Wed	5	Knowing God without Arguments	5	2		PP-2		
23-Feb	Wed	6	The Divine Attributes	6					
2-Mar	Wed	7	Divine Action	7			PP-3		
9-Mar	Wed	8	The Problem of Evil	8	7			TAOB	
16-Mar	Wed	-	Spring Break						
23-Mar	Wed	9	Atheism and Nonreligious Approaches to Religion	9			PP-4		
30-Mar	Wed	10	Miracles	10	5				
6-Apr	Wed	11	Life After Death	11			PP-5		
13-Apr	Wed	12	Religion and Science	12	6				
20-Apr	Wed	13	Religious Diversity	13			PP-6		
27-Apr	Wed	14	Religion and Morality	14					
4-May	Wed	15	Review						Research
11-May	Wed	16	Exam, Final			Exam			

