



# Online Course Syllabus

## Phi 502

### Philosophy of Religion

### Spring 2024

#### Contact Information

**Instructor Name:** Dr. Ray Wilkins

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**Instructor Office Hours:** By appointment

#### 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

- Analyze and process the language of philosophical theology.
- Investigate some of the major historical thinkers, principles, ideas, and theories in the field of philosophical theology.
- critically evaluate arguments and beliefs, as presented in our texts.
- Be able to articulate and support one's own conclusions regarding the various topics discussed in Philosophy of Religion.
- Be able to link philosophical theology to contemporary life.
- Explain various problems that religious belief and practice present to us and evaluate possible solutions.
- Do all the above from a biblical, Christian perspective.

#### Required Textbooks

Bavinck, Herman, *Christian Worldview*. Trans. & Eds. Nathaniel Sutowo, James Eglington, and Cory Brock.

Wheaton: Crossway, 2019. ISBN 978-1433563195

Lee, Zach, *Logic for Christians: Critical Thinking for the People of God*. Houston: Lucid Books, 2021. ISBN 978-1632964380.

Peterson, Michael, et al, editors. *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Oxford, 2014.

ISBN-10: 0199303444; ISBN-13: 978-0199303441

The professor may at times assign additional reading. These will be announced ahead of time and will be given to the students as either an on-line link or PDF.

## Recommended Reading

J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2003. ISBN: 0830826947

Anthony C. Thiselton, *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Religion*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002. ISBN-10: 0801031206; ISBN-13: 978-0801031205

## Course Requirements and Assignments

1. **Weekly Summary (15%).** Students will submit a 2–3-page **single-spaced** summary of each week's reading assignment. The Summary should include critical reflection and evaluation of the reading.
2. **Book Review (15%).** A 4–5-page book review of Herman Bavinck's, *Christian Worldview*. The book review should be **double-spaced**, include a brief introduction, a summary of the contents, and a critical evaluation of the work.
3. **Discussion Questions (30%).** Throughout the semester discussion questions will be posted in Canvas. The Discussion Question will be posted on Sunday and each student will have till Wednesday to respond. Then, each student must respond to at least two other students' posts. The Question will be due the following Sunday.
4. **Midterm & Final (20%).** There will be two exams, a midterm and a final. The exams will cover the material up to the date of the exam. The final exam will cover the material between the midterm and the final. The exams will be a combination of T/F, Matching, and Short Answer.
5. **Research Paper (20%).** Each student will write a minimum **15-page** double-spaced research paper on a relevant topic in the field of Philosophy of Religion. The paper should meet the Criswell guidelines, include a table of contents, a works cited, and include at minimum 3 journal articles in their works cited. The proper citation for the research paper will be footnotes.

## Online Course Information

In an online course at Criswell College:

1. Instructors and all students enrolled in that course meet using video-conferencing technology at scheduled class times through the course of a semester or term in order to meet 25–30% of the direct faculty instruction required by the college's Credit Hour policy.
2. The remaining direct faculty instruction is delivered using other means such as:
  - Lectures/instruction for students to watch asynchronously
  - Online content modules in which instructor provides feedback to student work
  - Tests/quizzes on which instructor provides feedback
  - Discussion boards on which instructor provides feedback

Canvas: Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based learning tool to host/deliver all instructional materials, discussions, assessments, files, and other peripheral tools and applications that support teaching and learning. In online courses at Criswell College, instructors design and use Canvas to:

- organize course content on a module basis using organizational tools within Canvas,
- control the timing of course requirements through module control or assignment due dates to ensure that students are engaged for the full length of the semester or term,
- accept assignments from students only inside the Canvas course (emailed assignments are not acceptable),

- provide written feedback on assignments only within Canvas, preferably through Speedgrader,
- use the Announcement or e-mail feature in Canvas to communicate to the students rather than by broadcasting to a class email listserv outside of Canvas.

Zoom in Canvas is used for all synchronous class sessions.

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.

## **Course/Classroom Policies and Information**

1. The instructor will work with the students the first week of the semester to determine an appropriate time for the direct faculty instruction via zoom.
2. During the scheduled Zoom meetings, students are expected to be present, with video on and audio turned on when appropriate.
3. Proper Christian etiquette between Students and between Students and the Professor is expected. The Professor will respect the Students and their opinions, even where there may be disagreements, and the same is expected from the Students.
4. No recording is to take place without prior approval from the Professor.

## **Attendance**

Students are responsible for enrolling in courses for which they (1) anticipate being able to attend every on-campus class session on the day and time appearing on course schedules, or (2) participating in academically related activities as identified in online-course schedules including synchronous class sessions conducted remotely by video, and then making every effort to do so. When unavoidable situations result in absence or tardiness, students are responsible for acquiring any missed information. Professors are not obliged to allow students to make up missed work. Per their independent discretion, individual professors may determine how attendance affects students' ability to meet course learning objectives and whether attendance affects course grades. Professors apprise students of such information in course syllabi.

Students receiving grants, loans, or scholarships must meet specified requirements of various departments at the college and should consult relevant sections of the *Academic Catalog*. To ensure such funds will not be forfeited, students are responsible for contacting the proper departments to ascertain any specific course participation requirements and consequences of not meeting such requirements. Students receiving grants, loans, or scholarships should consult the Financial Aid office.

While Criswell College is a non-attendance taking institution, it nevertheless must demonstrate that students begin their courses in order to comply with Federal Aid regulations. Accordingly, students must participate in academically related activities during census periods. Failure to meet this requirement will result in students being administratively dropped from courses.

Academically related activity is defined as any course-related activity that may be used as evidence of attendance. Examples include:

- physical presence in a classroom during a class session with the instructor present,
- participation in a synchronous remote video class session with the instructor present,

- submission of an academic assignment, quiz, or exam,
- participation in an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction,
- participation in a study group or discussion board that is assigned by the instructor,
- documentation showing that the student and a faculty member corresponded about the academic subject of the course.

**NOTE:** Logging into a Canvas course alone and logging into a Synchronous Online class session without active participation or with the camera off are not considered attendance.

**NOTE:** A census period begins on the first day of a semester/term and runs through the end of the last day to drop courses. During the census period, attendance data is collected in order to demonstrate compliance with Federal Aid regulations. There is no census period for winter terms since there is no last day to drop courses.

## Grading Scale

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.

## **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.

## Research and Writing Standards

The default writing style for written assignments in Criswell College Courses is the latest edition of *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations* by Kate Turabian. However, instructors are free to require alternative writing styles in their courses. These styles include but are not limited to the American Psychological Association (APA), Chicago Manual of Style, Modern Language Association (MLA), and Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) writing guides.

## Resources and Support

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](mailto:studentservices@criswell.edu). The Student Services Office also works with local counseling centers to ensure that every student has access to helpful mental health resources. More information can be found at [Criswell College Mental Health Resources](#), and students may contact the Director of Student Services if they have any questions.

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](mailto: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 schedule an appointment through Calendly (<https://calendly.com/criswell-tutoringcenter>) or by visiting the Tutoring Center located on the second floor in room E203. For questions, call 214.818.1373 or email at [tutoringcenter@criswell.edu](mailto:tutoringcenter@criswell.edu).

## Course Outline/Calendar

Date	Content	Weekly Reading	Major Assignments
Jan. 16	What is Logic?	Lee, Pt. 1	Weekly Summary

Jan. 23	Logic Cont.	<b>Lee</b> , Pt. 2	Weekly Summary <b>Q#1</b>
Jan. 30	Thinking about Religion	<b>Peterson</b> , Introduction & Pt.1	Weekly Summary <b>Q#2</b>
Feb. 6	Religion and Experience	<b>Peterson</b> , Pt.2	Weekly Summary <b>Q#3</b>
Feb. 13	Faith & Reason	<b>Peterson</b> , Pt.3	Weekly Summary <b>Book Review</b>
Feb. 20	Arguments for God's Existence.	<b>Peterson</b> , Pt.4, pgs. 127-176	Weekly Summary <b>Q#4</b>
Feb. 27	Arguments Cont.	<b>Peterson</b> , Pt.4, pgs. 177-201	Weekly Summary
Mar. 5	Religious Epistemology	<b>Peterson</b> , Pt.5	Weekly Summary <b>Q#5</b>
Mar. 12	<b>Spring Break!</b>		
Mar. 19	The Divine Attributes	<b>Peterson</b> , Pt.6	Weekly Summary <b>Midterm</b>
Mar 26	Divine Action	<b>Peterson</b> , Pt.7	Weekly Summary <b>Q#6</b>
Apr. 2	Evil & Suffering	<b>Peterson</b> , Pt.8	Weekly Summary
Apr. 9	<b>Research paper</b>	I want you to take this week to focus on the completion of your research paper.	

Apr. 16	Miracles	<b>Peterson, Pt. 10</b>	Weekly Summary <b>Q#7</b> <b>Research Paper Due!</b>
Apr. 23	Religion & Science	<b>Peterson, Pt. 12</b>	Weekly Summary
Apr. 30	Religion & Morality	<b>Peterson, Pt. 14</b>	Weekly Summary
May 7	<b>Finals</b>		

## Selected Bibliography

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Craig Bartholomew and Michael W. Boheen, *Christian Philosophy: A Systematic and Narrative Introduction*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013. ISBN 10: 0801039118; ISBN 13: 978-0801039119.

Montague Brown. *Restoration of Reason: The Eclipse and Recovery of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006. ISBN 10: 0801031540; ISBN 13: 978-0801031540.

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Paul Copan & William Lane Craig, *Creation Out of Nothing: A Biblical, Philosophical, and Scientific Exploration*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.

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Douglas Groothuis, *Truth Decay: Defending Christianity Against the Challenges of Postmodernism*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000. ISBN-10: 0830822283; ISBN-13: 978-0830822287.

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- J. P. Moreland. *Christianity and the Nature of Science*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1999. ISBN-10: 0801062497; ISBN-13: 978-0801062490.
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- James W. Sire, *Why Should Anyone Believe Anything at All?* Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1994.
- R. Scott Smith, *Truth and the New Kind of Christian: The Emerging Effects of Postmodernism in the Church*, Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2005. ISBN-10: 1581347405; ISBN-13: 978-1581347401.
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- Richard Swinburne. *The Existence of God*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004. ISBN 10-0199271682; ISBN 13: 978-0199271689.