



**Online Course Syllabus**  
**PHI 502 :01**  
**Philosophy of Religion**  
**Spring 2025**

### **Contact Information**

**Instructor Name:** Dr. Ray Wilkins

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**Instructor Phone:** 972-740-6548 Cell

**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.
- Link some areas of philosophical theology to contemporary life.
- Present critical evaluation relating to one or more topics in philosophical theology.
- Support one's own conclusions concerning one or more topics in philosophical theology.
- Do all of the above from a biblical, Christian, perspective.

### **Required Textbooks**

Herman Bavinck, *Christian Worldview*, Wheaton: Crossway Publishers, 2019. ISBN: 978-1433563195.

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

Michael Peterson, et al, editors. *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings*, 5th ed. New York: Oxford, 2014. ISBN-10:0199303444; ISBN-13: 978-0199303441.

### **Recommended Reading**

J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2003. ISBN: 978-0830826947.

Anthony 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. 2-3 page summary over each week's reading (**average is 15% of final grade**). The summary must be single spaced and not only include a summary of the reading **but** the student's critical reflection upon the assigned reading.
2. **Discussion Questions (30% of final grade)** will be posted throughout the semester. The purpose of these discussion questions is to foster critical thinking and develop reasoned responses to important questions. Discussion questions will be posted on a Sunday and students will have till Wednesday to respond to the question. Then, each student must respond to at least two of their fellow students responses. The Discussion question will be due on the following Saturday.
3. One research/position paper (**20% of final grade**), 15-18 pages. The meaning of research/position is this: do good research on a topic, issue, idea, or thinker, etc. *relevant to the course* (clear your topic with the professor before beginning work) and take a personal position. Argue your position clearly and carefully, anticipating and defending against objections (minimum 4 books, 2 journal articles, *not including* internet sources, assigned texts, the Bible, dictionaries, and encyclopedias). This paper should include a cover sheet, table of contents or outline page, body of the essay, and a works cited page. Number of pages applies only to the body of the essay.
4. Book review, **4-5 pages (15% of final grade)**. Each student will write a review of Herman Bavinck's, *Christian Worldview*. The book review should give a summary of the book followed by critical reflection from the reviewer (i.e. Strengths, weaknesses, etc.). Student's should review a current Criswell Journal for the proper form and style of Book Reviews.
5. **Mid-Term & Final Exam (20% of final grade)**.

## Online Course Information

In an online course at Criswell College:

1. To meet 25–30% of the direct faculty interaction required by the college's Credit Hour policy, instructors and all students enrolled in an online course will meet at scheduled class times throughout a semester/term using the video conferencing app, Zoom, found in the left-hand global menu in Canvas. Student cameras must remain on during the entirety of these video-conferencing sessions. (In order to be properly identified, students must upload a picture ID to their Canvas Account Profile *prior to the first online meeting.*)
2. The remaining direct faculty instruction is delivered using other means such as:
  - Lectures/instruction for students to watch at their convenience but in accordance with assignment due dates
  - 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 Management System (LMS). In online courses at Criswell College, instructors 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 with the students rather than by broadcasting to a class email listserv outside of Canvas.
- use Zoom in Canvas for all “live” (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.

## Identity Verification

Students enrolled in online courses must verify their identity through the term for each course. Identity confirmation occurs through scheduled video conference calls, scheduled submission of assignments, quizzes or exams, participation in online discussions, student/instructor communication, and a picture ID submitted in the Canvas profile. For instructions on how to upload a profile picture, [click here](#).

## Course/Classroom Policies and Information

**Recording devices, recording, use of technology, and social media:** Students may not take pictures, video recordings, or audio recordings of anyone or anything course, class, or class-room related without prior, written approval from the professor. Students may not post or share anything course, class, or classroom related on any sort of social or other media without permission from the professor and any student(s) who might be affected. Student use of computer, smartphone, and /or other device technology should be specifically limited to material being covered in class during the time it is being covered. During class students should silence electronic devices and make every effort to avoid being distracted or distracting others, whether with what is normally referred to as “technology,” or with any sort of potential distraction. The professor may ask a student to leave for any reason, *if the professor believes* the student poses a safety threat, is being disrespectful, or is being a distraction to the professor or other students.

### All written assignments:

- Typed, not handwritten
- 1” margins
- If notes are used, use footnotes (not endnotes or parenthetical references)
- 12 pt. Times New Roman font
- Double spacing (**Except Weekly Summaries**)
- Stapled in upper left corner. No special bindings, please.
- Parenthetical references for Scripture
- Printed on one side of paper only

- Proof-read, or have someone proof-read, your work (no careless error: i.e., grammar, spelling, form, style, etc.)
- Students are encouraged to read Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*, Margaret Shertzer's *The Elements of Grammar*, and Joseph Williams's *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace*
- No substantive part of the paper should have appeared in any paper which has been submitted (or will be submitted this semester) for credit in a course other than this one
- Number of pages required applies only to the body of the essay
- It is always best to write in Third person. First person is acceptable if not overused.
- Final (research/position) paper should include cover sheet, table of contents or outline page, and works cited page

## 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 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 "live" (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 an online 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."

**NOTE:** No end-of-semester extensions (i.e., "Incompletes") will be granted for students taking Criswell College courses through Acadeum.

## Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is essential to the integrity of the College's academic programs and to the success of its students. Defining and addressing academic dishonesty helps to ensure the maintenance of academic honesty among students.

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/her own,
- failing to credit sources properly in written work.

## **Course Policy on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

(Delete section if not needed or enter policies and/or information applicable to your course or classroom. Create relevant subheadings as desired.)

### **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.

**NOTE:** Acadeum students should have their Home Institution contact Criswell's Acadeum Student Contact and [acadeum@criswell.edu](mailto:acadeum@criswell.edu)

### **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 Assignment/Reading	Major Assignments
Jan. 20	What is Logic?	Lee: Pt. 1	Summary
Jan. 27	Logic Cont.	Lee: Pt. 2	Summary <b>Discussion Question #1</b>
Feb. 3	Thinking about Religion	Peterson: Intro. & Pt. 1	Summary

Feb. 10	Religion & Experience	Peterson, Pt. 2	Summary <b>Discussion Question #2</b>
Feb. 17	Faith & Reason	Peterson, Pt. 3	Summary <b>Book Review</b>
Feb. 24	Arguments for God's Existence	Peterson, Pt. 4, pgs. 127-176	Summary
Mar. 3	Arguments Cont.	Peterson, Pt. 4, pgs. 177-201	Summary <b>Discussion Question #4</b>
Mar. 10	Religious Epistemology	Peterson, Pt. 5	Summary
Mar. 17	<b>Spring Break!</b>		
Mar. 24	The Divine Attributes	Peterson, Pt. 6, pgs. 229-249; John Gill, <i>Doctrinal Divinity</i> , Chps. 5-8 (accessed online).	Summary <b>Midterm</b>
Mar 31	The Divine Attributes Cont.	Peterson, Pt. 6 pgs. 250-265. John Feinberg, <i>No One Like Him</i> , ch.9 (accessed online at Wallace Library).	Summary
Apr. 7	Divine Action	Peterson, Pt. 7	Summary <b>Discussion Question #5</b>
Apr. 14	Evil & Suffering	Peterson, Pt. 8; John Feinberg, <i>No One Like Him</i> (available online, Wallace Library) ch. 16.	Summary
Apr. 21	Miracles	Peterson, Pt. 10	Summary
Apr. 28	Religion & Science	Peterson, Pt. 12	Summary

May 5	<b>Research paper</b>		Paper due at the end of this week.
May 12	<b>Finals</b>		<b>Final exam</b>

## Selected Bibliography

Diogenes Allen and Eric Springsted, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007. ISBN 10: 0664231802; ISBN 13: 978-0664231804

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.

Nigel Brush. *The Limitations of Scientific Truth: Why Science Can't Answer Life's Ultimate Questions*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2005. ISBN-10: 0825422531; ISBN-13: 978-0825422539.

Paul Copan, *How Do You Know You Are Not Wrong?* Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005. ISBN-10: 0801064996; ISBN-13: 978-0801064999.

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

William Lane Craig, *The Cosmological Argument: From Plato to Leibniz*, Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2001.

William Lane Craig, *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*, Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2000.

C. Stephen Evans & R. Zachary Manis, *Philosophy of Religion: Thinking About Faith*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009.

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

Andreas Köstenberger, ed. *Whatever Happened to Truth*, Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2005. ISBN-10: 1581347723; ISBN-13: 978-1581347722.

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.

Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff, eds. *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991. ISBN-10: 0268009651; ISBN-13: 978-0268009656

Alvin Plantinga. *God, Freedom, and Evil*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989. ISBN-10: 0802817319; ISBN-13: 978-0802817310.

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.

W. Jay Wood, *Epistemology: Becoming Intellectually Virtuous*, Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1998.

Richard Swinburne. *Faith and Reason*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005. ISBN 10: 0199283931; ISBN 13 978-0199283934.

Richard Swinburne. *The Existence of God*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004. ISBN 10-0199271682; ISBN 13: 978-0199271689.

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