“Religion at its best has always sought to promote peace and good will among men. This is true of all of the great religions of the world. In their ethical systems, we find the love ethic standing at the center. This is true of Judaism, this is true of Christianity, this is true of Islam, of Hinduism and Buddhism, and if we go right through all the great religions of the world we find this central message of love and this idea of the need for peace, the need for understanding and the need for good will among men. Now the problem has been that these noble creeds and ethical insights of the great religions have not been followed by the adherents of the particular religions, and we must face the shameful fact that all too many religious people have been religious in their creeds but not enough in their deeds. . . .There is a need for individual religions to realize that God has revealed Himself to all religions and there is some truth in all. And no religion can permit itself to be so arrogant that it fails to see that God has not left Himself without a witness, even though it may be in another religion.”


Transfer Credit:
CSU, UC

Course Description:
This course will examine philosophical theories of the nature of religion, arguments for the existence of God, the nature of miracles, religious experience, faith and pragmatic reasons for belief, arguments from evil, God and morality, religious diversity, God and language, atheism and agnosticism, and life after death. The course will examine traditional and contemporary theories of philosophy of religion while students are also engaged in understanding the fundamentals of philosophy.

Texts:
• Charles Taliaferro, Philosophy of Religion (Oneworld, 2009) = PR
• Charles Huenemann, Spinoza’ s Radical Theology (Acumen, 2014) = SRT

Student Learning Outcomes:
By the end of this course you should be able to do the following:

• Compare and contrast Western and non-Western approaches to religion and religious experience.
• Use the vocabulary of the philosophy of religion.
• Explain at least two arguments for the existence of God and two arguments against the existence of God.
• Think critically about sacred texts and their interpretation.

Course Requirements:
1. Show up regularly and on time. Be prepared to discuss the readings. You should carefully read the assignment before class, noting difficult passages and writing down any questions you’d like to pose in class. You should also briefly reread the assignment after class to confirm that you now understand the author’s main points. NOTE: you must turn off, and place in your pocket or bag under your desk, all electronic devices before class begins (unless you have a demonstrable need); there is absolutely no texting permitted during class. Students who violate this policy may be asked to leave class.
NOTE: I reserve the right to drop any student who is absent for more than six class sessions during the course. Also, if you leave class early without permission, you will be considered absent for that session.

2. Take three exams, the first two of which each counts for 35% of your final grade, and the last of which counts for 30% of your final grade.

3. Final grades will be based on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90 - 100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - 89</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 - 79</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 69</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 59</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Cheating and plagiarism are ethically unacceptable and will result in automatic failure for a particular assignment. For the official Cerritos College Academic Honesty/Dishonesty Policy, see [http://cms.cerritos.edu/academic-affairs/academic-honesty](http://cms.cerritos.edu/academic-affairs/academic-honesty).

5. If you have a disability for which you would like to request an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both me and the Disabled Student Programs and Services at (562) 860-2451 ext. 2335, as early as possible in the term.

6. If you are a veteran and would like to take advantage of such support services as counseling and tutoring, please contact the Veterans Resource Center on campus (TE-8), 562-860-2451 ext. 3716 ([http://cms.cerritos.edu/va/veterans-resource-center.htm](http://cms.cerritos.edu/va/veterans-resource-center.htm)).

**Standards for Classroom Behavior and Discussion:**

Our goal in this course is to achieve respectful philosophical dialogue in which everyone feels that his or her ideas and contributions to the class are respected. This means not only that we should speak in certain ways, but also that we should listen in certain ways. Respectful philosophical dialogue demands that even if we strongly disagree with others, we should be very careful not to speak in a way that demeans them or their ideas. We should instead engage in active listening—a technique that helps us to be less defensive in responding to criticism or disagreement. Mindful, active listening requires each of us to focus on the words of the person speaking rather than on what we ourselves might want to say, and to reserve judgment until he or she has finished speaking and we are sure that we really understand his or her perspective. At the very least, active listening requires the following respectful behavior:

- No sleeping in class—but daydreaming is okay!
- If you are tired or ill, please stay home and get some rest.
- No side conversations, passing notes, or texting.
- No body language that is disrespectful (e.g., sighs, eye-rolling, muttering under your breath, throw-away comments after a speaker is finished).

**Reading Assignments:**

1. **Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion**

- 8/18 Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion
- 8/20 PR, pp. 1-23
- 8/25 PR, pp. 24-47
- 8/27 “ ”
- 9/1 No Class – Labor Day
- 9/3 PR, pp. 48-60
- 9/8 PR, pp. 60-68
- 9/10 PR, pp. 68-78
- 9/15 **Movie on Darwin**
- 9/17 PR, pp. 78-85
- 9/22 **Exam #1**
II. Spinoza’s Philosophy of Religion

11/17  **Movie: Spinoza, Apostle of Reason**

11/19  SRT, pp. xiii-10
11/24  SRT, pp. 11-29
11/26  SRT, pp. 31-57
12/1   SRT, pp. 59-80
12/3   SRT, pp. 81-107
12/8   SRT, pp. 109-30
12/10  SRT, pp. 131-41
12/17  **Exam #3 (10am - 12pm)**