



Advancing God's Kingdom by Preparing Competent Christian  
Leaders for Spirit-Empowered Life and Ministry

## **G330 - CB/DE Reason and Christian Belief**

3 credits. Prerequisites: G143 Worldviews and Contemporary Culture

*This course transfers to the University of Saskatchewan.*

**April 27-July 31, 2020**

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### **Course Content and Goals**

#### **Course Description**

A study of philosophical issues arising from religious belief and practice, such as: the relation between faith and reason, arguments for the existence of God, the problem of evil, the relation between religion and science, and religious pluralism.

#### **Relationship to Horizon's Mission**

As part of Horizon's mission to prepare leaders for Christian life and ministry, this course helps students evaluate philosophical reasons for or objections to having faith in God. Therefore, the primary area of [competency](#) development that applies to this course is:

- Contextual Awareness: Demonstrated by a maturing orthodox Christian worldview, a healthy self-understanding, and engagement of people and cultures with wisdom and discernment.

#### **Competency and Learning Outcomes**

To demonstrate competency in *Contextual Awareness* students will:

- 1) Compare and contrast an evangelical Christian worldview with that of postmodernism.
  - Assessment: Postmodernism Assignment.
- 2) Analyze, interpret, and critique texts related to religious belief.
  - Assessment: Response to Objections papers.
- 3) Respond to philosophical objections to belief in God.
  - Assessment: Response to Objections papers.
- 4) Explain their level of confidence for believing in God using philosophical resources.
  - Assessment: Belief in God Paper.

In addition, students will gain an introductory understanding of the primary issues in philosophy of religion.

## **Course Work**

### **Textbooks**

Evans, C. Stephan, and R. Zachary Manis. *Philosophy of Religion: Thinking about Faith*. 2nd ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009. (ISBN: 0830838767)

Peterson, Michael L., and Raymond J. Vanarragon, ed. *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Religion*. 2nd edition. Oxford: Blackwell, 2020. (ISBN: 978-1119028451).

\*\*Students are responsible to purchase textbooks from a third-party retailer. For your convenience, Horizon has partnered with Kennedy's Parable to provide textbooks.

### **Course Activities and Assignments**

**Portfolio Components. One of your *Response to Objections* papers.** This assignment must be edited and submitted to the Contextual Awareness *e-Project* in your Portfolio on *Portfolium*. See the [Portfolio Guide](#): "What Goes in My Portfolio" for further information.

- Note regarding readings/viewing
  - PR* = *Philosophy of Religion* by Evans and Manis
  - CD* = *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Religion* edited by Peterson and Vanarragon
  - Lesson = Documents, links, and videos available in the lessons on Populi.

#### 1. *Lecture Attendance and Interaction*

Your lecture interaction will take place in each of the lesson discussions on Populi ([see an example here](#)). "Attending" lectures for this course involves watching lectures on Populi, completing required readings, and taking notes. By the following due dates, **submit a statement indicating how many of the lessons you completed:**

→ Lessons 1-3 by **May 8**      → Lessons 4-5 by **June 10**      → Lessons 6-7 by **July 10**

To demonstrate your participation, plan to make *three or more posts of about 100 words for each lesson*. For your posts, act as though you were actually in class on campus, and then post whatever you would have said if you shared in class. Within your posts, you should also be responding to other students. This assignment will be marked as complete or incomplete.

#### *Accessing Online Lesson Discussions*

- Within a lesson, click on the discussion on the right side of the page ([see an example here](#)).
- If you are submitting *a new post*, scroll to the bottom of the discussion and enter your post in the dialogue box. Click on "Leave a comment" to post your thoughts.
- If you are submitting *a response to someone else*, please click on "reply" at the bottom of their post. This will open a new box that will allow your reply to appear underneath their post.

- Related learning outcomes: all.
- **Assignment Length:** 3 or more 100-word posts per lesson.
- **Due dates:** May 8, June 10, July 10

## 2. Postmodernism Assignment

To prepare for this assignment, read chapter 1 in *PR* and read/view the content in the lesson 2 on Populi. In a short assignment you will compare and contrast an evangelical Christian worldview with that of postmodernism. To complete the assignment, you will:

- a) Either meet with me in person (or online, e.g. Skype) for about 5 minutes or write a maximum of one page double spaced.
  - b) Begin by defining and describing postmodernism (1/2 of the assignment).
  - c) Note how postmodernism is consistent with and inconsistent with an evangelical Christian worldview (1/2 of the assignment).
  - d) Explicitly draw on and cite both the class lecture material and your *PM* reading/viewing (links will be listed on Populi). I am *not* looking for you to report on what other authors have said, but rather for you to draw on their material and synthesize it (when helpful) into your own evaluation of postmodernism.
- Related learning outcome: 1.
  - **Assignment Length:** One page or 5 min. **Due date:** May 4

## 3. Responses to Objections

In three papers you will respond to philosophical objections that are sometimes made regarding Christianity and sometimes even belief in a divine being in general. The three papers are based on the following material:

→Evil

- PR* ch 7.
- Lesson material on Populi.
- CD* ch 6 “Is Evil Evidence Against Belief in God?” pp. 139-164.

→Science

- PR* ch 6.
- Lesson material on Populi.
- CD* ch 8 “Does Science Discredit Religion?” pp. 193-218.

→Pluralism

- PR* ch 8.
- Lesson material on Populi.
- CD* ch 7. “Can Only One Religion Be True?” pp. 243-266.

After completing the required reading you write a 900 word paper (max 3 pages) where you will:

- a) Summarize the objection as it is described by the author in *CD* (1 page).
- b) Defend your belief or unbelief in the God of Christianity by responding to the objection (1.5-2 pages). In this section of your paper, I’m not looking for you to provide a summary of what various authors have said. Rather, I expect you to draw on their material and synthesize it (when helpful) into your own evaluation of the objections.
- c) Draw on and cite via footnotes *CD*, *PR*, and the lesson material.

Don’t include a paragraph of introduction or conclusion. Instead, save the space for more substantial content. No bibliography is required.

- Related learning outcomes: 2, 3.
- **Assignment Length:** 900 words each. **Due dates:** May 19; June 2, 24

#### 4. *Belief in God Paper*

Using philosophical resources, write a 1300 word paper (4 pages max) explaining your level of confidence for believing in God. For this paper you are expected to draw on and cite:

- Populi lesson material.
- *PR* ch 2-4 and 8.

No bibliography is required. You are welcome to draw on your other course readings as you wish. In your paper:

- a) Explain how confident you are regarding the existence of God in light of what you have studied in this course.
- b) Note what philosophical ideas/arguments you found convincing (and why) and what you didn't find convincing (and why) to support your belief in God.
- c) Draw on and cite via footnotes both the lesson material and the *PR* readings.

• Related learning outcomes: 4.

• **Assignment Length:** 1300 words. **Due dates:** July 22

**Estimate of Time Investment** (individual time investments may vary)

	<i>Time (approx.)</i>	<i>Due Dates</i>
1. Lecture Attendance and Interaction	25 hours	May 8, June 10, July 10
2. Postmodernism Assignment	5 hours	May 4
3. Responses to Objections a) Evil b) Science c) Pluralism	45 hours	May 19 June 2 June 24
4. Belief in God Paper	20 hours	July 22
TOTAL	95 hours	

#### Assessment Rubrics

For this course, please find assessment rubrics on the Populi course page, in the lesson called "Assignment Assessment Rubrics."

## Course Timeline

*Please complete your assignments in the following order. The Lessons on Populi will indicate when to read from your textbooks.*

*Any required revisions will take place throughout the course since there is no “revision week” for DE courses.*

- Note regarding readings/viewing
  - PR = Philosophy of Religion (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) by Evans and Manis*
  - CD = Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Religion (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) ed by Peterson and Vanarragon*
  - Lesson = Documents, links, and videos available in the lessons on Populi.

Weeks 1 Read *PR* ch 1  
Lessons 1-2

Weeks 2-4 ***Due May 4 Postmodernism Assignment***  
Read *PR* ch 7  
Lessons 3  
***Due May 8 Statement of completion for Lessons 1-3***  
Read *CD* ch 6  
***Due May 19 Response to Objections: Evil***  
Read *PR* ch 6

Weeks 5-6 Lesson 4  
Read *CD* ch 8  
***Due June 2 Response to Objections: Science***

Weeks 7-9 Read *PR* ch 8  
Lesson 5  
***Due June 10 Statement of completion for Lessons 4-5***  
Read *CD* ch 7  
***Due June 24 Response to Objections: Pluralism***  
Read *PR* ch 2

Weeks 10-13 Read *PR* ch 3  
Lesson 6  
Read *PR* ch 4  
Lesson 7  
***Due July 10 Statement of completion for Lessons 6-7***  
***Due July 22 Belief in God Paper***

→End Submit any remaining revisions as necessary  
(revisions will take place throughout the course)

- No resubmissions of assignments will be accepted after **July 31, 2020.**

## **Academic Policies**

### **General Assignment Guidelines**

Please see the Horizon College and Seminary [Format Guide](#) for assignment submission and formatting guidelines. In addition, please note: I will accept submissions on [Populi](#) in either **MSWord format** (doc or docx is fine) or as **PDF files**.

### **Late Assignments and Extensions**

Students are expected to submit work by the assigned due dates, as part of their development of the Leadership and Administration competency. To submit extension requests, students must submit the [Assignment Extension Request Form online](#) and *before the due date*. Professors may grant extensions in the case of extenuating circumstances, such as significant illness or a family emergency. Furthermore, no extensions will be granted beyond the final day of a term or semester.

A late assignment will not be assessed until the student first meets with the professor or the Faculty Assistant to discuss whether the student's reasons for the late submission are acceptable. Unexcused late submissions will be tracked across each student's program. If one assignment is submitted more than five days late or if a student incurs multiple instances of unexcused late submissions, it will result in academic discipline, such as required tutoring, academic probation, failure of the course, or failure to qualify for graduation. Similar to standard human resource employment practices, students will receive warnings and conditions with increasing severity of academic discipline.

### **Resubmission of Assignments**

Students have until the Friday of revision week to submit revisions, and students can only submit up to two revisions for each assignment. Students should follow the revision schedule outlined above.

### **Horizon College Assessment of Student Work**

The goal of courses is to help students develop the stated competencies, not earn letter grades. Assignments are the means by which instructors evaluate development of those competencies. Consequently, students do not earn overall "grades" on individual assignments. Instead, assessment focuses on measuring students' competency as outlined in the syllabus and assignment rubric. For purposes of transferability to other institutions, the final competency designations will be translated to a comparable letter grade on a traditional transcript. The tables below explain Horizon's approach:

Horizon CBE Scale		Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point	U of S Equivalency
E	Exceeding	Student <b>exceeded requirements for some</b> elements of competency and met all remaining elements.	A+	4.0	90-100
			A	4.0	85-89
			A-	3.7	80-84
M	Meeting	Student <b>met requirements for all elements of competency</b> and may have exceeded in one.	B+	3.3	77-79
			B	3.0	73-76
			B-	2.7	70-72

Students pass a course only after they have demonstrated that they have *met or exceeded all* competency requirements for a course. If the student chooses not to meet all course competency requirements, the course will not be sufficient to fulfill their program requirements at Horizon. Nevertheless, for transferability purposes, the student will receive a letter grade of C+ or below on a traditional transcript.

BTM	Beginning to meet	Student was <b>beginning to meet requirements for any one or more</b> elements of competency, and met or exceeded competency requirements for all other elements.	C+	2.3	67-69
			C	2.0	63-66
			C-	1.7	60-62
NYM	Not yet meeting	Student was <b>not yet meeting requirements for one or more</b> elements of competency.	D+	1.3	57-59
			D	1.0	53-56
			D-	0.7	50-52
			F	0.0	0-49

### Academic Honesty

Horizon uses the University of Saskatchewan definition of plagiarism described as “the presentation of the work or idea of another in such a way as to give others the impression that it is the work or idea of the presenter. Adequate attribution is required. What is essential is that another person have no doubt which words or research results are the student’s and which are drawn from other sources” (Office of the University Secretary, 2012). Students are expected to give due recognition to sources from which all substantial phrases, sentences or even ideas are drawn. Note also that you may not submit work done in one course to satisfy the requirements of another course (unless both instructors agree beforehand to accept such work). See [here](#) for examples of plagiarism and further guidelines in the [Student Handbook](#).

### Disability Services Information

If you would benefit from learning accommodations due to pre-existing physical or mental health conditions or learning disabilities, contact the Academic or Student Life departments at the beginning of the course. Horizon will work to meet your learning and/or physical needs where possible. If any conditions arise during the course that you wish to disclose, please contact us as soon as possible. In all cases you will need to provide current [documentation](#) of the disability or condition you wish to disclose. Horizon takes appropriate care to ensure confidentiality about any such disclosures. For more information, contact Bob Williamson, Dean of Students, at [bwilliamson@horizon.edu](mailto:bwilliamson@horizon.edu); or Heather Wood, Associate Dean of Students, at [hwood@horizon.edu](mailto:hwood@horizon.edu).

### Use of Technology

Horizon encourages the use of electronic devices in the classroom to enhance learning. Careful consideration must be given to privacy issues, copyrighted materials, and the general care and concern for others. Please respect the following classroom policies:

- Please use online access for course learning only. This is a matter of respect for the instructor’s teaching, your own learning, and fellow students who may be distracted by other uses.

- Students should secure permission from the instructor to record any teaching material. This includes PowerPoint slides, white board illustrations, notes, and any form of audio or video.
- Student feedback is a valuable input for course improvements. Please resolve any classroom grievance about the instructor or course with the instructor personally, through the Horizon College and Seminary grievance procedures, or the Populi-based course evaluations. It is inappropriate to air classroom grievances on a social media platform.
- When instructors use recording mechanisms in the classroom, recorded materials will be used for the sole purpose of instruction and cannot be released to any social media outlet without the written consent of the students whose images have been recorded.
- In general, it is not acceptable to share photographs or videos of students in the classroom setting without permission from those whose images appear in such media.



## **Bibliography**

### ***Internet***

*A Dictionary of Philosophical Terms and Names*: <http://www.philosophypages.com/dy/>

*EpistemeLinks*: <http://www.epistemelinks.com>

*Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

### ***Books***

*\*Note: Most of these books contain bibliographies that can lead you to works on specific topics.*

Adams, Marilyn McCord, and Robert Merrihew Adams, ed. *The Problem of Evil*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Adler, Morimer J. *Truth in Religion: The Plurality of Religions and the Unity of Truth*. New York: Collier, 1990.

Alston, William P. *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991.

Beckwith, Francis J., William Lane Craig, and J. P. Moreland, ed. *To Everyone an Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004.

Blackburn, Simon. *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Brown, Colin. *Christianity and Western Thought: A History of Philosophers, Ideas and Movements: Volume 1, From the Ancient World to the Age of Enlightenment*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990.

Cahn, Steven M. *God, Reason, and Religion*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2006.

Caputo, John D. *Philosophy and Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2006.

Clark, Kelly James, Richard Lints, and James K. Smith. *101 Key Terms in Philosophy and Their Importance for Theology*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004.

Clouser, Roy. *Knowing With the Heart: Religious Experience and Belief in God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999.

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Davies, Brian. *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

D'Souza, Dinesh. *What's So Great about Christianity?* Washington: Regnery, 2007.

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- Edwards, Paul. *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 8 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1972.
- Evans, C. Stephen. *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics and Philosophy of Religion*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002.
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- Geivett, R. Douglas, and Gary R. Habermas, ed. *In Defense of Miracles: A Comprehensive Case for God's Action in History*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997.
- Habermas, Gary, and J. P. Moreland. *Beyond Death: Exploring the Evidence for Immortality*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1998.
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- Keller, Timothy. *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*. New York, NY: Dutton, 2008.
- Meister, Chad V. *Introducing Philosophy of Religion*. London: Routledge, 2009.
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- Murray, Michael J., and Michael Rea. *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
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- Peterson, Michael L., and Raymond J. Vanarragon. *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Religion*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.
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