



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

G330 Reason and Christian Belief

3 credits. Prerequisites: G143 Worldviews and Contemporary Culture

This course transfers to the University of Saskatchewan

January 18-February 26, 2021
Term C
Monday-Thursday, 9-10:30 AM

Nathan McCorkindale, M.A. Theology
nathan@forestgrovecc.com

"A genuine and robust faith will not shrink from the process of testing, for it is confident that it will indeed pass the test." – C. Stephen Evans and R. Zachary Manis

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.

Core Competencies 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 his or her 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.

Required Readings

Textbooks

Evans, C. Stephan, and R. Zachary Manis. *Philosophy of Religion: Thinking about Faith*. 2nd edition. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009. (ISBN: 978-0830838769)

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

**While students have the benefit of accessing their textbooks online through the Digital Theological Library, they will not have access to the Digital Theological Library upon graduation. Therefore, we encourage students to purchase select textbooks to build their personal library. For your convenience, Horizon has partnered with Kennedy's Parable to provide textbooks.

Course Assignments and Activities

Portfolio Component. Response to Objections. One of these assignments 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

PM = Links (posted on Populi) to blogs and videos about Postmodernism

1. Postmodernism Assignment

In a short assignment, you will compare and contrast an evangelical Christian worldview with that of postmodernism. To complete the assignment, you will:

- Write a maximum of one page double spaced.
- Begin by defining and describing postmodernism (1/2 page).
- Note how postmodernism is both consistent with and inconsistent with an evangelical Christian worldview (1/2 page).
- 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(s): #1.
 - **Assignment Length:** 1 page. **Due date:** January 25.

2. 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 (due Feb 3)
 - PR ch 7.
 - Class lecture material.
 - CD ch 6 “Is Evil Evidence Against Belief in God?” pp. 139-164.
- ➔ Science (due Feb 5)
 - PR ch 6.
 - Class lecture material.
 - CD ch 8 “Does Science Discredit Religion?” pp. 193-218.
- ➔ Pluralism (due Feb 12)
 - PR ch 8.
 - Class lecture material.
 - CD ch 10. “Is it Reasonable to Believe That Only One Religion is True?” pp. 243-266. *Note that the objection you are responding too is the second essay in this chapter, “It is Not Reasonable to Believe That Only One Religion is True,” by Peter Byrne.

After completing the required reading, you will 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 outcome(s): #2, 3.
- **Assignment Length:** 900 words each. **Due date:** Feb 3, 5, 12.

3. 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:

- Class lecture 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 your class lecture material and the *PR* readings.
- Related learning outcome(s): #4.
 - **Assignment Length:** 1300 words. **Due date:** Feb. 18

Estimate of Time Investment (individual time investments may vary)

Classroom time	30 hrs	
1. Postmodernism Assignment	5 hrs	Jan 25
2. Response to Objections	45 hrs	
a) Evil		Feb 3
b) Science		Feb 5
c) Pluralism		Feb 12
3. Belief in God Paper	20 hrs	Feb 18
Total =	100 hrs	

Assessment Rubrics

For this course, please find assessment rubrics on the Populi course page, in the lesson called "G330 Assessment Rubrics."

Course Outline / Class Schedule

Tentative Class Schedule

PR = *Philosophy of Religion* by Evans and Manis

CD = *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Religion* edited by Peterson and Vanarragon

PM = Links (posted on Populi) to blogs and videos about Postmodernism

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Reading/Viewing (before class)</u>	<u>Assignments Due</u>
Mon 18 Jan	Intro to the Course		
Tues 19Jan	cont'd		
Wed 20 Jan	The Relationship of Faith and Reason	<i>PR ch 1</i>	
Thurs 21 Jan	Cont'd		
Mon 25 Jan	Postmodernism.	<i>PM links</i>	<i>Postmodernism Assignment</i>
Tue 26 Jan.	The Problem of Evil		
Wed 27 Jan	No Class – Leadership Summit		
Thurs 28 Jan	No Class – Leadership Summit		
Mon 1 Feb	The Problem of Evil Cont'd.	<i>PR ch 7</i>	
Tue 2 Feb	The Problem of Evil Cont'd	<i>CD ch 6</i>	
Wed 3 Feb	Science and Faith.	<i>PR 6</i>	Response to Objection 1 (Evil)
Thurs 4 Feb	Science and Fath Cont'd.	<i>CD ch 8</i>	
			(Friday) Response to Objection 2 (Science)

Mon 8 Feb	Religious Pluralism	
Tues 9 Feb	Religious Pluralism Cont'd.	<i>PR 8, CD 10</i>
Wed 10 Feb	The Existence of God	
Thurs 11 Feb	The Existence of God Cont'd	<i>PR ch 2 & 3</i>
		(Friday) Response to Objection 3 (Pluralism)
Mon 15 Feb	---- No Class ----	Family Day
Tue 16 Feb	The Existence of God Cont'd	
Wed 17 Feb	Religious Experience	
Thurs 18 Feb	Religious Experience cont'd	<i>PR ch 4</i> Belief in God Paper

Academic Policies

- First submissions of assignments will not be accepted after February 19, 2021.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Revisions Due</u>
Mon 22 Feb	Resubmission of <i>Postmodernism Assignment</i> (as necessary)
Tues 23 Feb	Resubmission of <i>Response to Objections</i> (as necessary)
Wed 24 Feb	Resubmission of <i>Belief in God Paper</i> (as necessary)
Thurs 25 Feb	Second Resubmission of assignments (as necessary)
Fri 26 Feb	Final Resubmission of assignments (as necessary)

- No resubmission of assignments will be accepted after February 26, 2021

Academic Policies

General Assignment Guidelines

Please see the Horizon [Format Guide](#) for assignment submission, grammar, and formatting guidelines.

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 Adjunct Faculty Advisor 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 last day 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 exceeded competency requirements for some learning outcomes and met requirements for all remaining learning outcomes.	A+	4.0	90-100
			A	4.0	85-89
			A-	3.7	80-84
M	Meeting	Student met competency requirements for all learning outcomes 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 beginning to meet competency requirements for any one or more learning outcomes, and met or exceeded competency requirements for all other outcomes.	C+	2.3	67-69
			C	2.0	63-66
			C-	1.7	60-62
NYM	Not yet meeting	Student was not yet meeting competency requirements for one or more learning outcomes.	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; Heather Wood, Associate Dean of Students, at hwood@horizon.edu; or Leanne Bellamy, Academic Coach, at lbellamy@horizon.edu.

Class Attendance

Students should attend all classes in order to facilitate competency development. In the case of illness or other unforeseen circumstances, students may miss one day of a module course or three days of class in a term or semester course without academic penalty. A student must be present for the full duration of a class period in order to be registered as present for the class. Students who are absent for more than the number of classes stated above will automatically fail the course. Students wishing to be exempted from this policy due to extenuating circumstances may make an academic appeal, where they will need to document and verify those circumstances. Students who miss a class are responsible to get missed notes or handouts from another student, rather than from the professor.

Campus Health Policy

While on campus, please maintain 2 metres of physical distance between yourself and others. Do not come on campus if you are experiencing symptoms (even if they are mild) of fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, chills, runny nose, or a loss of your sense of taste or smell. If you have any of these symptoms, do not return to campus until advised by Public Health. You should self-isolate and contact HealthLine 811 for advice on whether you should be tested for COVID-19. This will help keep others safe and possibly spare them from self-isolation and testing. While you are in self-isolation, you may attend class online. The link to access your class is posted on the course page on Populi, under the Syllabus tab, under Links on the right side of the page.

Live-Streaming Etiquette

If attending class online via live-stream, keep your camera on and stay present and attentive throughout the class session. Access your class with a computer (preferably) or tablet, not a cell phone. Arrive to class on time, and dress as you would if you were attending class on campus. Join the class from a quiet space with minimal background noise, and mute your microphone until you wish to speak to the class.

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

**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*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

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

Clark, Kelly James, ed. *Philosophers Who Believe: The Spiritual Journeys of 11 Leading Thinkers*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993.

Clark, Kelly James. *Return to Reason: A Critique of Enlightenment Evidentialism and a Defense of Reason and Belief in God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990.

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.
- Copan, Paul. *Loving Wisdom: Christian Philosophy of Religion*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2007.
- Craig, Edward, ed. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 10 vols. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Craig, William Lane, ed. *Philosophy of Religion: A Reader and Guide*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002.
- 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.
- Edwards, Paul. *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 8 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1972.
- Geivett, R. Douglas, and Brendan Sweetman, ed. *Contemporary Perspectives on Religious Epistemology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Hick, John H. *Philosophy of Religion*. 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1989.
- Kellenberger, James. *Introduction to Philosophy of Religion*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2006.
- 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.
- Moreland, J. P. *Love Your God With All Your Mind: The Role of Reason in the Life of the Soul*. Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1997.
- Moreland, J. P., and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003.
- Morris, Thomas V., ed. *God and the Philosophers: The Reconciliation of Faith and Reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Murray, Michael J., and Michael Rea. *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Peterson, Michael, et. al. *Reason and Religious Belief: An Introduction to Philosophy of Religion*. 5th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Peterson, Michael L. *God and Evil: An Introduction to the Issues*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1998.
- Plantinga, Alvin, and Michael Tooley. *Knowledge of God*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2008.
- Pojman, Louis P. *Philosophy of Religion*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 2001.
- Rowe, William L. *Philosophy of Religion: An Introduction*. 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2006.
- Stairs, Allen, and Christopher Bernard. *A Thinker's Guide to the Philosophy of Religion*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2006.

Stewart, David. *Exploring the Philosophy of Religion*. 7th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2016.

Thiselton, Anthony C. *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Religion*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2002.

Wainwright, William J. *Philosophy of Religion*. 2nd ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1999.

Williams, Clifford. *Existential Reasons for Belief in God: A Defense of Desires and Emotions for Faith*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011.

Yandell, Keith E. *Christianity and Philosophy*. Studies in Christian Worldview 2. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984.

_____. *Philosophy of Religion: A Contemporary Introduction*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2016.