G330 DE Reason and Christian Belief

3 credits. Prerequisites: G143 Worldviews and Contemporary Culture
This course transfers to the University of Saskatchewan.

May 3-August 6, 2021   Nathan McCorkindale, MA
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Course Design by Andrew Gabriel, Ph.D.

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

Required Readings

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).

**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 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 14**　➔Lessons 4-5 by **June 16**　➔Lessons 6-7 by **July 16**
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 14, June 16, July 16

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., Zoom) 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 10

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 10. "Is it Reasonable to Believe That Only One Religion is True?" pp. 243-266. *Note that the objection you are responding to 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 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 25; June 8, 30

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 28

Estimate of Time Investment (individual time investments may vary)

	Time (approx.)	Due Dates
1. Lecture Attendance and Interaction	25 hours	May 14, June 16, July 16
2. Postmodernism Assignment	5 hours	May 10
3. Responses to Objections a) Evil b) Science c) Pluralism	45 hours	May 25 June 8 June 30
4. Belief in God Paper	20 hours	July 28
TOTAL	95 hours	

Assessment Rubrics
For this course, please find assessment rubrics on the Populi course page, in the lesson called "G330 DE 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 (2nd ed.) by Evans and Manis
    CD = Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Religion (2nd 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 10* **Postmodernism Assignment**
            Read *PR* ch 7
            Lessons 3
            Due May 14 **Statement of completion for Lessons 1-3**
            Read *CD* ch 6
            Due May 25 **Response to Objections: Evil**
            Read *PR* ch 6

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

Weeks 7-9   Read *PR* ch 8
            Lesson 5
            Due June 16 **Statement of completion for Lessons 4-5**
            Read *CD* ch 7
            Due June 30 **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 16 **Statement of completion for Lessons 6-7**
            Due July 28 **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 **August 6, 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

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.

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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.

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

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Moreland, J. P. *Love Your God With All Your Mind: The Role of Reason in the Life of the Soul*. Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1997.

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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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