Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion (RELG 341)

1.05-2.25 pm, Monday and Wednesday, “Birks 111”
Garth Green, Instructor; 514.398.1446 (garth.green@mcgill.ca)
Office Hour; 2.30-3.30, W, “Birks 112”
Daniel Fishley, Teaching Assistant (daniel.fishley@mail.mcgill.ca)

The Course: Philosophy of religion is a branch of philosophy and an aspect of
the critical study of religion; in it, we examine, explicate, and
evaluate religious beliefs philosophically. Typical themes
include the relation of faith and reason, the nature of religious
experience, arguments for and against God’s existence, and the
problem of evil. We will think through these issues critically and
systematically by treating only essential figures in the history of
the field (and, for the most part, to the single religious tradition
of Christianity). We will focus on the key texts that define the
pre-history and progress of the field, such as Aquinas’ Summa
Theologiae, Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, and Hegel’s
Phenomenology of Spirit. The course will be oriented less
thematically than historically, in order that we see the
systematic interconnections between philosophy and religion
(of concord, critique, and competition) that historically obtain,
and that we inherit.

The Texts: There is no textbook. Open-access versions (or PDF versions of
shorter excerpts) of our sources will be indicated for you.
Suggestions for specific editions will be given for those
interested in purchasing specific texts. Let us know.

The Requirements: There are no exams. There will be (a) two 5-page exegetical
papers on figures and themes encountered during the progress
of the course (your choice; only you will know what is
compelling to you), and (b) one final 10-page paper on figures
and themes of your choice (due on a date to be decided together,
at some point during the final exam period). The deadlines for
the two shorter papers are (1) Mon., Oct. 26, and (2) Thurs., Dec.
3rd, the final day of class). Unless otherwise agreed upon, short
papers or final papers submitted after the deadline will be
penalized by one letter grade (not only one grade) per day.

The Grade: 25% for each short paper (50% total); 40% for Final Paper. 10%
for Class Attendance and Participation. (50% of the latter will be
secured through attendance; the other 50% will be secured
through preparation (reading) for class and active participation
in class.) N.B.: Regular attendance contributes essentially to
success in this course. Written assignments assume the
interpretational framework provided during class discussions.)

The Schedule:

Wed., Sept. 2   Introduction, Practical

Monday, Sept. 7  Labour Day Holiday.


Plato's *Euthyphro;*  [http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/euthyfro.html](http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/euthyfro.html)

**Part One: Bonaventure and Aquinas: Two Models of Philosophical Theology**


Wed., Sept. 16  Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* 3-4

Mon., Sept. 21  Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* 5-6, 7

Wed., Sept. 23  Aquinas' *Quinque viae; Summa Theologica, Prima pars,* q. 1; On the Nature of Theology, q. 2, On the Existence of God. (With reference in lecture to Anselm; *Proslogion,* chapters 1-5, 14-15)  

Mon., Sept. 28  Aquinas' *Quinque viae; Summa Theologica, Prima pars,* qq. 84-89. (With reference in lecture to qq. 12 {aa. 12-13}, 13 {a. 11}, 32 {a. 1})

**Excursus: A Model of Anti-Philosophical Theology**


Mon., Oct. 5   Martin Luther, *On the Freedom of the Christian*

**Part Two: Kant and Hegel: Two Modern Critiques of Philosophical Theology**

Wed., Oct. 7   Kant: A Critique of neo-Aristotelian Theology; The Preface(s) to Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (With reference in lecture to an Early Modern Interlude; *Descartes*’ *Meditations I;*[  


http://books.google.com/books?id=xOnhG9tidGsC&pg=PA1&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false

*Part Three: Post-Kantian Responses to this Conflict*

Mon., Oct. 26  Schleiermacher *On Religion: Speeches to its cultured despisers* 1; 77-95

Mon., Nov. 2  Schleiermacher *On Religion: Speeches* 1; 77-95

Wed. Nov. 4  Schleiermacher *On Religion: Speeches* 2; 96-140

http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schleiermach/religion.html

Mon., Nov. 9  Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*

Wed., Nov. 11  Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*

http://www.religion-online.org/showbook.asp?title=2068

Mon., Nov. 16 Nietzsche; *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense*

Wed., Nov. 18 Tillich; *The Two Types of Philosophy of Religion*

Mon., Nov. 23  Instructor Absence


Mon., Nov. 30  Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Introduction and excerpts)
Wed., Dec. 2  Conclusion(s), Thematic and Practical.

Thurs., Dec. 3  Final Day of Class. Final Research Paper (which will be due during the exam period. Consultations.

N.B. 1) Right to submit in English or French written work that is to be graded [approved by 2009 Senate]: In accord with McGill's Charter of Students' Rights, you may submit all written work in English or in French. 2) Academic Integrity statement: McGill University values academic integrity: all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences. See www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information). To ensure academic integrity, I reserve the right to use text-matching software.