



# Nazarene Theological Seminary

1700 E Meyer Blvd • Kansas City, MO 64131 • 816/268-5400

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## PHL 610 Philosophy of Religion Online Fall 2011

### Essential Information

Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available in the Essential Information section at <http://support.nts.edu>.

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose Degree Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS textbook information
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- *Handbook for Inclusive Language*

### Instructor Information

Professor: Henry W. Spaulding II, Ph.D.

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Office: (740) 392-9000 ext 4201

Office Hours: Telephone appointments only

### Catalog Description

This course deals with the problems that arise in relating the facts of human experience to the truths of the Christian faith.

### Course Narrative & Rationale

Some of the most fundamental questions in life arise at the intersection between philosophy and theology. This course is designed to allow space for question about the meaning of religion, the nature of faith, the meaning of God, the nature of evil and human destiny.

### Intersection of M.Div. Objectives and Course Outcomes

1. The development of wisdom and discernment through engagement with the intellectual challenge of the literature of the Christian faith, by the critical, scholarly study of the history and theology of Christianity, and of the literature

and practices of Christian spirituality, ethics and ministry.

2. The growth of mature self-awareness and self-understanding as flawed human beings, reconciled to God and to each other within the Christian community, who are being transformed into the perfect likeness of Christ, filled with his Spirit, and gifted for the service of humanity.
3. The investigation of human society, thought and culture in order to articulate clear and coherent views of the context of the mission of the Church, and to develop an understanding of the Church as the community of faith with a passion for the gospel engaging in mission to different cultures.

## **Course Outcomes**

**This course intends to:**

- a) survey the major issues which are related to the philosophical analysis of religion (fulfilled through Philosophical Essays, the Research Paper, and Participation)
- b) look carefully at the Arguments for the Existence of God, Divine Attributes, Faith and Reason, Theodicy, Immortality and the Afterlife (fulfilled through Philosophical Essays, the Research Paper, and Participation)
- c) learn to think critically about religion and faith (fulfilled through the Research Paper and Participation)

## **Required Texts & Course Materials**

Thomas Jay Oord, *Philosophy of Religion: Introductory Essays*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2003. [0-631-21471-2]

Charles Taliaferro and Paul Griffiths, *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003. [083-411-9951]

## **Course Outline**

Unit 1: Defining Philosophy of Religion

- A Short History of Philosophical Reflection
- Religious Identity

Unit 2: The Nature of God

- Theism and Divine Attributes
- Explanations of Religion
- Theistic Arguments

Unit 3: Evils, Values, and Destiny

- Evils and Goods

- Religious Values
- Personal Identity

## **Course Assignments & Requirements**

**Philosophical essays – 37%.** There will be two philosophical essays in the course. Each essay will be worth up to 100 points. Each essay should be 10 pages, double-spaced.

Criteria for evaluation: clarity of the description – 35 pts, strength of the critical analysis – 30 pts, reflection upon class lecture and assigned reading – 25 pts, and quality of writing – 10 pts.

- Philosophical Essay 1 is due October 12 @ 11:55pm. [Course outcomes a and b]
- Philosophical Essay 2 is due December 17 @ 11:55pm. [Course outcomes a and b]

**Research paper – 26%.** Each student will write a research paper on a topic approved by the professor. The topic must reflect a theme associated with philosophy of religion. This paper should be 15 pages, double-spaced. [Course outcomes a, b, and c]

Criteria for evaluation: grasp of issues – 70 pts, use of appropriate primary and secondary sources – 30pts, integration of material treated in class – 25 pts, clarity of argument, grammatical issue – 15 pts. Total points - - 140 points.

Due November 19@11:55pm.

**Participation – 37 %:** Each student must make a post of on at least three days each week. Students are required to post three question/comments on the reading by Tuesday at 11:55pm each week. Students are required to post seven fifty word responses to other students in class by Saturday at 11:50pm. Students are required to post substantial responses to posts and/or make substantial posts each week. A quality post is one that begins a new topic, critical reflection on another person's post, or one that moves the discussion in a new direction. [Course outcomes a, b, and c]

A substantial post is one that engages the specific content of the week. It is essential that each post critically engage course content. No points will be given for the type of notes that merely encourage one another or comments not related to the content of the course. Participation will be assessed Monday through Saturday (11:55pm – Central Time) of each week. You cannot make up participation points. You will receive a weekly grade for participation.

A quality post is one that begins a new topic, critical reflection on another person's post, or one that moves the discussion in a new direction.

Unless otherwise assigned, posts in a Forum should be at least 75 words for a new topic

and at least 50 words for a response to another's topic.

An assignment posted in a Discussion Forum may be considered a quality post at the discretion of the instructor.

Correct grammar and accurate spelling are expected.

Participation will be worth up to 200 points for the semester. Participation will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria: degree of insight in questions/comments, connection of comments/questions to assigned reading, and participation throughout the week. The first half of points will be posted the week of October 19 and the second half will be posted December 18.

Students are reminded of the following *minimum* requirements for online participation:

Students are encouraged to read posts nearly every day.

Students are required to write a quality post at least three days each week.

### **Distribution of Student Learning Hours**

	hours
Online Participation in forums, groups, etc.	38
Reading	55
Writing	40
Other Assignments and Learning Activities	0
Exams & Quizzes	20
TOTAL	153

#### Method for Submitting Assignments

All assignments for online courses will be submitted using the corresponding location within the Moodle course.

#### Form and Style Expectations

All must be submitted using Turabian.

#### Inclusive Language

NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in their writings. All written work presented to meet course requirements must use gender inclusive language.

#### Policy Regarding Late Work & Missed Exams

All work submitted late will be reduced by 20%. Any exception to this must be approved by the professor prior to the due date. Normally, the only requests that will be approved will be for illness, death in the family, etc.

### **Relevant Academic Policies**

1. No work will be accepted after **December 19@ 11:55pm – Central Time.**
2. All grades are open to reasonable and respectful review.
3. It is expected that all work turned in for this class reflect the labors of the person whose name appears on the paper. If there is any evidence to the contrary of this the student will receive a zero for the assignment.

### **Course Grading**

A - - 540-486

B - - 485-432

C - - 431-378

D - - 377-324

F - - 323-000

In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities. Accordingly NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodations should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies that have been beneficial for the student in the past.

### **Class Attendance**

Attendance at classes is essential for realizing the maximum benefit of your education. Since the professor in each course is best acquainted with the importance of consistent attendance, he or she will determine the rules for attendance.

If a student does not meet class participation standards in an online environment for four or more weeks, the professor may automatically fail the student.

## Course Calendar

Date	Week	Assignment
Sept 12	1	<p>A Short Introduction to Philosophical Reflection</p> <p><i>The purpose of this week is set forth the foundation for philosophy of religion by talking about the broad parameters of Western Philosophy.</i></p> <p>Reading Assignment: Oord: 187-200</p> <p>Assignment: Post three questions from the reading by Sept 15 Participation for this week ends on Sept 19 at 11:55pm</p>
Sept 19	2	<p>Religious Identity</p> <p><i>The purpose of this week is to understand the nature of religion and define the practice of philosophy of religion.</i></p> <p>Reading Assignment: Taliaferro and Griffiths: 1-43</p> <p>Assignments: Post three questions from the reading by Sept 22 Participation for this week ends on Sept 26 @ 11:55pm</p>
Sept 26	3	<p>Theism and Divine Attributes</p> <p><i>The purpose of this week is account for God-Talk in Western philosophy and to reflect on alternative possibilities for talking about God.</i></p> <p>Reading Assignment: Taliaferro and Griffiths: 45-72 Oord: 91-182</p> <p>Assignments: Post three questions from the reading by Sept 29 Participation for this week ends on Oct 3 @ 11:55pm</p>
Oct 3	4	<p>Theism and Divine Attributes – continued</p> <p><i>This week we continue the discussion of theism and divine attributes.</i></p> <p>Reading Assignment: Taliaferro and Griffiths: 73-97</p>

		<p>Assignments:  Post three questions from the reading by Sept 22  Participation for this week ends on Sept 26 @ 11:55pm</p>
Oct 10	5	<p>Explanations of Religion</p> <p><i>The purpose of this week is to look at the scope of religious assertion, language, belief, and explanation.</i></p> <p>Reading Assignment:  Taliaferro and Griffiths: 99-161</p> <p>Assignments:  Post three questions from the reading by Oct 13  Participation for this week ends on Oct 17 @ 11:55pm  Philosophical Essay 1 is due on Oct 15 @ 11:55pm</p>
Oct 17	6	Reading and Research Week
Oct 24	7	<p>Explanations of Religion - continued</p> <p>Reading Assignment:  Taliaferro and Griffiths: 162-225</p> <p>Assignments:  Post three questions from the reading by Oct 27  Participation for this week ends on Oct 31 @ 11:55pm</p>
Oct 31	8	<p>Theistic Arguments</p> <p><i>The purpose this week is to look at the classical and some modern arguments for the existence of God.</i></p> <p>Reading Assignment:  Taliaferro and Griffiths: 227-270  Oord: 13-88</p> <p>Assignments:  Post three questions from the reading by Nov 3  Participation for this week ends on Nov 7 @ 11:55pm</p>
Nov 7	9	<p>Theistic Arguments – continued</p> <p>Reading Assignment:  Taliaferro and Griffiths: 270-293</p>

		<p>Assignments:  Post three questions from the reading by Nov 10  Participation for this week ends on Nov 14 @ 11:55pm</p>
Nov 14	10	<p>Evils and Goods</p> <p><i>The purpose this week is to look at the problem of suffering and theodicy in the Christian faith.</i></p> <p>Reading Assignment:  Taliaferro and Griffiths: 357-406  Oord: 201-216</p> <p>Assignments:  Post three questions from the reading by Nov 17  Participation for this week ends on Nov 21 @ 11:55pm  The research paper is due on Nov 19@11:55pm</p>
Nov 21	11	<p>Evils and Goods - continued</p> <p>Reading Assignment:  Taliaferro and Griffiths: 407-448</p> <p>Assignments:  Post three questions from the reading by Nov 24  Participation for this week ends on Nov 28 @ 11:55pm</p>
Nov 28	12	<p>Religious Values</p> <p><i>The purpose of this week is to look at the intersection of value and virtue to the philosophical analysis of religion</i></p> <p>Reading Assignment:  Taliaferro and Griffiths: 449-552  Oord: 217-230</p> <p>Assignments:  Post three questions from the reading by Dec 1  Participation for this week ends on December 5 @ 11:55pm</p>
Dec 5	13	<p>Personal Identity and Death</p> <p><i>The purpose of this week is to talk about theories of the afterlife.</i></p> <p>Reading Assignment:  Taliaferro and Griffiths: 553-581  Oord: 275-288</p> <p>Assignments:  Post three questions from the reading by Dec 8  Participation for this week ends on December 12 @ 11:55pm</p>

Dec 12	14	Personal Identity and Death - continued  Reading Assignment: Taliaferro and Griffiths: 582-599  Assignments: Post three questions from the reading by Dec 15 Participation for this week ends on December 19 @ 11:55pm Philosophical Essay 2 is due December 17 @ 11:55pm.
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## **Bibliography**

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