

**Omar Fakhri**  
**Philosophy of Religion as Applied Philosophy**

**Course Description**

Central debates in metaphysics and epistemology have been recently applied to central debates in philosophy of religion. The results have been quite fruitful. In this graduate level seminar, we will explore some of this important literature. One purpose of this seminar is to expose students to a particular way of doing philosophy of religion. The working hypothesis of this seminar is that philosophy of religion is an applied philosophy. A productive way to engage the central issues in philosophy of religion is by interacting with more basic fields in philosophy.

**Course Requirements:**

Pick only **one** of the following requirements (note: for those interested in applying to graduate programs in philosophy, I highly recommend doing the latter option):

- Three Papers 20% each – These are shorter papers, about 5-7 double-spaced pages. Prompts will be handed out a week before the paper is due.

Or

- Long Paper 60% - This is a substantial paper, about 15 double-spaced pages. You will be required to get your paper topic approved by me first. Ideally, you should aim to do this at least a month before the paper is due. This paper will engage with a big bulk of the assigned readings and perhaps some outside sources as well. If you decide to write this paper instead of the three short papers, please let me know as soon as you make this decision. I will provide extensive comments on this paper, and I would be happy to read future drafts of it, even after the class is done.

**Required Text:**

All required reading will be posted on the class website.

**Course Schedule**

Part 1: Metaphysics

Unit: God's Omniscience and Grounding

Dennis Whitcomb: Grounding and Omniscience

Snyder, Rasmussen, & Cullison: On Whitcomb's Grounding Argument for Atheism

Optional:

Fabrice Correia: Ontological Dependence

Kit Fine: Ontological Dependence

Jonathan Schaffer: On What Grounds What?

Gideon Rosen: Metaphysical Dependence: Grounding and Reduction

Unit: The existence of God and Grounding

Kenneth Pearce: Foundational Grounding and the Argument from Contingency  
Optional:

See previous unit

Unit: God's Omniscience and Qualia

Linda Zagzebski: Omnisubjectivity

Optional:

Frank Jackson: What Mary Didn't Know?

Unit: God's Ineffability and Fundamentality

Jonathan Jacobs: The Ineffable, Inconceivable, and Incomprehensible God

Optional:

Kit Fine: The Question of Ontology

Ted Sider: *Writing the Book of the World* (selections)

Unit: Blasphemy and Causal Theory of Reference

Meghan Sullivan: Semantics for Blasphemy

Optional:

Saul Kripke: *Nameing and Necessity* (selections)

Unit: The problem of evil and modal realism:

Phil Quinn: God, Moral Perfection and Possible Worlds

Michael Almeida: Theistic Modal Realism?

Optional:

David Lewis: On the Plurality of Worlds (selections)

Mark Heller: The Immorality of Modal Realism, Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Let the Children Drown

Bruce Langtry: Unrestricted Actualization and Divine Providence

Michael Almeida: Unrestricted Actualization and Perfect Worlds: A Reply to Langtry

Bruce Langtry: Predication and Providence: Rejoinder to Almeida's Reply

Unit: God's aseity and abstract objects

Peter van Inwagen: God and Other Uncreated Things

William L. Craig: Nominalism and Divine Aseity

Unit: Divine simplicity and Monism

Gregory Fowler: Simplicity or Priority?

Optional:

Jonathan Schaffer: Monism: The Priority of the Whole

Unit: The Trinity and Qua-objects

Rob Koons: Divine Persons as Relational Qua-Objects

Optional:

Kit Fine: *Reasoning with Arbitrary Objects* (selections)

Nicholas Asher: Things and Their Aspects

Unit: The Trinity and Composition as Identity

Shieva Kleinschmidt: Many-One Identity and the Trinity

Optional:

Donal Baxter: Many-One Identity

Donald Baxter: Identity in the Loose and Popular Sense

Unit: The Trinity and Material Constitution

Brower & Rea: Material Constitution and the Trinity

Unit: The Incarnation and Temporary Intrinsic

Timothy Pawl: Temporary Intrinsic and Christological Predication

Optional:

David Lewis: *On the Plurality of Worlds* (selections)

Douglas Ehring: Lewis, Temporary Intrinsic and Momentary Tropes

Part 2: Epistemology

Unit: Faith and Reason

Lara Buchak: Rational Faith and Justified Belief

Unit: Ockhamism and Knowledge First

Alexander Arnold: Knowledge First and Ockhamism

Optional:

Timothy Williamson: Knowledge and Its Limits, ch. 2

John Fischer: Freedom and Foreknowledge

Unit: Religious belief and Disagreement

Michael Bergmann: Religious Disagreement and Rational Demotion

Nathan King: Religious Skepticism and Higher-Order Evidence

Optional:

Richard Feldman: Reasonable Religious Disagreements

Thomas Kelly: The Epistemic Significance of Disagreement

Adam Elga: Reflection and Disagreement