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: Naming 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 Intrinsics
  Timothy Pawl: Temporary Intrinsics and Christological Predication
  Optional:
    David Lewis: *On the Plurality of Worlds* (selections)
    Douglas Ehring: Lewis, Temporary Intrinsics 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