

Department: Philosophy

Course No: 105 W

Credits: 3

Title: Philosophy and Religion

Contact: Donald Baxter

Content Area: CA1-Arts and Humanities

WQ: Writing

Catalog Copy: 105W. Philosophy and Religion Either semester. Three credits. No student may receive more than 6 credits for PHIL 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107. Topics may include proofs of the existence of God, the relation of religious discourse to other types of discourse, and the nature of religious commitment.

Course Information: Course Information: a. The goal of the course is to introduce students to the various phenomena of religious expression and to enable them to interpret these competently and make some critical judgments as to their validity and truth. The objective is to encourage the students to become more self-conscious regarding their approach to complex religious and moral perspectives and more able to engage these in knowledgeable and intellectually responsible ways.

b. Texts consist especially of classics in the field of philosophy and religion, which students are required to read closely and critically. Students are required to prepare classes in advance in order to facilitate discussion of these texts, as well as to participate actively in class discussions of them; to write two papers of at least eight pages, presenting an analysis and evaluation of some element drawn from readings in the class texts; to take a midterm examination, consisting in essay questions addressing approximately the first half of the course; and finally, to take a final examination, consisting in essay questions addressing the whole body of the class material.

c. The course focuses especially on (1) the nature, grounds and difficulties inherent in religion as a form of culture; (2) the various forms of religiosity, as they are manifested in world religions; (3) the goals and significance of religious discourse, and the problems inherent in its interpretation; (4) the generic difference exhibited by philosophic/rational forms of discourse, and their relationship to religious speech.

Meets Goals of Gen Ed: Philosophic consideration of the place of religion in human culture can make a major contribution to student acquisition of a consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience, as well as a greater moral sensitivity, critical judgment, and intellectual breadth and versatility. (These comprise the second, third, fourth and sixth of the seven basic purposes of UConn general education.) No subject exhibits greater multiformity in its expressions than the religious; a proper understanding of the deeper significance of these phenomena must inevitably lead to an

increased consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience (# 6). One can expect that an enhanced student moral sensitivity (# 4) will follow from close attention to a universal feature of religions, their moral codes. Development of the students critical judgment (# 3) is promoted by constant attention to the truth and validity of competing religious claims, as well as the grounds for these. Finally, the achievement of student intellectual breadth and versatility (# 2) will be greatly stimulated by growing awareness of the multifarious nature of religious doctrines and practices. One can expect, moreover, that this awareness will help the student substantially to deal with life issues regarding religiosity once he leaves the University. In his own private life as well as in a society that becomes increasingly multicultural, with an ever increasing menu of religious options available to the individual, the ability to be able to consider these in a critical and informed manner should help contribute to both personal satisfaction and mutual toleration.

CA1 Criteria: Critical awareness of the role of religious doctrine and practice in human culture impels students to the first and third of the activities required for Arts and Humanities courses. Thus students by considering systematically the basic principles in a typology of religious expression, the hermeneutical criteria by which such expressions must be understood, and the grounds for their possible justification to others are engaged in depth in investigations and historical/critical analyses of human experience (# 1). Furthermore, by close investigation of the means metaphoric, analogical, anagogic, ironic, hyperbolic, reflexive, and so on by which religion communicates its claims, the student is involved exhaustively in "investigations into the modes of symbolic representation (# 3).

W Criteria: (1)The writing assignments will be designed to require the student to analyze carefully the arguments, assumptions and implications of the authors of the texts assigned. Two 8 page papers will be required; their grades will determine a substantial part of the final grade; failure to complete the written work satisfactorily will result in a grade of F for the entire course.

(2)Instruction will be offered in the class room on the means by which arguments should be developed and organized, as well as the overall techniques of effective presentation. Formal comments will be made of the initial drafts and revisions will be required. Where appropriate and desirable, individual conferences will be available.

(3)Each student will be required to submit an initial draft of his paper, which the student must then revise to meet the comments of the reader and demonstrate awareness of the principles at stake.