

General Education Course Information Sheet
Please submit this sheet for each proposed course

Department & Course Number	PHILOS 98T
Course Title	Rationality and Religious Belief
Indicate if Seminar and/or Writing II course	Seminar

1 Check the recommended GE foundation area(s) and subgroup(s) for this course

Foundations of the Arts and Humanities

- Literary and Cultural Analysis
- Philosophic and Linguistic Analysis
- Visual and Performance Arts Analysis and Practice

X

Foundations of Society and Culture

- Historical Analysis
- Social Analysis

X

Foundations of Scientific Inquiry

- Physical Science

With Laboratory or Demonstration Component must be 5 units (or more)

- Life Science

With Laboratory or Demonstration Component must be 5 units (or more)

2. Briefly describe the rationale for assignment to foundation area(s) and subgroup(s) chosen.

This seminar will be centered around the fundamental epistemological questions which arise when thinking about religious belief, structured through core weekly readings of current and historical works. Since philosophy is best learned through practice, students will grapple actively with these questions through writing and structured discussion. Toward that end, the course will center around a substantial term-paper. Students will develop a question or insight, drawn from the class discussion, and refined through drafts, peer review, and in-class presentation. This will expose students to the main research methods of philosophy: reading, writing, and discussion. Students will engage with texts carefully to understand complex concepts and arguments, refining their understanding by working through these ideas in writing and discussion.

3. "List faculty member(s) who will serve as instructor (give academic rank):

Gregory Antill, Teaching Fellow; Professor Pamela Hieronymi (faculty mentor)

Do you intend to use graduate student instructors (TAs) in this course? Yes _____ No X

If yes, please indicate the number of TAs _____

4. Indicate when do you anticipate teaching this course over the next three years:

2013-2014	Fall	_____	Winter	_____	Spring	_____
	Enrollment	_____	Enrollment	_____	Enrollment	_____
2014-2015	Fall	_____	Winter	_____	Spring	_____
	Enrollment	_____	Enrollment	_____	Enrollment	_____
2015-2016	Fall	_____	Winter	_____	Spring	X
	Enrollment	_____	Enrollment	_____	Enrollment	12

5. GE Course Units

Is this an existing course that has been modified for inclusion in the new GE? Yes No
If yes, provide a brief explanation of what has changed. _____

Present Number of Units: _____ Proposed Number of Units: 5 _____

6. Please present concise arguments for the GE principles applicable to this course.

General Knowledge

This course will involve an examination of the epistemology of religious belief whose relevance will extend to general questions about the relationship between faith and reason. In exploring these questions, students will develop an understanding of fundamental epistemological methodologies whose scope extends into the general sciences.

Integrative Learning

Students will use the tools of critical analysis to develop the ability to understand and communicate complex ideas in speech and writing. While these are the primary methods of philosophy, they are also the foundational skills of a liberal arts education, with broad applicability to a variety of disciplines within the arts and sciences.

Ethical Implications

This class will address questions of faith, religion, and belief, whose exploration is central to leading a thoughtful, ethical life.

Cultural Diversity

This course involves a substantial historical component. Many of the arguments we will cover will be drawn from the classic works of Islamic philosophy.

Critical Thinking

A central objective of this course will be to engage students in discussion with one another in a productive and thoughtful way, by developing and applying the central skills of a liberal arts education: the ability to read and reason critically about complex ideas, and the ability to communicate those thoughts in speech and writing with care and precision.

Rhetorical Effectiveness

A central component of the graded work in this class will be a term paper and accompanying presentation. Students will learn how to communicate effectively, with clarity and precision, in speech and writing.

Problem-solving

In this class, students will learn how to work through, analyze, and evaluate complex philosophical problems in epistemology and the philosophy of religion.

Library & Information Literacy

(A) STUDENT CONTACT PER WEEK (if not applicable write N/A)

1. Lecture:	<u>3</u>	(hours)
2. Discussion Section:	<u>N/A</u>	(hours)
3. Labs:	<u>N/A</u>	(hours)
4. Experiential (service learning, internships, other):	<u>N/A</u>	(hours)
5. Field Trips:	<u>N/A</u>	(hours)

(A) TOTAL Student Contact Per Week

3 (HOURS)

(B) OUT-OF-CLASS HOURS PER WEEK (if not applicable write N/A)

1. General Review & Preparation:	<u>3</u>	(hours)
2. Reading	<u>3</u>	(hours)
3. Group Projects:	<u> </u>	(hours)
4. Preparation for Quizzes & Exams:	<u> </u>	(hours)
5. Information Literacy Exercises:	<u> </u>	(hours)
6. Written Assignments:	<u>3</u>	(hours)

7. Research Activity: 3 (hours)

(B) TOTAL Out-of-class time per week

GRAND TOTAL (A) + (B) must equal at least 15 hours/week

12	(HOURS)
15	(HOURS)

Rationality And Religious Belief

Philosophy 98T, Spring 2016

Instructor: Gregory Antill

371 Dodd Hall

Gantill@humnet.ucla.edu

Office Hours: TBD

Course Description:

Is religious belief rational? In this class, we will explore the relationship between faith and reason, covering the classic arguments for and against religious belief, and its connection to many central contemporary questions in epistemology and the philosophy of science.

One of the reasons religious belief is so interesting to philosophers, beyond the intrinsic interest of the subject matter, is that it requires a detailed and novel look at many of key questions in rationality: What are the rational norms involved in the confirmation and disconfirmation of a hypothesis? Can we be warranted in believing without evidence? How should we understand the relationship between normative and descriptive explanation? Between epistemic reasons for adopting a belief, and our practical incentives for adopting a belief? What are the ultimate sources of justification?

We will start with an introduction to Epistemology and the Ethics of Belief. We will then consider the classic arguments and evidence for and against religious belief. Finally, we will discuss the relationship between religious belief and more contemporary non-standard epistemic theories of rationality, and see what impact these theories may have on our central question.

Course Expectations:

This course is worth 5 credits and the workload is set accordingly. You should expect to devote an average of about 12 hours per week outside of class to writing, reading, and thinking hard about the relevant issues.

Readings:

We will be reading selections from a variety of contemporary and historical sources. All reading will be available on the course website and through the course reader. A schedule of assigned readings can be found below. Reading assignments are to be completed before the seminar meeting for which they are listed.

Grading/Course Assessment:

Your grade for the course will be a function of the following:

Class Participation: 10%

Reading Comprehension Questions: 10%

Midterm: 25%

Term Paper: 55%

Participation: Philosophy is a subject matter best learned through practice, so participation in seminar will be essential component, both of your grade but also your learning of the material. You will be evaluated not on the quantity, but the quality of participation. The best participation is thoughtful and on topic. High quality participation can come in many forms. Often asking a question in order to make sense of an issue is just as important to a discussion as contributing your own viewpoint on an issue.

Reading Questions: Questions associated with each weeks readings will be posted on the course website. These questions should be reviewed before commencing the reading. You are required to complete 8 out of 9 assignments. Answers should be about 1 page in length. You are not required to submit "correct" answers, but a good faith effort is required.

Midterm: A short midterm essay of 3-4 pages will be due at the end of week five. You will be asked to present and explain an argument and an objection to that argument. This essay is entirely expository. Your role is not to evaluate these arguments and objections, but to present both of them in their strongest light, explaining them clearly in ordinary English, in a way that your friend or roommate here at ucla could understand. (this can be tested, with a willing friend or roommate: try reading your work to them aloud and see if they can follow along. This is also a good strategy for your term paper)

Term-Paper: You will be required to write a term paper of 12-15 pages. You will come up with a paper topic, drawn from discussion and reading questions, and present a 1-2 page paper proposal at the end of week 6. A finished draft will be due by the end of week 8. We will meet to go over these drafts by appointment during week 9, and you will present your results to the class during week ten. The final version will be due on Friday of finals week. We will talk more about how to write a philosophy paper during the semester. For now, you can find guides to philosophical writing by Eileen Nutting and Jim Pryor on the course website.

Academic Honesty:

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with, and follow, the University regulations regarding academic integrity. The UCLA academic honesty policy can be found in section 102.01 (pgs. 6-7) of the UCLA Student Conduct Code available at:

<http://www.studentgroups.ucla.edu/dos/assets/documents/StudentCC.pdf>

Please avoid plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty:

- It is against the rules and regulations of the university
- It is unfair to your fellow students
- It corrupts your moral character and is bad for the soul

Reading List

1. Rationality and The Ethics of Belief

- *Week 1 – The Ethics of Belief*
 - Introduction
Readings: Gould, “Non-overlapping Magisteria;” Pope John Paul, “Truth Cannot Contradict Truth”
 - Evidentialism
Readings: Merusic, “The Ethics of Belief;” Plantinga, “Reason and Belief in God”, Part I
- *Week 2 – Doxastic Voluntarism*
 - Doxastic Involuntarism
Readings: Williams, “Deciding to Believe,” excerpts
 - Faith and Obligation
Readings: Adams, “Involuntary Sins;” Feldman, “Epistemic Obligation”

2. Religious Belief and Evidence

- *Week 3 – Arguments For Religious Belief*
 - Ontological Argument
Readings: Anselm, “The Ontological Argument”; Kant, “A Critique of the Ontological Argument”
 - Teleological Argument
Readings: Paley, “The Watch and the Watchmaker”; Hume, “A Critique of the Design Argument”
 - Cosmological Argument
Readings: Al-Ghizali, “Tahafut al-Falasifah, excerpts”; Rowe, “An Examination of the Cosmological Argument”
- *Week 4 – Arguments Against Religious Belief*
 - Problem of Evil
Readings: Mackie, “Evil and Omnipotence”; Adams, “Horrendous Evil and the Goodness of God”
 - Confirmation and Falsifiability
Readings: Flew, “Theology and Falsification”; Van Inwagen, “Is God an unnecessary Hypothesis”

3. Non-Evidential Justification

- *Week 5 – Reformed Epistemology I*

- Classic Foundationalism
Readings: Bonjour, “Introduction,” *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*;
- Properly Basic Religious Belief?
Readings: Plantiga, “Reason and Belief in God,” Part II; Alston, “Is Religious Belief Rational”
- *Week 6 – Reformed Epistemology II*
 - The Current State of Reformed Epistemology
Readings: Prichard, “Reforming Reformed Epistemology.
 - Overflow and review; Paper Proposals due
- *Week 7 – Pragmatic Response*
 - Pascal’s Wager
Readings: Pascal, “Pascal’s Wager;” Hieronymi, “Believing At Will”
 - Pascal’s Wager, Updated
Reading: James, “The Will to Believe”; Feldman, “Clifford’s Option and James’ Principle”

4. Further Issues

- *Week 8 – Empirical Explanations*
 - Naturalistic Explanation of Religious Belief
Reading: Bloom, “Religion is Natural;” Van Inwagen, “Explaining Belief in the Supernatural”
 - Explanations and Rationality
Reading: Hieronymi, “Reasons for Action”; Berker, “The Normative insignificance of Neuroscience”
 - Paper Drafts Due
- *Week 9 – Religious Disagreement*
 - Religious Disagreement
Reading: Feldman, “Reasonable Religious Disagreement”
 - The Problem of Disagreement
Reading: Kelly, “The Epistemic Significance of Disagreement;” Van Inwagen, “Is it wrong, everywhere, always, for Anyone to Believe Anything on Insufficient Evidence?”
- *Week 10 - Presentations*
 - Recap and Paper presentations



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[Main Menu](#)
[Inventory](#)
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New Course Proposal

Philosophy 98T Rationality and Religious Belief

Course Number Philosophy 98T

Title Rationality and Religious Belief

Short Title

Units Fixed: 5

Grading Basis Letter grade only

Instructional Format Seminar - 3 hours per week

TIE Code SEMT - Seminar (Topical) [T]

GE Requirement Yes

Major or Minor Requirement No

Requisites Enforced requisite: satisfaction of Entry-Level Writing requirement.
Freshmen/sophomores preferred.

Course Description Can religious belief be rational? This seminar will explore the relationship between faith and reason, covering the classic philosophical arguments for and against religious belief, and their connection to many central contemporary questions in epistemology and philosophy of mind.

Justification Part of the series of seminars offered through the Collegium of University Teaching Fellows

Syllabus File [Antill_Rationality_and_Religious_Belief_Syllabus_6-10-15.pdf](#) was previously uploaded. You may view the file by clicking on the file name.

Supplemental Information Professor Pamela Hieronymi is the faculty mentor for this course

Grading Structure 10% participation; 10% reading comprehension questions; 25% midterm; 55% term paper

Effective Date Spring 2016

Discontinue Date

Instructor Name

Gregory Antill

Title

Teaching Fellow

Quarters Taught

Fall

Winter

Spring

Summer

Department Philosophy

Contact Name

MICHELLE CHEN

E-mail

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Routing Help

ROUTING STATUS

Role: FEC Chair or Designee - Castillo, Myrna Dee Figuracion (MCASTILLO@COLLEGE.UCLA.EDU) - 45040

Status: Pending Action

Role: CUTF Coordinator - Chen, Michelle L. (MCHEN@OID.UCLA.EDU) - 53042

Status: Approved on 6/26/2015 2:34:38 PM

Changes: No Changes Made

Comments: on behalf of Professor Kathleen L. Komar, chair of the CUTF Faculty Advisory Committee

Role: Initiator/Submitter - Chen, Michelle L. (MCHEN@OID.UCLA.EDU) - 53042

Status: Submitted on 6/26/2015 11:29:14 AM

Comments: Initiated a New Course Proposal

[Back to Course List](#)

[Main Menu](#) [Inventory](#) [Reports](#) [Help](#) [Exit](#)
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Comments or questions? Contact the Registrar's Office at
cims@registrar.ucla.edu or (310) 206-7045