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WBU Online

School of Christian Studies

**UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT**

Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused and distinctively Christian environment for professional success and service to God and humankind.

**COURSE NUMBER & NAME:**

PHIL/THST5332-VC01 Philosophy of Religion

**TERM:**

Spring 2020

**INSTRUCTOR:**

J. Jeffrey Tillman, Ph.D.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Office phone: 040-855-4322

WBU Email: James.tillman@wayland.wbu.edu

**OFFICE HOURS, BUILDING & LOCATION:**

M/T/W/TH 3-6 PM

**COURSE MEETING TIME & LOCATION:**

Online Course

CATALOG DESCRIPTION**:**

Research in philosophical thinking about religion with emphasis on the Judeo-Christian tradition as compared to other religious traditions; major attention on the nature of religious experience, the nature and existence of God, the problem of evil and suffering, religious epistemology, human destiny, and the relation of science and religion.

PREREQUISITE**:** None

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND RESOURCE MATERIAL**:**

Michael Peterson, William Hasker, Bruce Reichenback, and David Basinger, *Reason & Religious Belief: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, Fifth ed., Oxford University Press

# COURSE OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES:

Students will

1. Articulate and criticize the classical arguments for the existence of God

2. Articulate and criticize the major theories regarding the nature of religious experience

3. Articulate and criticize the major theories regarding the nature of evil and suffering.

4. Articulate and criticize the major theories of religious epistemology

5. Articulate and criticize the major theories regarding the destiny of human beings

6. Articulate and criticize the major issues regarding the relation of science and religion, and the nature of miracles.

7. Perform in depth research and writing on a specific topic within philosophy of religion.

8. Evaluate critically the responses and writing of other students in the class.

# ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:

Any student absent 25 percent or more of the online course, i.e., non-participatory during 3 or more weeks of an 11 week term, may receive an F for that course. Instructors may also file a Report of Unsatisfactory Progress for students with excessive non-participation. Any student who has not actively participated in an online class prior to the census date for any given term is considered a "no-show" and will be administratively withdrawn from the class without record. To be counted as actively participating, it is not sufficient to log in and view the course. The student must be submitting work as described in the course syllabus.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**:**

Wayland Baptist University observes a zero tolerance policy regarding academic dishonesty. Per university policy as described in the academic catalog, all cases of academic dishonesty will be reported and second offenses will result in suspension from the university.

DISABILITY STATEMENT**:**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. The Coordinator of Counseling Services serves as the coordinator of students with a disability and should be contacted concerning accommodation requests at (806) 291-3765. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.

Grade Appeal Statement: “Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation. A student who believes that he or she has not been held to realistic academic standards, just evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course by using the student grade appeal process described in the Academic Catalog. Appeals may not be made for advanced placement examinations or course bypass examinations. Appeals are limited to the final course grade, which may be upheld, raised, or lowered at any stage of the appeal process. Any recommendation to lower a course grade must be submitted through the Vice President of Academic Affairs/Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee for review and approval. The Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee may instruct that the course grade be upheld, raised, or lowered to a more proper evaluation.”

COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING CRITERIA**:**

All assignments, unless otherwise stated, are due on the Saturday of the week they are assigned at 11.59 P.M. C.S.T.

Feedback: All assignments will be completed/uploaded through Blackboard. Feedback on assignments will be provided through the same platform. To access feedback on any assignment, click on the grade in the grade book and continue following the screens, clicking on the underlined grade till you find feedback entered into a feedback field or a file I have uploaded with comments provided.

Chapter Question Blogs: Each week has a dedicated blog on Blackboard. For each week there are a series of discussion questions at the end of the assigned chapter. An assignment list will be posted in the Announcements during the first week indicating which students should answer which two questions. Each question should have an answer of at least 200 words, but many questions will require more words for complete credit, and may require follow up submissions in response to comments that I make on the blog. When more than one chapter is assigned during a week, the question numbers for both chapters should be completed. The text of the question being answered should appear before the answer. These answers/responses should be posted by the Wednesday of each week at 6 PM C.S.T. By Saturday at 11:59 P.M. C.S.T. each student should submit at least a 75 word response to another student’s response to a question which the first student did not answer. Students should respond to a student who answered a different question than he or she did. These should be critical comments regarding the other student’s success or failure in addressing the assigned question. These responses should be posted to the other student’s blog as well as your own blog. (See this link for an example of how to post the response to the blog: [copyandpaste example](http://www.wbuwf.com/online/Courses/PHIL4319/Exampleofcutand%20paste.htm).) The assignments of what student’s question to respond to on what week will also be posted to the Announcements. The posts and the responses should reflect an insightful reading and understanding of the book material. Each group of posts and responses is worth 20 points. The blogs will be available on Monday of the week they are due, and then close by 11:59 PM on Saturday of the week they are due. I will reopen the blogs only under exceptional circumstances.

Blogs on My Comments on Your Weekly Chapter Blogs: There are 10 of the blogs which involve each student posting a reaction to my comments on his/her blogs for the previous week. The student should begin with a summary of what my statement is that he/she is responding to. These are due the week after the respective blog is due, and therefore there is no blog of this type for the reading for the last week. Each blog is worth five points.

Critical paper first draft: Each student should select a topic dealing with a specific issue falling within the field of philosophy of religion. The topic should be specific enough to bring the student into touch with significant academic resources. One approach is to take a specific issue discussed in one of the textbook chapters and research it significantly. This should be a focused investigation, involving the identification of at least two major competing perspectives on the issue, a clear articulation of the perspectives in terms of the best scholarly representatives of them, and then critical evaluation of the options. Materials available on the WBU library databases should be the source of research. These include the Religion and Philosophy Index, the ATLA databases, Proquest Religion, the Philosopher’s Index, Academic Premier, Omnifile, SpringerLink, Oxford, and Cambridge University databases, and EbscoBooks. Research should begin early in the term so that materials may be interlibrary loaned if need be. This paper should be at least 20 pages in length and be prepared in Turabian style, and uploaded to the Assignment Upload Spot on Blackboard by the assigned date. Students should submit paper topic proposals to the designated discussion board by week 2. Students should submit a working bibliography to the designated discussion board by week 5, and a proposed outline by week 6. Each of these discussion boards should be checked within the week to read the instructor’s feedback. Follow up consultations via email are encouraged. This paper should be formatted according to the Turabian style guide parameters found at this link: [link](https://www.wbu.edu/academics/schools/school-of-religion-and-philosophy/documents/Revised-SRPWritingStyleGuide2016.pdf). The paper will be graded on the basis of grammar, style, accuracy, thoroughness, and critical content and creativity, and is worth 100 points.

Form Critique:  Each student will be assigned to critique the form of a paper presented during the term.  The student should provide a critique of no less than two double spaced pages indicating the quality of the paper in terms of Turabian style and Religion Division criteria.  A copy of the critique should be posted to the class discussion board by the date indicated on the schedule.  The header of the discussion board thread should clearly indicate the posting student’s name as well as the title of the paper being discussed.  While students should remain respectful and courteous in these critiques, they should also work to identify all major problems and as many minor problems as they can. Each critique is worth 25 points.

Content Critique:  Each student will be assigned a paper to critique for content.  The student will provide a critique of no less than five pages of the content of the assigned papers.  A copy of the critique will be posted to the class discussion board by the date indicated on the schedule.  The header of the discussion board thread should clearly indicate the posting student’s name as well as the title of the paper being discussed.  Each critique is worth 50 points. While students should remain respectful and courteous in these critiques, they should also work to be as insightful and critical as possible. For many of you, this may be the last time that your thinking and writing style are subjected to such scrutiny. We should all help each other to become better writers and thinkers.

Discussion Board Responses:  Each student should make insightful responses to each of the form and content paper critiques, other than his/her own, posted on the Blackboard discussion board in terms of the student’s own reading of all the other student papers. These responses should be posted no later than one week after the critiques are posted and interaction with other student posts is encouraged. These are to be critical posts which scrutinize each critique in terms of how each fulfills or falls short of the requirements for the assignment. Each post should be at least 75 words. Discussion Board Responses are worth a total of 50 points.

Critical paper final draft: This paper is a revision of the first paper draft in terms of comments by the professor and other student’s feedback. The expectation is that significant revision will be carried out on the first draft to produce this draft. This assignment is worth 100 points.

# Course Evaluation (Method of Determining Grade)

# Total points

Blog posts-220 points

Blog reactions to my blog comments-50 points

First Draft of paper-100 points

Form Critique of a Paper-25 points

Content Critique of a Paper-50 Points

Discussion Board Responses-50 points

Final Draft of paper-100 points

A—535-595 B—476-534 C—416-475 D—357-415 F—0-356

## University Grading System

Symbol Percentage

A 90-100

B 80-89

C 70-79

D 60-69

F Below 60

Other symbols used for grading include:

CR Credit Satisfactory, but without qualitative grading.

NCR No Credit Unsatisfactory, but without qualitative grading.

I\*\* Incomplete May be given to a student who is passing, but has not completed a term paper, examination, or other required for work reasons beyond the student’s control.

IP In progress Assigned to a course indicating that at the conclusion of a term the course will still be in progress.

X No grade No grade has been submitted by the instructor. The course grade which will replace the X must be submitted within 30 days from the beginning of the next full term.

W Withdrawal Course dropped or withdrawal from the University.

WP Withdraw passing Course dropped or withdrawal from the University after deadline to withdraw with a W and prior deadline to withdraw with a WP or WF.

WF Withdraw failing Course dropped or withdrawal from the University after deadline to withdraw with a W and prior to deadline to withdraw with a WP or WF.

\*\*A grade of incomplete is changed if the deficiency is made up by midterm of the next regular semester; otherwise, it becomes "F". This grade is given only if circumstances beyond the student's control prevented completion of work during the semester enrolled and attendance requirements have been met.

# TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

| Dates | Reading in Reason and Religious Belief, Chapters | Assignments Due |
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| **Week 1 –** February 24-29 | 1-2 | Blog 1 Post Due |
| **Week 2 –** March 1-7 | 3-4 | Blog 2 Post Due  Blog on My Comments on Your Chapter Blog for Week 1  Paper Topic Post |
| **Week 3 –** March 8-14 | 5 | Blog 3 Post Due  Blog on My Comments on Your Chapter Blog for week 2 |
| **March 15-21** | Spring Break | |
| **Week 4-** March 22-28 | 6-7 | Blog 4 Post Due  Blog on My Comments on Your Chapter Blog for Week 3 |
| **Week 5-** March 29-April 4 | 8 | Blog 5 Post Due  Blog on My Comments on Your Chapter Blog for Week 4  Working Bibliography Post |
| **Week 6 –** April 5-11 | 9 | Blog 6 Post Due  Blog on My Comments on Your Chapter Blog for Week 5  Paper Outline Post |
| **Week 7-** April 12-18 | 10 | Blog 7 Post Due  Blog on My Comments on Your Chapter Blog for Week 6 |
| **Week 8 –** April 19-25 | 11 | Blog 8 Post Due,  Blog on My Comments on Your Chapter Blog for Week 7  First Paper Draft Due |
| **Week 9 –** April 26-May 2 | 12-13 | Blog 9 Post Due  Blog on My Comments on Your Chapter Blog for Week 8  Form and Content Critiques Due |
| **Week 10 –** May 3-9 | 14 | Blog 10 Post Due  Blog on My Comments on Your Chapter Blog for Week 9  Discussion Board Responses Due |
| **Week 11 –** May 10-16 | 15-16 | Blog 11 Post Due  Blog on My Comments on Your Chapter Blog for Week 10  Final Paper Draft due |