

Course: The Divine Attributes
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Winter 2019
2 Credits/4 ECTS Credits

Course Description. This course concerns the metaphysical implications of the concept of God at the center of traditional, Western philosophical theology. According to this concept God possesses essentially various perfections in their highest degree, e.g., omnipotence, omniscience, absolute independence, necessary existence. Moreover, everything there is supposed to be completely dependent on God. We will examine the consequences of these ideas for the metaphysics of modality, the fixity of the past and the openness of the future, the status of morality and mathematical truths, freedom of the will, etc.

Outcomes. Students should be able to reconstruct and critically evaluate positions and arguments from historical and contemporary texts. They should be able to design and execute suitable research projects in which they demonstrate their capacity for independent thought.

Required Work. Attendance and active participation is required and will account for 10% of your final grade. The remainder of your grade will be determined by a 2000 word term paper. You will be asked to submit a draft of the paper by the end of the tenth week of class. You will receive detailed comments on the draft and a provisional grade. There will be presentations of the papers during the last two weeks of the course. Papers should then be revised on the basis of my feedback and feedback received in presentation. Your final paper grade will be based on the provisional grade of the first draft and the grade on the revised version.

Topics and Readings. The following is a list of the topics and readings grouped by week. The schedule and topics may be changed if there is sufficient student interest.

1. The Existence of God

Anselm's Proslogion II-IV, Gaunilo's Reply on Behalf of the Fool, Anselm's reply to Gaunilo.
Mann, "The Ontological Presuppositions of the Ontological Argument" and "The Perfect Island"
Robert Adams, "Divine Necessity"

2. God and Necessity

Selections from Descartes's Letters
Connee, "The Possibility of a Power Beyond Possibility"
Curley, "Descartes on the Creation of the Eternal Truths"

3. God and Necessity II

Leftow, "A Leibnizian Cosmological Argument"
Menzel and Morris, "Absolute Creation"

4. God's Simplicity and Immutability

Thomas Aquinas, ST 1a, QQ. 3 and 9.
William E Mann, "Simplicity and Immutability in God"
Wolterstoff, "Divine Simplicity"

5. Omnipotence

Thomas Aquinas, ST 1a, Q. 25.

Peter Damian, "Letter on Omnipotence."

Peter Geach, "Omnipotence."

Thomas Flint and Alfred Freddoso, "Maximal Power."

6. Eternity

Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, Book V, Prose 6.

Thomas Aquinas, ST 1a, Q. 10.

Nicholas Wolterstorff, "God Everlasting."

Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, "Eternity."

7. Foreknowledge I

Thomas Aquinas, ST 1a, Q.14.

Nelson Pike, "Divine Omniscience and Voluntary Action."

8. Foreknowledge II

Luis de Molina, *Concordia*, Disputation 52.

Robert M Adams, "Middle Knowledge and the Problem of Evil."

Thomas Flint, "Two Accounts of Providence."

9. God and Morality

Norman Kretzmann, "Abraham, Isaac, and Euthyphro."

William E Mann, "Modality, Morality, and God."

10-12. Catch-up, topics suggested by students and student presentations.