

NOVA COLLEGE-WIDE COURSE CONTENT SUMMARY
PHI 265 - PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION (3 CR.)

Course Description

Examines problems raised by arguments for and against the existence of God and discusses such topics as the nature of God, the nature of religious experience, the problem of evil, religious truth and language, immortality, miracles, spirituality, and the relation between philosophy and theology.

General Course Purpose

To introduce the student to the philosophical analysis of the nature of religion and religious experience with an emphasis on such themes as rationality and religious belief, the existence and attributes of God, the problem of evil, miracles, life after death, and faith and reason.

Course Prerequisites/Co-requisites

None.

Course Objectives

At the completion of the course, the student will be able to examine the major problems in philosophy of religion. Specifically, the student will be able to:

- Recognize a variety of philosophically important issues in religion
- Critically examine the idea of God, and the major rational arguments for and against the existence of God.
- Identify and analyze the various religious ideas such as faith, reason, evil, miracles, immortality, free will, and divine foreknowledge
- Understand the relationship between (i) God and human reason and (ii) morality and religion
- Discuss the problem of life after death and the nature of religious language

Major Topics to be Included

Critical attention will be given to the following topics:

- Problems surrounding the notion of God's omniscience and omnipotence
- Difference between an *a priori* and an *a posteriori* arguments for the existence of God
- Arguments for both the theistic and atheistic positions for the problem of evil
- Miracles and assessment of miracles by (i) Hume, (ii) Holland, and (iii) Swinburne
- Classical and contemporary arguments for immortality
- Religious symbolism and the problems arise in claiming that *all* religious language is symbolic
- Epistemology and fideism
- Religious inclusivism, exclusivism and pluralism