The Philosophy of Religion (A003404)

Valid in the academic year 2014-2015

Course Specifications

Lecturers in academic year 2014-2015
Van Herck, Walter  LW01 lecturer-in-charge
Bleys, Kjell        LW01 co-lecturer

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2014-2015
A (semester 1) self-reliant study activities 2.5 h

Offered in the following programmes in 2014-2015
crds offering
Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy  5  A
Bachelor of Arts in Moral Sciences  5  A
Bachelor of Arts in African Languages and Cultures  5  A
Abridged Bachelor's Programme in Moral Sciences for Bachelors  5  A
Abridged Bachelor's Programme in Philosophy for students holding a diploma of bachelor awarded by a higher education institution of the Flemish Community  5  A

Teaching languages
Dutch

Keywords
philosophy of religion

Position of the course
The course helps students to gain insight in a variety of philosophical approaches to the phenomenon 'religion'.

Contents
The course discusses four models of philosophy of religion.
(1) philosophy of religion as part of a religious practice: philosophy of religion is here taken to be a subjective genitive. This approach is internal to a specific religion. Religious man worships his God by offering him philosophical thoughts. Texts which will be read: Anselm, Thomas Aquinas.
(2) philosophy of religion as an elaboration of a natural theology: from modernity onwards the possibility of a natural religion is investigated. Reading of substantial parts of David Hume's Dialogues concerning natural religion. Also: Hume's criticism of miracles.
(3) philosophy of religion as the pathology of religion: naturalistic approaches of religion (not the reasons for, but the causes of religion). Passages from Hume's Natural History of Religion will be discussed.
(4) philosophy of religion as description: attention will be payed to approaches in French phenomenology and in anthropology (van Gennep, Eliade, Caillois), to American pragmatism (William James) and to the neo-wittgensteinian tradition (D.Z. Phillips).

Within the context of this course students are expected to write a paper which will document their reading and study of David Hume's Dialogues concerning Natural Religion. Assignment, evaluation criteria and other information will be communicated through Minerva.

Initial competences
To have successfully completed the course History of philosophy or to have acquired (Approved)
the necessary skills by other means.

Final competences

- B.1.3 and B.3.3: To have basic knowledge of the historical sources of the monotheistic religions and to be able to use that knowledge in forming judgements about the reliability of central truth claims of those religions
- B.3.2: Being able to situate truth claims in the whole of the arguments that are advanced for justifying religion
- B.1.4: To have knowledge of the main debates in the philosophy of religion.
- B.3.2: To formulate, situate historically, comment and criticize the rational arguments that have been advanced pro monotheistic faith (equally so for atheism and agnosticism)
- M.1.2: To approach critically the relationship between on the one hand the psychology and sociology of believing and on the other hand the truth claims of religious systems.
- B.3.3: To form for oneself a personal and examined opinion on the preceding matters.
- B.4.2: To collaborate in a task-oriented way
- B.4.1: To communicate both written and orally with fellow students of philosophy about issues in the philosophy of religion.
- B.5.1: To appreciate the societal and existential consequences of diverging philosophical approaches to religion

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Lecture, self-reliant study activities

Extra information on the teaching methods

- The teacher gives weekly lectures (with ample opportunity for interaction). In preparation all students are required to read weakly one or more texts that are discussed in class.
- Students will write a paper in which they document their reading and study of Hume's Dialogues concerning Natural Religion. An assistant will provide feedback on the draft versions. The final versions are part of the exam.

Learning materials and price

Hume, Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, circa 15 euro
Copyright-free materials is made available via Minerva.

References

T.J. Mawson, Belief in God. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion. Oxford University Press, 2005

(Approved)
end-of-term evaluation and continuous assessment

Examination during the second examination period is not possible.

Assignment


“Classics”:

I. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*
I. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft (Teil 2.)*
L. Feuerbach, *Das Wesen des Christentums.*
F. Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral.*
F. Nietzsche, *Der Antichrist.*
S. Freud, *Die Zukunft einer Illusion.*
S. Freud, *Der Mann Moses und der Monotheismus.*

Course content-related study coaching

By lecturer and by assistant (Aurélie Van de Peer)

Evaluation methods

day-of-term evaluation and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the first examination period

Oral examination

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the second examination period

Oral examination

Examination methods in case of permanent evaluation

Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent evaluation

examination during the second examination period is not possible

Extra information on the examination methods

The non-periodic evaluation is based on a paper assignment - its first version receives feedback from the assistant.
The periodic evaluation consists in an oral examination with opportunity to prepare oneself (15’). The student will be asked to comment on two quotes taken from the texts discussed during the course.
Students who cannot be present in class will receive an alternative assignment.

Calculation of the examination mark

The oral exam counts for 15; the non-periodic evaluation for 5. To get a global score, the two parts of the exam must have been taken.

Facilities for Working Students

Facilities:
1. Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance
2. Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
3. Feedback can be given by email or during an appointment during office hours

Extra information:
For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy

(Approved)