

# Philosophy of Religion 2000-2001

## Part II Religious Epistemology

### Aims and Objectives

This course will seek to address the question: How, if at all, can belief in the existence of God be rationally justified? The aim of the course will be to survey recent attempts to provide a philosophically plausible answer to this question. Arranged in five parts, each representing a substantive contribution to contemporary religious epistemology, the course will consider the answers advanced by: (1) Natural Theology; (2) Reformed Epistemology; (3) Prudentialist arguments for religious belief; (4) Wittgenstein and his interpreters; and (5) Arguments from religious experience. It is to be hoped that the course will build upon the first years courses BT 1001 and BT 1010, thereby facilitating a sound and coherent progression in a student's study of the philosophy of religion.

### Teaching Plan

#### *Lectures*

A total of eleven two hour lectures is assumed:

1. General Introduction to Religious Epistemology
2. Natural Theology and its Traditions

3. Contemporary Natural Theology
4. Reformed Epistemology and the Critique of Evidentialism
5. Reformed Epistemology and the 'Proper basicity' of religious beliefs
6. Prudentialist Arguments (1): Pascal's Wager
7. Prudentialist Arguments (2): William James
8. Wittgenstein
9. 'Wittgensteinian Fideism'
10. Arguments from Religious Experience (1): Swinburne's 'Principle of Credulity'
11. Arguments from Religious Experience (2): Alston's *Perceiving God*

### Bibliography of course resource material and texts

#### Introductions

Brian Davies, *Philosophy of Religion. A Guide and Anthology* (Oxford, 2000); see Part I.

M.W.F. Stone, 'Philosophy of Religion' in A.C. Grayling (ed.), *Philosophy A Further Guide Through the Subject* (Oxford, 1997).

#### Essential Reading:

R. Douglas Geviert and Brendan Sweetman (eds.), *Contemporary Perspectives on Religious Epistemology*, (Cambridge University Press, 1992). [These readings

cover all the topics covered by the course.]

Commentary:

A. Plantinga and N. Wolterstorff (eds.), *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, (Notre Dame University Press, 1983).

L. Zagzebski (ed.), *Rational Faith: Catholic Responses to Reformed Epistemology*, (Notre Dame University Press, 1993).

James Tomberlin (ed.), *Philosophical Perspectives, 5: Philosophy of Religion* (Ridgeview, 1991). Part III, Papers by Audi, Gale, Plantinga and Quinn.

Thomas Senior (ed.), *The Rationality of Belief and the Plurality of Faith*, (Cornell University Press, 1996).

Mark McLeod, *Rationality and Theistic Belief*, (Cornell University Press, 1993).

R. Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, Revised Edition, (Oxford University Press, 1991).

P. Van Inwagen, *God, Knowledge and Mystery*, (Cornell University Press, 1995).

Keith Yandell, *The Epistemology of Religious Experience*, (Cambridge University Press, 1993).

D. Z. Phillips, *Faith after Foundationalism* (Westview Press, 1995).

William Alston, *Perceiving God*, (Cornell University Press, 1991).

William Alston, *Epistemic Justification*, (Cornell University Press, 1989).

Paul Helm, *Belief Policies*, (Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Paul Helm, *Faith with Reason* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

Paul Helm, *Faith and Understanding* (Edinburgh, 1998).

Anthony Kenny, *Faith and Reason*, (Columbia University Press, 1983).

Dewey Hoytenga, *Faith and Reason from Plato to Plantinga*, (SUNY, 1991).

A. Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, (Oxford University Press, 1993).

A. Plantinga, *Warrant: The Current Debate*, (Oxford University Press, 1993).

A. Plantinga, *A Christian Warrant*, (Oxford University Press, 2000).

Terence Penelhum, *Reason and Religious Faith*, (Westview Press, 1995).

Richard Gale, *On the Nature and Existence of God*, (Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Norman Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*, (Oxford University Press,

1997).

Norman Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Creation*, (Oxford University Press, 1998).

G. Brüntrup and R Tacelli (eds.), *The Rationality of Theism* (Kluwer, 1999); see papers by Swinburne; Plantinga; Alston and Czapkay Sudduth.

Jeff Jordan and Daniel Howard-Synder (eds.) *Faith, Freedom and Rationality* (Lanham, 1996); see papers by Alston and Van Inwagen.