

## The Philosophy of Religion (A003404)

**Course size** *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

**Credits 5.0**

**Study time 150 h**

**Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2024-2025**

A (semester 2)

Dutch

Gent

lecture

independent work

**Lecturers in academic year 2024-2025**

Mortier, Freddy

LW01

lecturer-in-charge

**Offered in the following programmes in 2024-2025**

[Bachelor of Arts in Moral Sciences](#)

**crdts**

**offering**

5

A

[Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy](#)

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 paid 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 Ufora.

**Initial competences**

To have successfully completed the course History of philosophy or to have acquired the necessary skills by other means.

**Final competences**

- 1 Knowledge about and insight in different approaches in the philosophy of religion
- 2 Knowledge of the history of the philosophy of religion: philosophers, concepts, debates.
- 3 Formulate one's own opinion on a particular question in the philosophy of religion.
- 4 Make an argumentative and interpretative analysis of primary and secondary literature in the philosophy of religion.

5 Reflect on the relation between the philosophy of religion and the cultural and historical context.

#### **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, Independent work

#### **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.

#### **Study material**

None

#### **References**

The titles mentioned below are recommended, not required reading/study material.  
B. Clack & B.R. Clack, *The Philosophy of Religion. A Critical Introduction*, Polity Press, 2012, or a newer edition.  
R. Fogelin, *A Defense of Hume on Miracles*. Princeton University Press, 2003  
T.J. Mawson, *Belief in God. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. Oxford University Press, 2005  
Ch. Meister, P. Copman, *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Religion*. Routledge, London, 2007  
J.J.C. Smart, J.J. Haldane, *Atheism and Theism* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Oxford, Blackwell, 2003.  
Ch. Taliaferro, P.J. Griffiths, *Philosophy of Religion. An Anthology*. Oxford, Blackwell, 2003.

#### **Course content-related study coaching**

By lecturer and by assistant.

#### **Assessment moments**

end-of-term and continuous assessment

#### **Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period**

Oral assessment

#### **Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period**

Oral assessment

#### **Examination methods in case of permanent assessment**

Assignment

#### **Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment**

examination during the second examination period is 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 which will be discussed during the oral examination.

#### **Calculation of the examination mark**

75% periodic evaluation

25% non- periodic evaluation

The oral exam counts for 15; the non-periodic evaluation for 5. Total maximum score is 20/20.

#### **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

(Approved)

3 Feedback can be given by email or during an appointment during office hours  
For more information contact the monitoring service of the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy:  
<https://www.ugent.be/lw/nl/student/studiestudentenbegeleiding/trajectbegeleiding.htm>