

Course Enhancement Rationale

Course Dept/Number: **Philosophy 402**

Course Name: **Problem of God**

Instructor: **Jerome Miller**

Total Credits **4**

Gen Ed Cr: Yes or No

Indicate which enhancement(s) will be used for this course by checking the appropriate box.

Enhancement	COMAR Requirements
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Increased course content and/or collateral readings	Additional 45 hours per semester of supervised, documented learning.
<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate Research and Information Literacy	Additional 45 hours per semester of supervised, documented learning and/or supervised instruction and documented learning through appropriate technology mediums.
<input type="checkbox"/> Technology	Supervised instruction and documented learning through appropriate technology mediums.
<input type="checkbox"/> Higher Level Critical Thinking Exercises	Additional 45 hours per semester of supervised, documented learning and/or supervised instruction and documented learning through appropriate technology mediums.
<input type="checkbox"/> Service Learning/Civic Engagement	Additional 45 hours per semester of supervised, document learning.
<input type="checkbox"/> International Education/Cultural Enrichment	Additional 45 hours per semester of supervised, documented learning.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional hour(s) in class	Additional 15 hours per semester of supervised, documented learning: (Complete only questions #1 below)
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional hour(s) in lab or studio	Additional 30 hours per semester of supervised, documented learning.

This enhanced course involves 11 additional hours of class time. This falls short of the 15 hours of additional class time needed to completely satisfy COMAR requirements. Hence, I include in the following an explanation of the reasons for adding class time, and an explanation of other enhancements which, when added to the additional class time, should suffice to meet COMAR rules.

1. Describe the enhancement(s) for this course. Discuss how this enhanced course will differ from the current 3 credit course. Especially address what makes it a more rigorous, focused and engaging learning experience.

A. Additional Class Time.

The course will meet an additional hour each week during the semester except during the three weeks when a major paper is due. The readings for this course are very difficult; the issues addressed are very complex; and the philosophical treatment of these issues by the philosophers we will be reading is very theoretically sophisticated. Hence, a great deal of classroom time has to be devoted to the explanation of ideas. However, in order to foster genuine student understanding of the issues, a good deal of time also has to be devoted to discussion and debate. In the past, there has not been sufficient classroom time to accomplish both of these purposes, especially during the final quarter of the course. Additional classroom time will help to resolve this problem. It will also make it possible for students to read in class the "preparatory papers" described in the syllabus, and it will give me more of an opportunity to explain the issues raised in the Burrell reading described below. (Comar requirement: additional hours.)

B. Enhanced Reading.

I am deleting one required text, *The Silence of St. Thomas*, by Josef Pieper, and adding a new text, *Freedom and Creation in Three Traditions*, by David Burrell. The Burrell book (225 pages) is significantly longer than, and considerably more difficult than, the Pieper book (125 pages). Moreover, the Burrell book compares/contrast the Jewish, Christian and Islamic conceptions of creation, and so will enable me to add a "multi-cultural" dimension to the course. (Comar requirement: increased content or collateral readings, higher level critical thinking.)

C. Enhanced Writing.

Previously, students were asked to write a minimum of 25 pages: 6 papers, each 3-4 pages in length, during the semester, and a 7-10 page final paper. The enhanced version of the course requires students to write 4 2-page "preparatory papers," 3 5-page major papers, and a final 7-10 page paper, for a total of at least 30 pages. (Comar requirement: increased content.)

D. Enhanced Participation in Initiating Class Discussion.

A group of three or four students will initiate the conversation in each class session by reading from reflection papers which they have written. This will enable the students to play a pivotal role in deciding what issues need to be addressed. It will also give them the opportunity to air their confusions, their objections to the theories being presented, and their insights into the readings. Each student will be asked to help initiate class discussion at least twice during the semester. (Comar requirement: higher level critical thinking exercises).

2. Discuss what the faculty member will do to provide appropriate guidance and feedback for the enhancement activity.

I will provide guidance and feedback regarding the above enhancements by (a) explaining each of them at the beginning of the course; (b) monitoring and assessing student learning as it is manifested (or not manifested) in class discussions and writing assignments; (c) grading and commenting on all writing assignments; and (d) by providing intellectual direction to students during expanded classroom discussions.

3. Discuss the estimated time expected for students (and faculty) to complete the enhancement (COMAR requires approximately 45 hours per 1 credit):

There will be an additional 11 hours of class time.

The enhanced reading will require approximately 20 hours of additional student work (and similar preparation time for me);

The enhanced writing will require approximately 10 hours of additional student work (and 20 additional hours of grading for me);

4. Discuss how the enhancement will be assessed.

I will be grading the students' "preparatory papers" as well as their performance in initiating class discussion by reading these papers in class. I will be grading their comprehension of the additional readings and their integration of this material into their understanding of the course.

PHIL 402 - The Problem of God
Syllabus
Fall 2005

Dr. Miller
Philosophy House, Camden Avenue
410 742 0856

jerome miller on groupwise
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REQUIRED TEXTS

Tolstoy. *The Death of Ivan Ilych*.
Freud. *The Future of an Illusion*.
Miller. *The Way of Suffering*.
Burke. *An Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*.
Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Contra Gentiles, Vol. I*.
Pieper. *The Silence of St. Thomas*.
Xeroxed material distributed in class.

TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

- I. God as a Matter of the Heart (one week; reading: handouts, Miller)
1. The heart as the core of the person.
 2. Philosophy as an exploration of our deepest realizations.
 3. The ultimate human experiences: love and death.
- II. Control as the Governing Principle of Everydayness; Leisure and the Suspension of Control (one week; reading: Miller)
1. Practicality and the will to control.
 2. The primary purpose of techniques in modern life.
 3. Being cool; adult personality and the will to control.
 4. Leisure as letting-be.
 5. The possibility of rapport.
- III. The Experience of Crisis in Human Life (one week; reading: Miller, Tolstoy)
1. Crisis as the loss of control.
 2. Crisis as a breakthrough to the ultimate realities.
- IV. The Therapeutic Diagnosis of Religious Belief (two weeks; reading: Freud)
1. The therapeutic motive for religious belief: the avoidance of death.
 2. The therapeutic motive of religious belief: God as a father-figure.
 3. The inauthenticity of therapeutic belief.
 4. The encounter with death as the alternative to therapeutic religion.
 5. The necessity of atheism.
- V. Common-sense, Science, and Ultimate Realizations. (one week; reading: Freud)
1. The senses and common-sense.
 2. Scientific explanations.
 3. The limits of scientific explanation.

VI. The Encounter with Nothingness and the Discovery of God (three weeks; reading: Tolstoy, Miller, Burke)

1. The encounter with death as an experience of nothingness.
2. Responses to Nothingness: anger, flight, despair, surrender.
3. The acknowledgment of one's own nothingness and the discovery of God as Absolute Be-ing.
4. The difference between God and beings.

VII. The Relationship between God and Creatures. (one week; reading: Aquinas, Pieper)

1. Emanation theory.
2. Creation theory.

VIII. The Nature of God (three weeks; reading: Aquinas, Pieper)

1. The way of remotion and analogical predication.
2. God is unlike creatures; creatures are like God..
3. Rules governing speech about God.
4. Ontological predicates: Being, One, Eternal.
5. Is God personal?
6. Is God intelligent and rational?
7. Is God loving?

IX. God and the Possibility of Revelation (one week; reading: Aquinas)

1. Human openness to the possibility of revelation. God and the Question of Evil
1. Is God controlling?
2. Can we know how God responds to evil?
3. The limits of philosophy and the possibility of revelation.

REQUIREMENTS

I. Issue papers (60% of grade).

There will be approximately 6 papers, each 3 to 4 pages in length, due during the course of the semester--approximately one every two weeks. These papers will require you to develop *your own thoughtful* reflections on very specific issues being discussed in the readings and in class. Topics will be assigned and will always require a careful reading and re-reading of the relevant texts. However, you may, with my permission, write a paper on issues which have arisen in class or the readings, instead of writing on the assigned topics. *All papers must* engage the assigned texts.

Each of these papers will count for 10% of grade. *If a paper is submitted after it is due, the grade will be lowered. A paper will not be accepted at all if it is handed in more than a week after it is due.*

II. Synthesis Paper (30% of grade).

Each student is expected to write a seven to ten page paper at the end of course. The purpose of this major paper is to give you an opportunity to synthesize the insights you have come to throughout the course. This will count for 30% of final grade.

III. Attendance and Participation (10% of grade).

You are expected to attend class regularly and at least occasionally participate. Three or fewer absences is considered "excellent." Seven or more absences is considered Apoor.@ In the event that the results of your paper grades are inconclusive, your attendance and participation record will raise or lower your final grade.

Grading Criteria for reflections and papers:

- A: The paper involves a creative exploration of the issues and exceptional insight into their complexity; it addresses issues not raised in class; it carefully explores the ideas it presents; it typically includes a careful consideration of the assigned readings; it is adventuresome, and faithful to the path of inquiry on which it ventures. Its arguments are well-developed and its conclusions justified.
- B: The paper focuses on critically important issues and it intelligently explains conflicting theories regarding these issues; it shows evidence of careful reading of texts; it demonstrates some understanding of the philosophical ramifications of the ideas and texts under consideration, and some effort to explore aspects of issues not directly addressed in class.
- C: The paper shows a basic understanding of ideas presented in class and in the readings; it accurately re-presents what has been presented.
- D: The paper shows a rudimentary but flawed understanding of ideas that have been presented; it contains minimal insight into texts and issues but makes no serious effort to grapple with either.
- F: The paper demonstrates a failure to understand basic ideas; it does not express coherent insights and does not address pivotal issues.

ENHANCED SYLLABUS FOR PHILOSOPHY 402

The Problem of God
Spring 2008

Dr. Miller
Philosophy House, Camden Avenue
410 742 0856

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REQUIRED TEXTS

Leo Tolstoy. *The Death of Ivan Ilych*.

Sigmund Freud. *The Future of an Illusion*.

Jerome Miller. *The Way of Suffering*.

Edmund Burke. *An Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*.

Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Contra Gentiles, Vol. I*.

David Burrell. *Freedom and Creation in Three Traditions*.

Xeroxed material distributed in class.

TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

I. God as a Matter of the Heart (first week; reading: handouts, Miller)

1. The heart as the core of the person.
2. Philosophy as an exploration of our deepest realizations.
3. The ultimate human experiences: love and death.

II. Control as the Governing Principle of Everydayness; Leisure and the Suspension of Control (first week; reading: Miller)

1. Practicality and the will to control.
2. The primary purpose of techniques in modern life.
3. Being cool; adult personality and the will to control.
4. Leisure as letting-be.
5. The possibility of rapport.

III. The Experience of Crisis in Human Life (second week; reading: Miller, Tolstoy)

1. Crisis as the loss of control.
2. Crisis as a breakthrough to the ultimate realities.

IV. The Therapeutic Diagnosis of Religious Belief (third week; reading: Freud)

1. The therapeutic motive for religious belief: the avoidance of death.
2. The therapeutic motive of religious belief: God as a father-figure.
3. The inauthenticity of therapeutic belief.
4. The encounter with death as the alternative to therapeutic religion.
5. The necessity of atheism.

V. Common-sense, Science, and Ultimate Realizations. (fourth week; reading: Freud)

1. The senses and common-sense.
2. Scientific explanations.

3. The limits of scientific explanation.

VI. The Encounter with Nothingness and the Discovery of God (**fifth and sixth weeks; reading: Tolstoy, Miller, Burke**)

1. The encounter with death as an experience of nothingness.
2. Responses to Nothingness: anger, flight, despair, surrender.
3. The acknowledgment of one's own nothingness and the discovery of God as Absolute Being.
4. The difference between God and beings.

VII. The Relationship between God and Creatures. (**seventh and eighth week; reading: Aquinas, Burrell**)

1. Emanation theory.
2. Creation theory.

VIII. The Nature of God (**eighth, ninth, and tenth weeks; reading: Aquinas, Burrell**)

1. The way of remotion and analogical predication.
2. God is unlike creatures; creatures are like God..
3. Rules governing speech about God.
4. Ontological predicates: Being, One, Eternal.
5. Is God personal?
6. Is God intelligent and rational?
7. Is God loving?

IX. The Three Monotheistic Traditions (**eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth weeks; Burrell**)

1. Freedom and creation in the Jewish tradition.
2. Freedom and creation in the Islamic tradition.
3. The relationship between the divine and human actor.
5. Points of convergence, points of divergence in the three traditions.
6. The concept of sin and redemption in the Western tradition.

X. God and the Possibility of Revelation (**fourteenth week; Aquinas, Burrell**)

1. Human openness to the possibility of revelation. God and the Question of Evil
1. Is God controlling?
2. Can we know how God responds to evil?
3. The limits of philosophy and the possibility of revelation.

XI. Exam Week Meeting (15th week)

Submission of final papers.

REQUIREMENTS

This class, like all classes in the Philosophy Department, is a four-credit enhanced course. The four-credit version of this course will involve more class-time, as well as more extensive reading and writing, than the three-credit version of it offered previously. You should consider these factors when considering your course schedule for this semester. The Philosophy Department believes that students will receive a better philosophical education by taking fewer courses each semester and focusing more intensively on each class.

I. Preparatory papers and Initiation of Class Discussion (20% of grade)

You will write four "preparatory papers." Each should be at least two pages, and you will be writing one of these one before each of the major papers (which are discussed

below). In these preparatory papers you will be asked to grapple with the complexities of the text and the issue which we are discussing. In each class session, a few students will be asked to initiate class discussion by reading the "preparatory paper" they have written. These papers will be preparatory in two senses. They will help you to prepare for class, and they will help you prepare for writing your major papers. Each of these papers will count for 5% of your final grade. A group of 5 to 8 students will be assigned to write preparatory papers for every class session.

II. Major Papers (70% of grade).

There will be three major papers during the course of the semester, each of which should be five pages, and each of which will count for 15% of the final grade.) These papers will require you to develop *your own thoughtful* reflections on very specific issues being discussed in the readings and in class. Topics will be assigned and will always require a careful reading and re-reading of the relevant texts. Estimated due dates are: February 18, March 20 and April 16

Each student is expected to write a seven to ten page paper at the end of course. The purpose of this major paper is to give you an opportunity to synthesize the insights you have come to throughout the course. This will count for 25% of final grade. The paper will be due on the day and at the time that the final exam is scheduled.

III. Attendance and Participation (10% of grade).

You are expected to attend class regularly and at least occasionally participate. All students will be asked to initiate class discussion two or three times during the semester. 3 or fewer absences is considered "excellent." 7 or more absences is considered "poor." In the event that the results of your paper grades are inconclusive, your attendance and participation record will raise or lower your final grade.

Class will be cancelled once during the week prior to the due-date for the three major papers so that you can focus more intently on writing them.

Grading Criteria for reflections and papers:

A: The paper involves a creative exploration of the issues and exceptional insight into their complexity; it addresses issues not raised in class; it carefully explores the ideas it presents; it typically includes a careful consideration of the assigned readings; it is adventuresome, and faithful to the path of inquiry on which it ventures. Its arguments are well-developed and its conclusions justified.

B: The paper focuses on critically important issues and it intelligently explains conflicting theories regarding these issues; it shows evidence of careful reading of texts; it demonstrates some understanding of the philosophical ramifications of the ideas and texts under consideration, and some effort to explore aspects of issues not directly addressed in class.

C: The paper shows a basic understanding of ideas presented in class and in the readings; it accurately re-presents what has been presented.

D: The paper shows a rudimentary but flawed understanding of ideas that have been presented; it contains minimal insight into texts and issues but makes no serious effort to grapple with either.

F: The paper demonstrates a failure to understand basic ideas; it does not express coherent insights and does not address pivotal issues.

WAC Statement:

This course complies with the University's "Writing Across the Curriculum" policy. All written work will be evaluated both on its content and the quality of writing.

HONOR PLEDGE:

Signing an Honor Pledge is a condition for membership in this learning community. You must return the signed Pledge at the beginning of the second class period to remain enrolled in the course.