

### 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.