

PHIL 3730 Philosophy of Religion

MW11 Mon, Wed 11:00am – 12:15pm

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This course will consider both traditional and contemporary notions of divinity and revealed religion. We will primarily focus on these notions as they are conceived in the Abrahamic traditions (i.e. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam); however, non-Abrahamic conceptions of divine beings may also be considered and many of the issues explored easily will translate into non-Abrahamic contexts.

Readings will be drawn from medieval, Enlightenment and contemporary sources.

Questions to be explored will include the following:

Can God's existence be proved? Can God's essence and nature be grasped by the unaided human intellect? Do mystics have special access to the divine nature? Is God's essence fundamentally unknowable or ineffable? What is God's relation to time and space? Is the existence of evil compatible with the existence of an all-powerful and all-good divinity? Are the claims about the natural world that we find in revealed texts supposed to be taken literally? If a passage from the Bible or Qur'an seems to conflict with our best current science, what should we do?

Be prepared to explore these questions with equanimity and magnanimity. No specific ideological perspective will be privileged. We will be engaging in careful conceptual analysis as well as using the tools of deductive and inductive logic to tackle these and other related questions. No previous acquaintance with philosophy or religion will be assumed.