

Nottingham Trent University

Module Specification

	Basic module information	
1	Module Title:	Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion
2	Module Code:	PHIL20307
3	Credit Points:	20
4	Duration:	Half Year
5	School:	Arts and Humanities
6	Campus:	Clifton
7	Date this version first approved to run:	September 2013

8 Pre, post and co-requisites:

These are modules that you must have studied previously in order to take this module, or modules that you must study simultaneously or in a subsequent academic session

<u>Pre, Co, Post</u>	<u>Module Code</u>	<u>Module Title</u>
Pre	PHIL10111	The Basic Problems of Philosophy
Pre	PHIL10211	Philosophy: Ancient & Modern

9 Courses containing the module

<u>Level</u>	<u>Core/Option</u>	<u>Mode</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Course Title</u>
		FT	HUMA008	BA (H) Communication & Society and Philosophy
		FT	HUMA016	BA (H) English and Philosophy
		FT	HUMA023	BA (H) European Studies and Philosophy
		FT	HUMA028	BA (H) Film & TV and Philosophy
		FT	HUMA033	BA (H) Global Studies and Philosophy
		FT	HUMA038	BA (H) History and Philosophy
		FT	HUMA042	BA (H) Linguistics and Philosophy
		FT	HUMA045	BA (H) Philosophy and International Relations
		SW	MODL014	BA (H) French and Philosophy
		SW	MODL027	BA (H) German and Philosophy
		SW	MODL039	BA (H) Italian and Philosophy
		SW	MODL058	BA (H) Spanish and Philosophy
		FT	EURX002	European Exchange (Second Half Year)
		FT	EURX003	European Exchange (Full Year)

FT	INTX002	International Exchange (Second Half Year)
FT	INTX003	International Exchange (Full Year)

10 Overview and aims

This module introduces you to the key debates and themes in contemporary philosophy of religion. The module aims to facilitate an awareness of religion's problematic status in modern philosophy, as well as allowing you to explore the assumptions of key thinkers in an area of philosophical inquiry that also touches on theological issues.

More specifically, the lectures will examine how religion was conceived by a variety of modern philosophers, many of whom spoke for and on behalf of the scientific worldview - especially the rationalist critiques of religious belief developed by Hume, Marx, Darwin, Nietzsche and Freud. The influence of these thinkers on the 'New Atheism' of Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett will be assessed alongside this discussion.

The module will go on to discuss the so-called 'theological turn' in contemporary philosophy of religion. Discussed in this context are the ideas of a number of philosophers who believe that religion remains essential for human flourishing. Particular attention here will be paid to the work of René Girard, the liberation theologians, Alastair MacIntyre, Maurice Blondel and Slavoj Žižek.

Overall, the aim of the module is to show how philosophical issues surrounding religious belief and theological debate continue to provide the context for many of today's most pressing political problems and intellectual concerns.

11 Module content

The lectures begin by examining the emergence of 'new atheist' philosophical discourse through an examination of the ideas of Dawkins and Dennett. The roots of these ideas in the ideas of Darwin and Marx will also be addressed. The atheism of Jacques Derrida and other post-structuralist philosophers will be introduced as a counter-point to this.

The second half of the course will introduce the critique of religion in the philosophical writings of Friedrich Nietzsche as well as the criticisms of his philosophy in the work of René Girard, Protestant liberal theology, liberation theology and orthodox Catholic theology.

12 Indicative reading

Davis, C., Milbank, J, and Žižek, S. (eds.) (2005) 'Theology and the Political: The New Debate' Durham N.C: Duke University Press

Derrida, J. and Vattimo, G. (eds.) (1998) 'Religion' Cambridge: Polity.

Girard, R. (1995) 'Violence and the Sacred' London: Athlone

MacIntyre, A. (1981) 'After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory' London: Duckworth.

Nietzsche, F. (1977) 'The Nietzsche Reader' Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Peterson, M. (et. Al.) (2006) 'Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings' Oxford: Oxford University Press

Sponville, A.C. (2012) 'The Book of Atheist Spirituality' London: Bantam Press.

Von Balthasar, H. (2004) 'Love Alone is Credible' Ignatius: San Francisco

13 **Learning outcomes**

Learning outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of the module

Knowledge and understanding. After studying this module you should be able to:

- Assess the significance and validity of the mediaeval proofs for the existence of God
- Demonstrate a familiarity with arguments in the field of the philosophy of religion and an understanding of the ideas of those philosophers who attempted to develop philosophical critiques of religion
- Assess the significance of the writings of some of the major classical and modern philosophers
- Understand the nature of secularity and the significance of the ideas of its critics
- Bring together the ideas found in opposing philosophical positions and attempt a synthesis of them
- Apply doctrines from the history of philosophy in order make sense of contemporary philosophical debates

Skills, qualities and attributes. After studying this module you should be able to:

- Engage in debate about philosophical issues without recourse to insult or susceptibility to take offence.
- Manage your time and organise your work effectively
- Identify the key assumptions underlying contemporary philosophical and other intellectual debates

- Describe the contemporary significance of philosophical problems and the arguments for and against their solution
- Read carefully and interpret texts drawn from a variety of ages and/or traditions with sensitivity to context
- Evaluate the success of standard arguments
- Consider unfamiliar ideas and ways of thinking, and to examine critically pre-suppositions and methods within the discipline itself

14 **Teaching and learning**

Range of modes of direct contact

This indicates the range of direct contact teaching and learning methods used on this module, e.g. lectures, seminars

Lectures

Seminars

Total contact hours:

39

Range of other learning methods

This indicates the range of other teaching and learning methods used on this module, e.g. directed reading, research

Total non-contact hours:

161

15 **Assessment methods**

This indicates the type and weighting of assessment elements in the module

<u>Element number</u>	<u>Weighting</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Description</u>
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1	100%	Coursework	3000 Word Essay
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Diagnostic/formative assessment

This indicates if there are any assessments that do not contribute directly to the final module mark

You will be offered opportunities to submit and discuss an essay outline, which will help you develop a feasible approach to the necessary research for the essay as well to improve the structure and content of the writing.

Participation and engagement in seminar work and workshops on a group and an individual basis.

Further information on assessment

This section provides further information on the module's assessment where appropriate

See module handbook and NOW learning room for further information

Document management

16	Module Title:	Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion	
17	Module Code:	PHIL20307	
18	Subject (JACS) Code	V500	
19	Cost Centre	141	
20	School:	AAH	
21	Academic Team	ECM	
22	Campus	2 (Clifton)	
23	Other institutions providing teaching	<i>Please complete in box 23 a-d - if applicable</i>	
		Institution	%
23a	Other UK Higher Education or Further Education Institution- Please name Percentage not taught by NTU		
23b	Other public organisation in the UK- Percentage not taught by NTU		
23c	Other private organisation in the UK - Percentage not taught by NTU		
23d	Any other Non-UK organisation - Percentage not taught by NTU		
24	Date this version was formally approved by SASQC/DAG:		