

AP2750P/ 3750P

Belief after Philosophy: Postmodernism and Religious Faith

Semester 2: Classroom-based (AP2750P, AP3750/P)

Description

Is postmodernist suspicion an ally of religious faith, or its deadly enemy? How can anyone doubt the value of foundations and still speak meaningfully of God, or religious faith? Alternatively, does the notion of God as foundation amount to limitation of the divine or even idolatry? This unit looks at how postmodern thinking bids to rework some traditional connections between faith and philosophy.

Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, it is expected that **Level 2** students will be able to:

1. Explain the meaning(s) of the term postmodern, in relation to and differentiation from the terms classical and modern, as these are understood philosophically.
2. Show understanding of the interrelatedness between the postmodern claims for the death of God, death of the self, end of history, and 'closure of the book'.
3. Explain and evaluate Taylor's postmodern advocacy of an a/theological faith, with its relationship to anonymous subjectivity and an erring Word.
4. Describe and assess alternatives to Taylor's approach: Jean Luc Marion's God without Being, and also the Radical Orthodoxy school, who are themselves cognizant of postmodernism.

Upon successful completion of this unit, it is expected that **Level 3** students will be able to:

1. Explain the philosophical meaning(s) of the term postmodern, as it informs interrelated postmodern claims for the death of God, death of the self, end of history, and 'closure of the book'.
2. Explain and evaluate Taylor's postmodern advocacy of an a/theological faith, with its relationship to anonymous subjectivity and an erring Word.
3. Describe and assess alternatives to Taylor's approach: Jean Luc Marion's God without Being, and also the Radical Orthodoxy school, who are themselves cognizant of postmodernism.
4. Demonstrate awareness of the significant philosophical commitments expressed in the divergent approaches above.

Assessment

Assessment Type	Weighting
Level 2	
Essay (2500words)	50%
Essay (2000words)	50%
Level 3	
Essay (2500words)	50%
Essay (2500 words)	50%

Pre-requisite: N/A

Lecturer: John Martis

Recommended reading

* = set texts recommended for purchase

*Mark C. Taylor, *Erring: A Postmodern A/Theology*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984. Paperback editions 1987, 1999.

Appignanesi, R., and C. Garratt. *Postmodernism for Beginners*. Cambridge: Icon Books, 1995. N.B. This book is also available in the alternative title, *Introducing Postmodernism*.

Caputo, John D. *On Religion*. New York: Routledge, 2001.

Descombes, Vincent. *Modern French Philosophy*. Trans L. Scott-Fox and J.M. Harding. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980.

Eagleton, T. *Literary Theory: an Introduction*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.

*Hart, Kevin. *Postmodernism: a Beginner's Guide*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2004.

Horner, Robyn. *Jean-Luc Marion: A Theo-Logical Introduction*. Hants, UK: Burlington VT, 2008.

Melchert, Norman. *The Great Conversation: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*. 4th ed. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 2002. (Or 3rd ed., 1999.)

Reese, William. *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*. New, enlarged ed. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1996.

Sim, Stuart (ed.) *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge, 2011.

AP9750P

Belief after Philosophy: Postmodernism and Religious Faith

Semester 2: Classroom-based (AP9750P)

Description

Is postmodernist suspicion an ally of religious faith, or its deadly enemy? How can anyone doubt the value of foundations and still speak meaningfully of God, or religious faith? Alternatively, does the notion of God as foundation amount to limitation of the divine, or even idolatry? This unit looks at how postmodern thinking bids to rework some traditional connections between faith and philosophy. Canvassing the questions above, it takes the student towards the deeper question of whether theology as such can be said to help, rather than hinder, philosophical approaches to the divine.

Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, it is expected that students will be able to:

1. Explain the philosophical meaning(s) of the term postmodern, as it informs interrelated postmodern claims for the death of God, death of the self, end of history, and closure of the book .
2. Explain and evaluate Taylor's postmodern advocacy of an a/theological faith, situated in relation to alternatives, such as Jean-Luc Marion's God without Being, and the Radical Orthodoxy school.
3. Discuss the significant philosophical commitments found expressed in the divergent approaches above, and the echo in these of historically radical philosophical disagreements.
4. Show a critical awareness of the theological dimensions associated with the philosophical positions studied.
5. Debate, at a sophisticated level, the claim that postmodern believers' philosophico-theological premises intersect with those of agnostics and atheists.

Assessment

Assessment Type	Weighting
First Essay (3000words) comprising written-up final version (30 %) following previous Seminar Presentation of draft (20 %)	50%
Second Essay (3000words)	50%

Pre-requisite: Undergraduate philosophical studies, or comparable literary or cultural studies.

Lecturer: John Martis

Recommended reading

* = set texts recommended for purchase

* = set texts recommended for purchase

*Mark C. Taylor, *Erring: A Postmodern A/Theology*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984. Paperback editions 1987, 1999.

Appignanesi, R., and C. Garratt. *Postmodernism for Beginners*. Cambridge: Icon Books, 1995. N.B. This book is also available in the alternative title, *Introducing Postmodernism*.

Caputo, John D. *On Religion*. New York: Routledge, 2001.

---, *The Insistence of God: A Theology of Perhaps*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 2013.

Descombes, Vincent. *Modern French Philosophy*. Trans L. Scott-Fox and J.M. Harding. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980.

Eagleton, T. *Literary Theory: an Introduction*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.

*Hart, Kevin. *Postmodernism: a Beginner's Guide*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2004.

---. *The Trespass of the Sign: Deconstruction, Theology and Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989.

Marion, Jean-Luc. *The Reason of the Gift*. Trans. Stephen E. Lewis. Charlottesville, VA: U of Virginia P, 2011.

Horner, Robyn. *Jean-Luc Marion: A Theo-Logical Introduction*. Hants, UK: Burlington VT, 2008.

Melchert, Norman. *The Great Conversation: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*. 4th ed. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 2002. (Or 3rd ed., 1999.)

Reese, William. *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*. New, enlarged ed. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1996.

Sim, Stuart (ed.) *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge, 2011.