

AP2850P/ 2859P/ 3850P/ 3859P

God's Existence: Defensible or Delusion?

Semester 1: Classroom-based (AP2850P, AP3850P)

Online: (AP2859P, AP3859P)

Description

Does God exist? And can this be proved to the satisfaction of a non-believer, or even the doubter in myself? This unit looks at how philosophers – from Plato's time to ours – have sought to answer these questions. It explores traditional moves, such as ontological and cosmological proofs, Leibniz' argument and Pascal's wager, as well as more recent discussion, including the intelligent design argument, and Richard Dawkins' characterisation of this and other proofs as "deluded". Gradually, great philosophers – Aquinas and Descartes, Hume and Kant – are seen to shine within an ongoing quest, to which we ourselves might be drawn: the search for a God whom philosophy can persuasively defend, but never enclose.

Learning outcomes

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

1. Analyse and assess arguments comprising various traditional proofs for God's existence.
2. Expand knowledge of particular proofs to encompass reasoning patterns or "types" which those proofs identify.
3. Construct and/or critique modern versions of the traditional proofs.
4. Sustain reasoned debate on the question of whether a given philosophical proof enhances faith claims for God's existence.
5. (Additional outcome for Level 3) Reflect at meta-level on the question of the philosophical meaning of "proof" when applied to the question of divine existence.

Assessment

Assessment Type	Weighting
Classroom-based – Level 2	
Essay (2500 words)	50%
Essay (2500 words)	50%
Online – Level 2	
Essay (2000 words)	40%
Essay (2000 words)	40%
Weekly Participation (1000 words)	20%
Classroom-based – Level 3	
Essay (3000 words)	50%
Essay (3000 words)	50%
Online – Level 3	
Essay (2400 words)	40%
Essay (2400 words)	40%
Weekly Participation (1200 words)	20%

Pre-requisite: For Level 2: 15 points in Philosophy
For Level 3: 15 points in Philosophy at Level 2

Lecturer: John Martis

Recommended reading

* = set texts recommended for purchase

Davies, Brian. *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982.

Davies, Paul. *The Mind of God*. London: Penguin Books, 1992.

Dawkins, Richard. *The God Delusion*. Paperback ed. Boston: Mariner Books, 2007.

Descartes, René. *Discourse on Method and the Meditations*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968.

Hegel, G. W. F. *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God*. Ed. and trans. Peter C Hodgson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

*Hick, J.H. *Arguments for the Existence of God*. London: Macmillan, 1970.

Hume, David. *Principal Writings on Religion including Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion and the Natural History of Religion*. Pref. J.C.A. Gaskin. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Küng, Hans. *Does God Exist?* New York: Crossroad, 1991.

AP2850P/ 2859P/ 3850P/ 3859P
God's Existence: Defensible or Delusion?

Semester I: Classroom-based (AP2850P, AP3850P)

Online: (AP2859P, AP3859P)

Levering, Michael *Proofs of God: Classical Arguments from Tertullian to Barth*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2016.

Mackie, J. L. *The Miracle of Theism*. Paperback ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Melchert, N. *The Great Conversation: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*. 4th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2002.

Spitzer, Robert J. *New Proofs for the Existence of God: Contributions of Contemporary Physics and Philosophy*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2010.

Swinburne, Richard. *The Existence of God*. Rev. ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Swinburne, Richard. *Is There a God?* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

AP9850P/ 9859P

God's Existence: Defensible or Delusion?

Semester I: Classroom-based (AP9850P) Online: (AP9859P)

Description

Does God exist? And can this be proved to the satisfaction of a non-believer, or even the doubter in myself? This unit looks at how philosophers – from Plato's time to ours – have sought to answer these questions. It explores traditional moves, such as ontological and cosmological proofs, Leibniz' argument and Pascal's wager, as well as more recent discussion, including the intelligent design argument, and Richard Dawkins' characterisation of this and other proofs as "deluded". Gradually, great philosophers – Aquinas and Descartes, Hume and Kant – are seen to shine within an ongoing quest, to which we ourselves might be drawn: the search for a God whom philosophy can persuasively defend, but never enclose.

Learning outcomes

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

1. Analyse and assess arguments comprising various traditional proofs for God's existence, and old and new rejoinders to these proofs in Hume, Richard Dawkins, and others.
2. Expand knowledge of particular proofs to encompass "types" which those proofs identify, modern versions of the traditional proofs, and modern rebuttals.
3. Reflect at depth on whether a given philosophical proof can be integrated with faith claims for God's existence.
4. Sustain a meta-level philosophical discussion/argumentation on "proof" of divine existence.
5. Examine critically the compatibility of scientifically and theologically-based approaches to identifying evidence for divine engagement with the world.

Assessment

Assessment Type	Weighting
Classroom-based	
Essay (3000 words)	50%
Essay (3000 words)	50%
Online	
Essay (2400 words)	40%
Essay (2400 words)	40%
Weekly Participation (1200 words)	20%

Pre-requisite: A previous unit of philosophy at any level

Lecturer: John Martis

Recommended reading

* = set texts recommended for purchase

Davies, Brian. *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982.

Davies, Paul. *The Mind of God*. London: Penguin Books, 1992.

Dawkins, Richard. *The God Delusion*. Paperback ed. Boston: Mariner Books, 2007.

Descartes, René. *Discourse on Method and the Meditations*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968.

Hegel, G. W. F. *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God*. Ed. and trans. Peter C Hodgson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

*Hick, J.H. *Arguments for the Existence of God*. London: Macmillan, 1970.

Hume, David. *Principal Writings on Religion including Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion and the Natural History of Religion*. Pref. J.C.A. Gaskin. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Küng, Hans. *Does God Exist?* New York: Crossroad, 1991.

Levering, Michael *Proofs of God: Classical Arguments from Tertullian to Barth*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2016.

Mackie, J. L. *The Miracle of Theism*. Paperback ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Melchert, N. *The Great Conversation: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*. 4th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2002.

Spitzer, Robert J. *New Proofs for the Existence of God: Contributions of Contemporary Physics and Philosophy*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2010.

Swinburne, Richard. *The Existence of God*. Rev. ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Swinburne, Richard. *Is There a God?* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.