

# SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

## Course Syllabus

Fall 2023

Instructor: Dr. Bernie Cantens  
PHIL 2321 Philosophy of Religion  
MW 8:00-9:10  
Classroom: Briscoes Administrative Building (BAB)  
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Office: BAB 203  
Web Page: <http://berniephilosophy.com/>  
Office Hours: By Appointment  
**Text**

Rowe, William L. *Philosophy of Religion: An Introduction*. Thomson Wadsworth. 2007. ISBN-13 978-0-495-00725-8

**Make sure you bring the text to every class!**

## Course Description

A study of the major issues in the Philosophy of religion such as the existence and nature of God, the relationships between faith and reason, the nature of religious language, religious experience and the problem of evil.

## Relationship of Course to University Mission

## Assessment Mapping

### Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLO)

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PSLO 1	Describe and critically analyze chief doctrines, theories, and ideas of the great philosophers of the past and present.
PSLO 2	Demonstrate critical thinking by recognizing good and bad arguments and constructing cogent and sound arguments to defend or refute philosophical views.
PSLO 3	Demonstrate proficient writing skills.
PSLO 4	Demonstrate proficient reading comprehension skills of philosophical texts.
PSLO 5	Develop original arguments on philosophical issues that fairly consider different and opposing perspectives.
PSLO 6	Evaluate how philosophical concepts, ideas, theories, and principles affect one's obligations to others and society.

## THECB Core Competencies and PSLO

Competencies	PSLO	Assessment Tool	Assessment Method	Assessment Targets
<b>Communication:</b> Students will develop communication skills to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.	PSLO 3 and 4	Written Assignment	Constructed Rubric	To be developed by individual instructors for each course.
<b>Critical Thinking:</b> Students will develop critical thinking skills to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.	PSLO 1, 2, and 5	Written Assignment	Constructed Rubric	To be developed by individual instructors for each course.
<b>Personal Responsibility:</b> Students will develop principles of personal responsibility for living in a diverse world; to include intercultural competency, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.	PSLO 5 and 6	Written Assignment	Constructed Rubric	To be developed by individual instructors for each course.
<b>Social Responsibility:</b> Students will develop principles of social responsibility for living in a diverse world, to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.	PSLO 5 and 6	Written Assignment	Constructed Rubric	To be developed by individual instructors for each course.

## Course Student Learning Outcomes (CSLO)

The following outcomes are expected of the students who complete this course:

	CSLO	PSLO
2321 CSLO 1	Read, analyze, and critique texts in the philosophy of religion.	PSLO 1 and 4
2321 CSLO 2	Demonstrate knowledge of major arguments, problems, and terminology in the philosophy of religion.	PSLO 1 and 2
2321 CSLO 3	Articulate key concepts and issues in the philosophy of religion.	PSLO 1 and 4
2321 CSLO 4	Write logically persuasive assessments of key concepts and issues.	PSLO 2 and 3
2321 CSLO 5	Discuss the application of philosophy to various aspects of religion.	PSLO 5
2321 CSLO 6	Evaluate the personal and social responsibilities of living in a diverse world.	PSLO 6

## Grading and Assignments

- Weekly Review Questions: Due Fridays (3 points each) – 30 Points
- Weekly quiz: Due Fridays (3 points each) – 30 Points
- Midterm-15 points
- Final-15 points
- Paper-10 points

## 5-Page reflection paper

Students will complete a philosophical reflection paper on a topic *directly* related to this course and that has been part of the reading assignments and class discussions. The paper should be approximately 2 pages long (or longer), double-spaced and 12-font. The students will be graded according to four criteria: (1) whether the paper has a clear and explicit thesis; (2) whether the paper has an organized and demonstrates a logical flow of ideas; (3) whether there are well constructed and developed arguments and/or critical explanations of philosophical problems and solutions; and (4) whether the writing skills, such as word use, sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation are correct.

## Test/Exams

There will be three tests and one final exam. The three tests will be worth 10 points each and the final exam is worth 25 points. The test will be composed of multiple choice and true questions. The final exam will be multiple choice, true and false, short answers and essays. It is within the instructor's purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for an assignment or for the course.

## Class Participation

Attendance will be taken every class period and students will be marked down for unexcused absences. Students will lose 1 point for every unexcused absence up to a possible 5 points. Students can make up lost points in unexcused absences by actively participating in class discussions or by attending out-of-class philosophy lectures and events. Unexcused absences included only the following: (1) sickness with a doctor's note, (2) death in the family, or (3) some other extraordinary event.

## Class Dynamic

Class participation is expected of all students enrolled in this course. Questions and class discussions are encouraged as an effective vehicle to motivate students' interest in the subject matter. *If there are few questions and little discussion taking place in the classroom, the professor reserves the right to choose individual students to answer questions or give their view and arguments on a particular issue.* Therefore, careful daily reading of the text and handouts is essential for success in this course.

## Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory. Students **must** bring their text and journals to every class! Students will lose 1 point for every unexcused absence up to a possible 5 points. Students can make up lost points in unexcused absences by actively participating in class discussions or attending out-of-class philosophy lectures and events. Unexcused absences include only the following: (1) sickness with a doctors' note, (2) death in the family, or (3) an extraordinary event to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## Course Requirements

Reading assignments before class is essential to succeed in this course. Students are expected to be ready for class and to write intelligibly in their journals every class period. This means that he or she should read the assigned chapters before the professor introduces it. Class participation, note taking, and discussion are highly encouraged. The study of philosophy does not only consist of memorization; students must also read analytically and reflect critically on the texts and reading assignments. When studying difficult material, it is often necessary to read it several times before a proper understanding is achieved. Do not be disappointed if you do not understand a philosophical reading assignment on your first try.

## Grading/Measures of Evaluations

Review Questions	30 Points
Weekly Quizzes	30 Points
5-Page Reflection Paper	10 Points
Tests/Exams	30 Points

A=100-90; B 89-80; C79-70; D=69-60; F=<59

## ADA Statement

SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mrs. Mary Schwartz Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director at 432-837-8203 or email [mschwartz@sulross.edu](mailto:mschwartz@sulross.edu). Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine. Texas, 79832.

## Counseling

Sul Ross has partnered with TimelyCare where all SR students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. You can learn more about this 24/7/356 support by visiting [Timelycare/SRSU](https://www.timelycare.com/SRSU). The SR Counseling and Accessibility Services office will continue to offer in-person counseling in Ferguson Hall room 112 (Alpine campus), and telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students and RGC students.

## Libraries

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, [library.sulross.edu/](http://library.sulross.edu/). Off-campus access requires logging in with your Lobold and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email ([srsulibrary@sulross.edu](mailto:srsulibrary@sulross.edu)), or by phone (432-837-8123).

No matter where you are based, public libraries and many academic and special libraries welcome the general public into their spaces for study. SRSU TexShare Cardholders can access additional services and resources at various libraries across Texas. Learn more about the TexShare program by visiting [library.sulross.edu/find-and-borrow/texshare/](http://library.sulross.edu/find-and-borrow/texshare/) or ask a librarian by emailing [srsulibrary@sulross.edu](mailto:srsulibrary@sulross.edu).

New for Fall 2023: Mike Fernandez, SRSU Librarian, is based in Eagle Pass (Building D-129) to offer specialized library services to students, faculty, and staff. Utilize free services such as InterLibrary Loan (ILL) and ScanIt to get materials delivered to you at home or via email.

## Academic Integrity

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students should submit work that is their own and avoid the temptation to engage in behaviors that violate academic integrity, such as turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden. Students should also avoid using open AI sources *unless permission is expressly given* for an assignment or course. Violations of academic integrity can result in failing assignments, failing a class, and/or more serious university consequences. These behaviors also erode the value of college degrees and higher education overall.

## Classroom Climate of Respect

Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still, we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

## Supportive Statement

I am to create a learning environment for my students that supports various perspectives and experiences. I understand that the recent pandemic, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events may impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create a supportive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia.

If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

## PROGRAM AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>
Week 1	What is philosophy?
Week 2	Chapter 1 The Idea of God
Week 3	Chapter 1 The Idea of God
Week 4	Chapter 2 The Cosmological Argument
Week 5	Chapter 4 The Design Argument
Week 6	Midterm
Week 7	Chapter 5 Religious Mystical Experience
Week 8	Chapter 5 Religious Mystical Experience
Week 9	Chapter 6 Faith and Reason
Week 10	Chapter 6 Faith and Reason
Week 11	Chapter 7 The Problem of Evil
Week 12	Chapter 7 The Problem of Evil
Week 13	Topic to be selected by students

Week 14	Topic to be selected by students
Week 15	Review
Final Exam	TBD

**PLEASE, as a courtesy to the other students in the class, turn off all phones upon entering class!**