

**PHIL 49 : Seminar: Epistemology of Religion MW :00 – 4:1**

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**Instructor:** Dr. Aaron Segal, e-mail: Aaron.Segal@u.edu

**Office Hours:** Belfer 1514, Monday and Wednesday 5:45 – 7:45 PM, and by appointment. Please do avail yourselves of office hours!

**Course Description:** This course will explore foundational questions in the epistemology of religion. Some of the questions are very old: can we know that God exists, and if so, how? Can we reasonably believe in God in the absence of evidence, and if so, why? Is it better to know that God exists or to accept it “on faith”? What is faith, anyway? Some of the questions are of more recent vintage: does the fact

**Schedule:**

DATE	TOPIC	REQUIRED READING	RECOMMENDED	VISITOR
<b>PART 1: THEISTIC BELIEF AND EVIDENTIALISM</b>				
1/	Introduction	Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief"		
<b>Theistic Belief without (Sufficient) Propositional Evidence</b>				
1/ 7	Foundationalism and Deontologism	Plantinga, <i>WCB</i> , ch. 3		
1/ 9	Rationality	Plantinga, <i>WCB</i> , ch. 4		
/3	Warranted Theistic Belief	Plantinga <i>WCB</i> , chs. 5 – 6		
/5	Virtues of Arguments	<i>Emunot V'deot</i> , Introduction:		

3/17	Faith and Inquiry: Part 1	Buchak, "Can it be Rational to Have Faith?"		Lara Buchak
3/19	Faith and Inquiry: Part	Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, "The Clever Man and the Simple Man"	Green, "Excursus I: Faith, Doubt, and Reason"	
3/ 4	Faith and Intellectual Faithfulness	C.S. Lewis, "On Obstinacy in Belief" and Shatz, "So What Else is Neo: Theism and E is-temic Recalcitrance"		
3/ 6	Faith and Doubt: Part 1	<i>Emunot V'deot</i> Introduction 1,		
3/31	Faith and Doubt: Part	Lamm, "Faith and Doubt," and Golding "Faith and Doubt Re-considered"		
<b>INTERLUDE</b>				
4/	The Philoso hy of Alvin Plantinga	Re-read selections from Plantinga		Alvin Plantinga
<b>PART 3: RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES</b>				
4/7	Religious Elders and Authorities	Lichtenstein, "Source of Faith..." and Zagzebski, "Religious Authority"		
4/9	Religious Disagreement: Part 1	Hick, "Religious Pluralism..."		
4/ 8	Religious Disagreement: Part	Plantinga, "Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism" and Gellman "In Defense of a Contented Religious Exclusivism"		
4/30	Inter-religious Dialogue	Soloveitchik, "Confrontation" and Shatz, TBA	Articles found here:	David Shatz
5/5	Etiology of Belief	White, "You Only Believe That Because..."		

**Readings:** The following readings will be available on Angel.

- Adams, Robert. "Kierkegaard's Arguments Against Objective Reasoning in Religion," in *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion*, Oxford University Press.
- Alston, William P. "Belief, Acceptance, and Religious Faith," in *Faith, Freedom, and Rationality: Philosophy of Religion Today*, Rowman & Littlefield.
- Buchak, Lara. "Can it be rational to have faith?" in *Probability in the Philosophy of Religion*, Oxford University Press.
- Clifford, W.K. "The Ethics of Belief," in *The Ethics of Belief and Other Essays*, Prometheus Books.
- Flew, Antony. "The Presumption of Atheism," in *The Presumption of Atheism and other Philosophical Essays on God, Freedom, and Immortality*, Barnes and Noble.
- Gellman, Jerome. "In defence of a contented religious exclusivism," *Religious Studies*, 36(4).
- Golding, Joshua. "The Rational Defensibility of Being a Traditional Religious Jew," *Religious Studies*, 35(4).
- Golding, Joshua. "Faith and Doubt Reconsidered," *Tradition*, 6(3).
- Green, Arthur. *Ornamented Master: The Life and Spiritual Quest of Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav*, Excursus I.
- Hacking, Ian. "The Logic of Pascal's Wager," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 9(1).
- Hajek, Alan. "Waging War on Pascal's Wager," *Philosophical Review*, 11(1).
- Hick, John. "Religious Pluralism and Salvation," in *The Philosophical Challenge of Religious Diversity*, Oxford University Press.
- Howard-Snyder, Daniel. "Propositional Faith: What it is and what it is not," in *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*, 6th ed.
- James, William. "The Will to Believe," in *The Will to Believe and other essays in popular philosophy*, Dover.
- Jordan, Jeff. "The Many Gods Objection," in *Gambling on God: Essays on Pascal's Wager*, Rowman & Littlefield.
- Kierkegaard, Soren. "Concluding Unscientific Postscript".
- Lamm, Rabbi Norman. "Faith and Doubt," in *Faith and Doubt*, Ktav Publishing.
- Lewis, C.S. "On Obstinacy in Belief," *The Sewanee Review*, 63(4).
- Lichtenstein, Rabbi Aharon. "The Source of Faith is Faith Itself," in *Leaves of Faith*.
- Pascal, Blaise. *Pensees*.
- Plantinga, Alvin. *Warranted Christian Belief*, Oxford University Press. Chs. 3 – 6.
- Plantinga, Alvin. "Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism," in *The Philosophical Challenge of Religious Diversity*, Oxford University Press.
- Rav Nachman of Bratslav. "The Clever Man and the Simple Man," in *The Tales of Rabbi Nachman*, Koren Publishers.
- Rav Saadya Gaon, *The Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*, Hackett Publishing Company. Prolegomena.
- Ross, Jacob Joshua. "The Hiddenness of God: A Puzzle or a Real Problem," in *Divine Hiddenness: New Essays*, Cambridge University Press.
- Russell, Bertrand. "Is There a God?"
- Schellenberg, J.L. "What the Hiddenness of God Reveals: A Collaborative Discussion," in *Divine Hiddenness: New Essays*, Cambridge University Press.
- Schlesinger, George. "A Central Theistic Argument," in *Gambling on God: Essays on Pascal's Wager*, Rowman & Littlefield.
- Shatz, David. "So What Else is Neo-Theism and Epistemic Recalcitrance," in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 37(1).
- Soloveitchik, Rabbi Joseph B. "Confrontation," *Tradition*, 6(1).
- van Inwagen, Peter. "Russell's China Tea Pot," in *The Right to Believe: Perspective in Religious Epistemology*.
- van Inwagen, Peter. "The Hiddenness of God," in *The Problem of Evil*, Oxford University Press. Available here.
- Wettstein, Howard. *The Significance of Religious Experience*, Oxford University Press. Chs. 3,7.
- White, Roger. "You just believe that because..." *Philosophical Perspectives*, 4(1).
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas. "The Migration of the Theistic Arguments; From Natural Theology to E(Theistic)-Theism," *Journal of Philosophy*, 86(1).