

**PHIL 3333**  
**Comparative Philosophy of Religion 比較宗教哲學**

**Course Outline**

**Course overview**

This course introduces philosophy of religion with a global perspective and a comparative approach. It will explore the reasons and rationalities embedded in a variety of religious traditions including Buddhism, Chinese religions (Confucianism and Daoism), Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. The main topics will fall into three areas: the human condition, ultimate realities, and religious truth.

Advisory to Majors: to be taken in year 2 or above.

**Learning outcomes**

1. Acquire knowledge of major world religions in a comparative approach.
2. Understand the major concepts and issues in philosophy of religion.
3. Ability to work independently and critically on related primary and secondary sources.
4. Explore the contemporary relevance of concepts and issues discussed.

**Topics**

- 1 Introduction: philosophy, religion, and comparative philosophy of religion
- 2 Self: human nature, sin, no-self, suffering, happiness, good life
- 3 Death: life after death, soul, rebirth, eschatology
- 4 Evil: moral bad, karma, free will, theodicy
- 5 The human condition: review section one
- 6 Theistic reality I: ontological arguments (for and against)
- 7 Theistic reality II: cosmological arguments (for and against)
- 8 Comparative perspectives: being, Dao, nirvāṇa, emptiness, mysticism
- 9 Ultimate realities: review section two
- 10 Faith and reason: evidence, miracles, science and religion, brain studies\_
- 11 Religious experience: meditation, prayer, sagehood and self-transformation
- 12 Religious diversity: interreligious dialogue, exclusivism, inclusivism, pluralism
- 13 Religious truth: review section three

**Learning activities**

In this course, you are expect to

- ✧ Attend the lectures and tutorials.
- ✧ Study the readings assigned and try to think through them;
- ✧ Develop the skills mentioned above through discussion and writing (short essays and final paper).
- ✧ Attend all lectures/tutorials and arrive prepared to discuss the readings and participate in class discussion.

*Types of activities and workload:*

In-class:

1. Lecture: 2 hours a week (mandatory)
2. Tutorial: 1 two-hour session every two week beginning from Week 3. (mandatory)

\*Out-of-class:

1. Reading: an average of 4-5 hours per week on required and suggested reading assigned for lecture topics, and 2-3 hours on tutorial reading assignments and presentation.
2. Essay writing: an average of 2-3 hour per week on preparing and writing your essay assignments throughout the term. You should arrange your time so as to apportion more hours on writing.

#### Assessment scheme

<i>Task nature</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Tutorial and class performance	Discussion and presentation	20%
Two short papers	1,000-2,000 words each	2x25%
A final paper	3,000-5,000 words	30%

#### Remarks on Assessment Scheme (if any)

#### Recommended learning resources

- #Meister, Chad, ed. *The Philosophy of Religion Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Anderson, Pamela Sue and Clack, Beverley, eds. *Feminist Philosophy of Religion: Critical Readings*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Hick, John, ed. *Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion*. Third Edition. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1990.
- Hick, John. *Philosophy of Religion*. Fourth Edition. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1990. 中譯：希克著，錢永祥譯：《宗教哲學》。台北：三民，1972。(據英文 1963 年初版譯出)；另一譯本：希克著，何光滬譯：《宗教哲學》。北京：三聯，1988。(據英文 1973 年再版譯出)。
- Hick, John. *An interpretation of religion: human responses to the transcendent*. 2nd ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. (約翰·希克《宗教之解釋：人類對超越者的回應》王志成譯。成都：四川人民出版社，1998.)
- Kessler, Gary E. *Philosophy of Religion: Toward a Global Perspective*. Wadsworth, 1998.
- Mohapatra, Amulya Ranjan. *Philosophy of Religion: An Approach to World Religions*. Sterling Pub Private Ltd; 2 edition, 1990.
- Morgan, Diane. *The Best Guide to Eastern Philosophy and Religion*. Los Angeles: Renaissance Books, 2001.
- #Neville, Robert Cummings, ed. *Religious Truth*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001.
- #Neville, Robert Cummings, ed. *The Human Condition*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001.
- #Neville, Robert Cummings, ed. *Ultimate Realities*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001.
- Nishitani, Keiji. *Religion and nothingness*, translated with an introduction by Jan Van Bragt. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.
- Peterson, Michael & et al, eds. *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings*. Third Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Peterson, Michael L. & Van Arragon, Raymond J. (eds.). 2004. *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Religion*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Phillips, Steven. *Philosophy of Religion: A Global Approach*. Wadsworth, 1995.
- Quinn, Philip L. & Taliaferro, Charles, eds. *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1997.
- Runzo, Joseph. 2001. *Global Philosophy of Religion: A Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oneworld.
- Sharma, Arvind. *The Philosophy of Religion: A Buddhist Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995. (中譯：《宗教哲學：佛教的觀點》，陳美華譯，台北：立緒文化

事業，2006年)

Stewart, Melville Y. *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology of Contemporary Views*. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett, 1996. (中譯：邁爾威利·斯圖沃德著，周偉馳、胡自信及吳增定譯：《當代西方宗教哲學》。北京：北京大學出版社，2001)

Stump, Eleonore & Murray, Michael J., eds. *Philosophy of Religion: the Big Questions*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999.

Taliaferro, Charles and Griffiths, Paul J., eds. *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*. Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2003.

Yandell, Keith E. *Philosophy of religion: a contemporary introduction*. London and New York: Routledge, 1999.

王志成：《全球宗教哲學》。北京：宗教文化出版社，2005。

胡景鍾、張慶熊主編，尹大貽等譯：《西方宗教哲學文選》。上海人民出版社，2002

張志剛：《宗教哲學研究》。北京：中國人民大學出版社，2003。

#單純：《宗教哲學》。北京：中國社會科學出版社，2003。

單純：《當代西方宗教哲學》。北京：中國社會科學出版社，2004。

(#Reserved in the library)

### Course schedule

Jan 9 Introduction: philosophy, religion, and comparative philosophy of religion

Jan 16 Self: human nature, sin, no-self, suffering, happiness, good life [Reader Ch 6]

Jan 23 Death: life after death, soul, rebirth, eschatology [Reader Ch 9]

Jan 30 [No Class]

Feb 6 Evil: moral bad, karma, free will, theodicy [Reader Ch 8]

Feb 13 The human condition: review section one (*Tutorial week*)

Feb 20 Theistic reality I: ontological arguments (for and against) [Reader Ch 3] (*First short paper due*)

Feb 27 Theistic reality II: cosmological arguments (for and against) [Reader Ch 3]

Mar 6 Theistic reality III and Comparative perspectives: teleological argument, being, Dao, nirvāṇa, emptiness, mysticism [Reader Ch 2]

Mar 13 Ultimate realities: review section two (*Tutorial week*)

Mar 20 Faith and reason: evidence, miracles, science and religion, brain studies [Reader Chs 4, 5] (*Second short paper due*)

Mar 27 Religious experience: meditation, prayer, sagehood and self-transformation [Reader Ch 7]

Apr 3 Religious diversity: interreligious dialogue, exclusivism, inclusivism, pluralism [Reader Ch 1]

Apr 10 Religious truth: review section three (*Tutorial week*) [Reader Ch 10]

[May 5 *Final paper due*]

### Details of course website

We use Blackboard (elearn.cuhk.edu.hk) for this course. Lecture notes and essay guidelines will be available at the website.

**Contact details for teacher(s) or TA(s)**

<b>Teacher</b>	
Name:	Yao Zhihua
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<b>TA</b>	
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**Academic honesty and plagiarism**

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.