

THEO 650 Questioning God: Conversations in Philosophy of Religion
Fall 2022

Instructor:

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Course Description:

Christians today live in a global context characterized simultaneously by unprecedented cultural-religious diversity and religious pluralism, on the one hand, and scientific materialism, secularization, and growing nonreligious alternatives for a meaningful life, on the other. In this course, we examine key aspects of this challenge—the nature of ultimate reality; science, faith, and reason; religious pluralism, evil and divine benevolence; the self, death, and the afterlife, etc.—and explore implications for a reasoned, reasonable, and generative Christian witness today.

Course Objectives:

- Appreciate the import of global cultural-religious diversity and religious pluralism as the necessary framework for responsible theological reflection on questions of Christian faith.
- Understand different religious conceptions of ultimate reality, theistic and nontheistic, among the world's religions and explore implications for Christian approaches to God's reality.
- Embrace the challenges posed by scientific and materialistic perspectives for religious (especially theistic) accounts of the world, including questions of faith and reason, belief in a spiritual realm, divine action in the world, miracles, and more.
- Grasp the challenge posed by horrendous evil, suffering, and injustice for belief in a benevolent God and a purposeful world.
- Acquire a basic capacity to explain to ordinary believers in nontechnical language the import of the topics covered in the course as well as their relevance for Christian witness today.

Course texts:

Meister, Chad. *The Philosophy of Religion Reader*. First ed. Routledge, 2007. ISBN: 978-0415408912. List price (Amazon): \$62.95. **Note:** *If you'd prefer, used copies of the book at reduced prices are also readily available through Amazon, bookfinder.com, AbeBooks, and other vendors.*

Meister, Chad. *Introducing Philosophy of Religion*. First ed. Routledge, 2009. ISBN: 978-0415403276. List price (Amazon): \$42.95 (paperback); \$42.95 (digital). **Note:** *If you'd prefer, used copies of the book at reduced prices are also readily available through Amazon, bookfinder.com, AbeBooks, and other vendors.*

Taliaferro, Charles, Paul Draper, Philip L. Quinn, eds. *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*. Second Ed. Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2010. Print ISBN: 9781405163576 (Online ISBN: 9781444320152. DOI:10.1002/9781444320152 (**Free online access through Garrett library**)).