Essential Information
Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available in the Essential Information section at http://support.nts.edu.

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose and Degree Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS textbook information
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- Handbook for Inclusive Language

Instructor Information
Professor: Eric Severson, Ph.D. Email: erseverson@gmail.com
Office: (617) 745-3525
Office Hours: by appointment (email)

Catalog Description
This course deals with the problems that arise in relating the facts of human experience to the truths of the Christian faith.

Course Narrative & Rationale
Some of the most fundamental questions in life arise at the intersection between philosophy and theology. This course is designed to allow space for question about the meaning of religion, the nature of faith, the meaning of God, the nature of evil and human destiny.

The course will be taught using pedagogical methods that aim to best simulate face-to-face class interactions. This is performed by using a series of audio and visual lectures and discussion-starters, along with ensuing discussions. In this course, the discussion boards should simulate informal class discussion. Discussion should always be respectful, but it can certainly be open and experimental. Student papers will be rigorously evaluated, with the expectation that these works represent refined and researched presentations. The professor will also be available for side-conversations via email or phone if students wish to engage certain questions outside of the shared discussion forums.
Degree Objectives
Intersection of M.Div. Objectives and Course Outcomes

1. The development of wisdom and discernment through engagement with the intellectual challenge of the literature of the Christian faith, by the critical, scholarly study of the history and theology of Christianity, and of the literature and practices of Christian spirituality, ethics and ministry.

2. The growth of mature self-awareness and self-understanding as flawed human beings, reconciled to God and to each other within the Christian community, who are being transformed into the perfect likeness of Christ, filled with his Spirit, and gifted for the service of humanity.

3. The investigation of human society, thought and culture in order to articulate clear and coherent views of the context of the mission of the Church, and to develop an understanding of the Church as the community of faith with a passion for the gospel engaging in mission to different cultures.

Course Outcomes
This course intends to:
1. Survey the classical problems and issues in the philosophy of religion, including theodicy, the existence of God, the relationship between faith and reason, etc. (discussions and papers in Unit 1 and Final).
2. Explore the intersection of various cultures and religion (daily discussions and Final).
3. Demonstrate the ability to analyze, discuss and engage concepts across the various fields of philosophy as they intersect with religion and religious categories (daily discussions and Final).
4. Students should display the ability to engage in reflection on philosophical concepts with exegetical depth and rigor (Weekly Reflection Papers and Final).
5. Students should display the capacity to research and extend course concepts into areas in the field of philosophy of religion not covered in the course (Research Paper).

Required Texts & Course Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>ISBN</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Copyright</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy of Religion</td>
<td>William L. Rowe</td>
<td>978-0495007258</td>
<td>Thompson/ Wads.</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The God Who May Be</td>
<td>Richard Kearney</td>
<td>978-0253214898</td>
<td>Indiana University</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sickness Unto Death</td>
<td>Kierkegaard</td>
<td>978-0691020280</td>
<td>Princeton</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond Good and Evil</td>
<td>Nietzsche</td>
<td>978-0140449235</td>
<td>Penguin</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Requirements

1. Final Examination: Cumulative Essay Examination (100 points)
   The course will conclude with a cumulative examination, taken without notes or books and then uploaded into Moodle. Instructions for the final exam are provided in the course outline below, and will be provided in greater detail as the class progresses. (Objectives 1-4)

2. Course Discussion Score (300 points – 25 points each for 12 discussion weeks)
Each week students will be expected to participate in active dialogue concerning the readings, lectures and course material. This requirement is equivalent to classroom attendance and participation, and it plays a critical role in this online environment.

Online courses rely on thoughtful and regular reflections on the course material. Students are expected to read online posts almost every day, and post meaningful, high quality responses at least three days each week. Quality responses are considered discussion posts that either present a new topic/thread, or critically reflect on another person’s post or the professor’s questions. For posts to count toward participation and attendance, they should be several sentences long. Conversational discourse is acceptable, but students should edit and proofread posts before they are submitted. Spelling and grammar problems often derail good conversation. The course schedule below outlines the posting expectations for each week.

(Objective 4)

Discussion will be scored as follows:

- 25 points: students read all assigned readings, respond thoroughly to each question, and interact thoughtfully with other students.
- 22 points: strong achievement of assignments and readings; a few responses could have been more probing or thoughtful. If any of your assignments are late you cannot receive higher than a 45.
- 20 points: satisfactory achievement of assignments and responses, though several areas could have shown more thoughtful and careful reflection. Late work will quickly lower your grade to this level.
- 17 points: some late or missing work, or unsatisfactory responses
- 15 points: significant missing work or failure to interact responsibly and helpfully with the class.
- 14 points or below: unsatisfactory performance in this aspect of the course for the week.

3. Four Short Reflection Papers (400 points – 100 points each)

Students will write three short reflection papers of at least 1250 words each (12pt, double space, 1” margin, conformed to Turabian) reflecting on philosophical or ethical issues raised within the assigned readings. Students should avoid generic paper topics (i.e. “Plato’s Metaphysics”) and strive to write a paper that explores the issue with significant creativity and depth (i.e. “The Unsettling of Plato’s Metaphysics in the Timaeus”). These papers should take an exegetical approach to the readings. The must develop a clear thesis with support from the philosophers studied in class. Your reflections should include many citations from the assigned course readings. *External research is acceptable but not required.* Students will be expected to develop researched opinions in these reflection papers, emphasizing sources gleaned from the required readings. Significant grading deductions will be incurred for spelling/grammar errors, improper documentation, etc. (Objectives 1-3)

Papers will be graded according to the following rubric:

- Grammar, spelling, sentence structure, readability, consistency of notations/spacing/pagination (20 points)
- Careful engagement of the text(s) under consideration (20 points)
- Logical connectedness of the paragraphs/points, visibility of a structure/outline, transitions between points/paragraphs (20 points)
- Thesis development, quality of argument, appropriate length/word count (20 points)
- Strength of conclusions, scope of argument (20 points)
- Total Points: 100
4. Research Paper (200 points)

Students will write a research paper, of at least 3000 words (12 pt, double space, 1” margin, conformed to Turabian), reflecting on issues raised in the course but extending these reflections into external research. This paper must relate to some issue or theme within the broader field of Philosophy of Religion. Topics should be specific and narrow. Students should have their topics approved by the professor before beginning research. Research and writing will occur after the module in the post-module period, building on knowledge and topics that have been discussed in the course. Significant grading deductions will be incurred for spelling/grammar errors, improper documentation, etc. Students are strongly encouraged to use multiple proofreaders and scrutinize all arguments before submission. (Objective 5)

Papers will be graded according to the following rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar, spelling, sentence structure, readability, consistency of</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>notations/spacing/pagination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of research, accuracy of citations, connection of thesis to the</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scholarly field, use of primary sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical connectedness of the paragraphs/points, visibility of a structure</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outline, transitions between points/paragraphs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis development, quality of argument, appropriate length/word count</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of conclusions, scope of argument (whether or not the paper</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accounts for the range of opinions on the topic), overall presentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of thesis</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Points: 200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Distribution of Student Learning Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Participation in forums, groups, etc.</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Assignments and Learning Activities</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams &amp; Quizzes</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Method for Submitting Assignments

All written assignments will be submitted through the Moodle course website. Assignments should not be submitted by email or hard-copy.

Form and Style Expectations

All written assignments should be written with the Turabian style pattern and citation method.

Inclusive Language

NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in their writings. All written work presented to meet course requirements must use gender inclusive language.
**Learning Accommodations**

In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities. Accordingly NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodations should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies that have been beneficial for the student in the past.

**Policy Regarding Late Work & Missed Exams**

Papers will lose 10% possible value for every day they are late. Extensions will be denied except for reasons involving severe illness or a death in the family. No papers will be graded that are more than 5 days late. The only examination in this course is the final exam, and it must be taken between December 9 and December 12 (10:00 p.m., Central Time) or the student will receive no credit for the final.

**Stewarding the Online Classroom Environment**

Online learning is a challenge, and the environment of online classes requires careful maintenance and attention from all participants. Respectful online etiquette is absolutely mandatory. This course visits sensitive issues and provides theological challenges that require students to be open and vulnerable to one another in the class. Students must respect and honor the explorations and ideas that are discussed in the forums, and find ways to communicate with grace and warmth even when disagreeing. Furthermore, regular attention to conversational dynamics is required in the class. Nothing undermines online learning as thorough as unanswered questions and incomplete conversations. Though the course is asynchronous, students are expected to read and post in discussions several times each week so conversational threads don’t go cold. If a student does not meet class participation standards in an online environment, the professor may automatically fail the student.

**Course Grading**

- Final Exam: **100 points**
- Short Reflection Papers: **400 points (100 points each)**
- Research Paper: **200 points**
- Discussion, Reading, Participation: **300 points (25 points each week)**

**Total possible points: 1000**

Grades: A (920 and up), A- (900-919), B+ (880-899), B (820-879), B- (800-819), C+ (780-799), C (720-779), C- (700-719), D (600-699), F (0-599).
Course Outline

Unit 1: Traditional Problems in the Philosophy of Religion

Week 1: September 9-14
- Monday: Watch/Listen to Lecture 1
- Tuesday: Post on Lecture 1 Discussion thread
  o Two quality posts required, along with ongoing conversation. Please do not limit your postings to this numeric requirement – be a good conversation partner, even if it means you “speak up” more than can be required in the syllabus.
- Wednesday/Thursday: Read Rowe 1-68
  o Three quality posts required, along with ongoing conversation (always part of the conversation expectation). Please respond to the professor’s discussion prompt and either create your own discussion thread or participate meaningfully in another student’s thread.
  o On your first post, list the percentage of the reading your completed for the day (100%, 90%, etc.). This helps us stay accountable to one another and helps the professor evaluate student completion of the assigned reading.
- Thursday/Friday: Read Rowe 91-110 and Supplemental Reading (hereafter SR) #1 – Kierkegaard.
  o Three quality posts required. Please respond to the professor’s discussion prompt and either create your own discussion thread or participate meaningfully in another student’s thread.
  o On your first post, list the percentage of the reading your completed for the day. Please do this on the first post any day with reading assigned.
- Saturday: Each week, review your participation in this week’s discussion threads.
  o Have you answered questions given to you by your peers or the professor?
  o No reflection paper is due this weekend, but you will be able to use topics from Week 1 in future reflection papers. Jot down some notes about topics that you might want to write about. The more thorough you are now, the easier it will be to write when the first paper is due next weekend.

Week 2: September 16-21
- Monday: Watch/Listen to Lecture 2 and Read Rowe 112-132
- Tuesday: Post on Lecture 2 Discussion thread (including discussion of Rowe 112-132)
  o Two quality posts required. On your first post, list the percentage of the reading your completed for the day. Please do this on the first post any day with reading assigned (this will not be noted again in the syllabus); students who do not post their reading percentage will not be given credit for completing the reading.
- Wednesday/Thursday: Read SR #3 - Hick
  o Three quality posts required. Please respond to the professor’s discussion prompt and either create your own discussion thread or participate meaningfully in another student’s thread.
- Friday/Saturday: Read SR #4 – Levinas
  o Three quality posts required. Please respond to the professor’s discussion prompt and either create your own discussion thread or participate meaningfully in another student’s thread.
- Saturday: **First Reflection Paper Due**: Select one of the topics from the first two weeks of class and reflect on this subject in a 1250 paper. The thesis of your paper should be narrow, clear and stated early in the paper. These “Short Reflection Papers” do not require external research, though students are welcome to incorporate external sources. The papers *must* focus on the author(s) and ideas of the course. Several citations should be made to the course reading most pertinent to the student’s thesis. Students are expected to investigate their thesis with careful and accurate research taken from the text(s). Creative application of the material is permissible. However, students should be careful to avoid drifting away from the concepts as they are expressed by the philosophers and theologians assigned in class.

**Week 3: September 23-28**
- Monday: Watch/Listen to Lecture 3 and Read Rowe 162-177
- Tuesday: Post on Lecture 3 Discussion thread (including discussion of Rowe 162-177)
  - Two quality posts required.
- Wednesday/Thursday: Read SR #5 – Sartre (also available as video; see Moodle for link)
  - Three quality posts required.
- Friday/Saturday: Read SR #6 – Tao Te Ching (also available as audio; see Moodle for link)
  - Three quality posts required.

**Unit 2: God and the Question of Being**

**Week 4: September 30-October 5**
- Monday: Watch/Listen to Lecture 4
- Tuesday: Post on Lecture 4 Discussion thread
  - Two quality posts required.
- Wednesday/Thursday: Read Kearney 1-38
  - Three quality posts required.
- Friday/Saturday: Read Marion 1-52
  - Three quality posts required.

**Week 5: October 7-12**
- Monday: Watch/Listen to Lecture 5
- Tuesday: Post on Lecture 5 Discussion thread
  - Two quality posts required.
- Wednesday/Thursday: Read Kearney 39-52
  - Three quality posts required.
- Friday/Saturday: Read Marion 53-138 (139-187 recommended)
  - Three quality posts required.
- Saturday: **Second Reflection Paper Due** (same instructions as above). Be sure to carefully note any corrections or suggested changes in your first graded paper.

**Week 6: October 14-19**
- Monday: Watch/Listen to Lecture 6 and Read Kearney 53-79
- Tuesday: Post on Lecture 6 discussion thread (including Kearney 53-79)
  - Two quality posts required.
- Wednesday/Thursday: Read Nietzsche 31-73
  - Three quality posts required.
- Friday/Saturday: Read SR #7 – Levinas
Week 7: October 21-26

Reading and Research Week: No assignments due. The only task you need to complete this week is to contact the professor to discuss your ideas for the final research project and your plan to research and prepare the paper. An email correspondence should suffice, though a phone conversation can be arranged if necessary.

Unit 3: The Puzzle that is the Self

Week 8: October 28-November 2
- Monday: Watch/Listen to Lecture 7
- Tuesday: Post on Lecture 7 Discussion thread
  o Two quality posts required.
- Wednesday/Thursday: Read Kearney 80-110
  o Three quality posts required.
- Friday/Saturday: Read Kierkegaard 5-74
  o Three quality posts required.
- Saturday: Third Reflection Paper Due (same instructions as above). Be sure to carefully note any corrections or suggested changes in your first two papers.

Week 9: November 4-9
- Monday: Watch/Listen to Lecture 8
- Tuesday: Post on Lecture 8 Discussion thread
  o Two quality posts required. Please respond to the professor’s discussion prompt and either create your own discussion thread or participate meaningfully in another student’s thread.
- Wednesday/Thursday: Read Kierkegaard 75-131
  o Three quality posts required.
- Friday/Saturday: Read SR #8 – Luther
  o Three quality posts required.

Unit 4: Philosophy’s Frontier - Religion

Week 10: November 11-16
- Monday: Watch/Listen to Lecture 9
- Tuesday: Post on Lecture 9 Discussion thread
  o Two quality posts required.
- Wednesday/Thursday: Read Nietzsche 74-128
  o Three quality posts required.
- Friday/Saturday: Read SR #9 - Hegel
  o Three quality posts required.
- Saturday: Fourth Reflection Paper Due (same instructions as above). Be sure to carefully note any corrections or suggested changes in your first graded paper.

Week 11: November 18-23
- Monday: Watch/Listen to Lecture 10
- Tuesday: Post on Lecture 10 Discussion thread
  o Two quality posts required.
- Wednesday/Thursday: Read SR #10 - Buber
  o Three quality posts required.
- Friday/Saturday: Read SR #11 – Henry
  - Three quality posts required.

**Week 12: November 25-30 (Thanksgiving Week)**
- Monday: Watch/Listen to Lecture 11
- Tuesday/Wednesday: Read SR #12 - Heidegger
  - Three quality posts required, on either the lecture or on the related Heidegger reading.
- Thursday-Sunday: Happy Thanksgiving!

**Week 13: December 2-7**
- Monday: Watch/Listen to Lecture 12. The focus this week is on the preparation of your Research Paper, though we will continue a dialogue on themes that have emerged as central in our discussions and lectures in the course.
- Tuesday: Post on Lecture 12 Discussion thread
  - Two quality posts required.
- Wednesday/Thursday: Read SR #14 - TBA
  - Two quality posts required.
- Friday/Saturday: Read SR #15 - TBA
  - Two quality posts required.
- Saturday: Final Research Paper Due. Pay close attention to the requirements for this important component of this course as listed above.

**Week 14: December 9-12**
- Final Exam: During Week 13 the professor will provide instructions for preparing for this closed book examination on some of the key themes in the course. The only task during Week 14 will be the completion of the exam, which is due by December 12. The rest of the week has been set aside for student preparation for the final examination.