

PIU11023 — Central Problems in Philosophy A

Module Information	
Module Code	PIU11023
Module Title	Central Problems in Philosophy A
Department	Philosophy
Year Group	Junior Fresh
Module Personnel	Dr. Jamie B. Turner Dr. Farbod Akhlaghi
Academic Year	2026-27
Credit Weighting	5 ECTS
Semester	1
Contact Hours	22 hours of lectures and 4 hours of tutorial

Module Content	
Module Description	Component 1 – Philosophy of Religion (Dr Turner) This course offers an introduction to some main topics in the philosophy of religion. It begins with an analysis of how philosophical approaches to religion differ from other kinds of approaches, such as sociological or theological ones. Then the nature of religious belief and conditions under which it might be rational to uphold are examined. Thereafter the main arguments for God's existence are examined. There ontological, cosmological, and design arguments are considered. Then three major arguments against God's existence from evil, hiddenness, and hell are explored. Finally, the epistemic implications of religious experience, and the relationship between God and morality, are examined.

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	Component 2 – Moral Philosophy (Dr Akhlaghi) How should we approach conversation with others? What do we owe our friends? Could it be wrong to have children? The aim of this component is to introduce you to some of the central problems in moral philosophy through engaging with moral questions that arise in the course of our everyday lives: with friends, family, romantic partners, social media, and more. It is natural, in thinking through such questions, to wonder if morality is all a matter of opinion or whether there are any moral facts at all. We will thus also cover some key debates about the nature of morality, asking, for example, whether there are moral facts, whether they are objective, and how we could know what is right and wrong.
Learning Outcomes	Component 1: • Articulate central questions and problems in philosophy of religion. • Critically evaluate competing philosophical arguments concerning God, religious belief, and the rationality of faith. • Understand how the philosophical approach to religion is different from other approaches. Component 2: • Understand major ethical theories and central debates in moral philosophy. • Articulate competing perspectives on the nature of morality, moral obligation, and the good life. • Critically evaluate different ethical theories and their application to contemporary moral issues.
Indicative Reading / Resources	An extensive and detailed reading list will be made available at the start of the module. The following are helpful preparatory background reading: For Component One: • Davies, Brian. (2020). <i>An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion</i> (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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	For Component Two: • Shafer-Landau, Russ. (2021). <i>The Fundamentals of Ethics</i> (Fifth Edition or later). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
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Assessment

Assessment Components	One essay (50%). In-person exam (50%).
Assessment Details	While students can choose which component their essay concerns, their exam answer must concern the component on which they did not write their essay. Word-limit for the essay: 1,000 words. Final exam: One hour.

Additional Information

Prerequisites	None.
Co-requisites	None.