Ethics, Philosophy and Religion

EPR100 AT A GLANCE

People
Course Convenor:
Dr Shuruq Naguib, shuruq naguib@lancaster.ac.uk
Part I Co-ordinators: Gillian Taylor (5)92425, B.43, County South
& Katherine Young (5)92710, B.46, County South

Lectures
Tuesday, 11.00-12.00 pm:
in Frankland Colloquium Room
Thursday, 4.00-5.00 pm:
in Cavendish Colloquium Room (Michaelmas)
in Frankland Colloquium Room (Lent & Summer)

Seminars
One 50 minute seminar each week.

Assessment
50% Coursework (four essays)
50% Examination (three hours)

Essay Deadlines
Essay One Thursday 13 November 2014
Essay Two Thursday 15 January 2015
Essay Three Thursday 19 February 2015
Essay Four Thursday 30 April 2015

You must always submit your essays by 12.00 noon

Course Readers and Books
There is one course reader for all terms. There is no single course book for EPR.100 but useful background reading includes:
A. MacIntyre, A Short History of Ethics London: Routledge, 1991

Course Website link
https://modules.lancs.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=5446
Ethics, Philosophy and Religion EPR100

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion is located in County South. The Part I Co-ordinators who look after EPR 100 are Gillian Taylor and Katherine Young. Gillian can be found in Room B.43, and Katherine in B.46, County South. Both can deal with general and administrative queries about the course.

Seminars will be led by Graduate Teaching Assistants, while the overall Course Convenor is Dr. Shuruq Naguib. Please ask your seminar tutor or the course convenor if you have any academic questions, or are having difficulties, or would like other advice relating to the course.

All members of academic staff who teach on EPR 100, as well as the Teaching Assistants, have Office Hours during Term, and these will be displayed on their departmental webpages (see www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/pps/profiles).

Course Convenor
Dr Shuruq Naguib  (5)92426  Email: shuruqnaguib@lancaster.ac.uk

Part I Co-ordinators
Gillian Taylor  (5)92425  Email: g.taylor@lancaster.ac.uk
Katherine Young  (5)92710  Email: k.young1@lancaster.ac.uk

Course Lecturers
Dr. Brian Black (Email: b.black@lancaster.ac.uk)

Dr Brian Garvey (Email b.garvey@lancaster.ac.uk)

Dr Gavin Hyman (Email: g.hyman@lancaster.ac.uk)

Dr Anderson Jeremiah (Email: a.jeremiah@lancaster.ac.uk)

Dr Shuruq Naguib (Email: shuruqnaguib@lancaster.ac.uk)
THE COURSE
The course provides an introduction to key areas at the intersection of ethics, philosophy and religious studies. Historically and practically these areas of enquiry have often been closely related and, even today, we can appreciate that there are areas of life and experience – such as in global politics, the technological advances all around us, and in our own ethical decisions – where an understanding of the philosophical and religious foundations of ethics has profound relevance and significance.

The course is divided into five main areas. They will provide a range of core themes and perspectives including western and Asian philosophical and religious ethics and the authorities upon which ethical standpoints are grounded.

In Michaelmas term, the course begins with an exploration of the different conceptions of God at the intersection between philosophy and religion. In particular, it examines some of the very different conceptions of God that have existed in the history of the western Christian tradition. It explores the ways in which these different conceptions have been produced by contrasting philosophical methodologies and variegated understandings of the ways in which philosophy should relate to religion. The section attempts to show how intertwined are philosophy and religion, and to explore the ways in which philosophy impacts upon understandings of God within religion itself.

In the second half of the term, we consider the foundational aspects of Ethics and the conceptual understanding of morality with special reference to the western philosophical tradition. Building upon this foundation, we will explore the interconnected nature of ethical precepts and how the Christian tradition developed its ethical framework with reference to Jesus of Nazareth. Finally this section will also touch upon the global nature of Christianity and consequent ethical implications.

In the Lent term, the course moves on to look at the relationships between science and religion. There is much debate on the question of whether religion and science can peacefully co-exist, or are intrinsically antagonistic. We will first look at two major episodes in the history of science that are often regarded as occasions of conflict between religion and science: the Scientific Revolution in the 17th century, and the emergence of Darwinism in the 19th. Then we will consider scientific theories of the origins of religion and whether they have any implications for religious belief. Finally in this section, we will look at some recent thinkers who think that science and religion are intrinsically antagonistic, and some who think they are not.
In the second half of the Lent term, we will examine the general themes of the course specifically within the context of two Asian religious and philosophical traditions: Hinduism and Buddhism. We will examine teachings on the Self, teachings on Not-self, Hindu conceptions of God and ethics, and Wisdom and Compassion in Mahayana Buddhism. Finally, we will look at two modern thinkers – Mohandas Gandhi and the Dalai Lama – who have posed challenges to Western modernity from Hindu and Buddhist perspectives.

In the summer term, the course moves on to consider the development of philosophical and ethical thought and practice in the Islamic tradition, with a focus on the different paths for knowing God. We will particularly look at the paths of the scripturalists, the rationalists and the mystics, examining their sources of knowledge and their understandings of God. We will finally consider the challenges modernity poses to the Islamic tradition, and how Muslim thinkers attempt to reconcile between past and present.

COURSE AIMS

The course aims to develop a critical awareness of the place and status of ethical discourse and practice within the context of philosophy and religious studies, the capacity to analyse and assess theoretical and historical texts, and an understanding of different religious and philosophical perspectives that inform ethical stances.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

On successful completion of this course, you will have acquired a comprehensive range of skills that can only be obtained in an interdisciplinary course of this kind. You should be able to:

- Identify, describe and discuss key philosophical debates and key figures in western and Asian philosophical and theological traditions (Judeo-Christian, Enlightenment, post-Enlightenment; Indian; and Chinese)
- Recognise, analyse, and critically evaluate a range of philosophical critiques of various conceptions of the divine and accounts of how the divine may be known
- Engage in and exemplify philosophical reasoning in relation to a range of philosophical and ethical issues and debates, including key ideas of existentialism and contemporary debates on evolution, religion and ethics
- Compare and critically evaluate different ethical and philosophical approaches – from different religious or cultural traditions – to the same or related topics.
You will also develop a range of transferable skills:

- **Skills in reading and note taking.**
  
  These skills will be developed at all stages of the course, but especially in the preparation of the essays.

- **Skills in research and writing.**
  
  These skills will be developed at all stages of the course, but particularly in the preparation of the essays and in the preparation for the group presentation.

- **Skills in examination preparation and technique.**
  
  These skills will be consolidated during the Summer term when examinations are conducted. In addition to the revision lecture, the final seminar of the course in week 5 of the Summer Term is devoted to revision and examination techniques.

**Further information**

For further information about university resources and services, including support for learning, library use and careers advice, please see the Department’s Undergraduate Handbook. This also contains information about grading and marking criteria, and all members of staff in the Department.
TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

Lectures

In Michaelmas, Lent & Summer terms, there are two lectures each week

Tuesday, 11.00-12.00 pm:
   in Frankland Colloquium Room (all year, weeks 1 – 24)

Thursday, 4.00-5.00 pm:
   in Cavendish Colloquium Room (Michaelmas, weeks 1 - 10)
   in Frankland Colloquium Room (Lent & Summer, weeks 11 - 24)

Seminars

Each student attends one seminar per week, in all three terms. The seminar lasts for 50 minutes. These seminars are designed to clarify important issues covered during the lectures, to discuss and analyse the set readings, and to stimulate further reflection and discussion.

ASSESSMENT

The formal course assessment is broken down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay 1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
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<td>Essay 2</td>
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<td>Essay 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Examination</td>
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Essays

All students are required to write four essays which should be 1,500 words long. Each essay should not be significantly longer or shorter than this.

You must write one essay on each of the four areas taught during the Michaelmas and Lent terms. The final area of the course taught in the summer term will be assessed by a compulsory question in the end of year exam. Essay questions for Michaelmas and Lent terms are given below, with suggestions for reading.
### Essay Deadlines

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Essay</th>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 1</td>
<td>Week 6, Michaelmas Term – Thursday 13 November 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 2</td>
<td>Week 1, Lent Term – Thursday 15 January 2015</td>
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<td>Essay 3</td>
<td>Week 6, Lent Term – Thursday 19 February 2015</td>
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<td>Essay 4</td>
<td>Week 2, Summer Term – Thursday 30 April 2015</td>
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You must always submit your essay by **12.00 noon**. **Essays submitted after this time will be considered late.** You must submit two copies of your essay. One should be printed and **posted** in the essay submission box located in open area next to B.39, County South. The other should be submitted **electronically** via Moodle. Instructions for electronic submission can be found in the Undergraduate Handbook. **Be aware that your essay will be considered late if you do not submit both paper and electronic copy by the deadline.**

Please note that, following a decision by the University Senate, there is now no period of grace: work that is even a day late, without good reason, will be penalised. Please also note that non-term time is also included when calculating the ‘lateness’ of essays.

Essays which do not contain a complete bibliography, or which do not use references, will be penalised as they fail to meet academic standards. Plagiarism (which is passing off someone else’s ideas or work as your own) will not be tolerated. For advice on writing essays and details of Departmental rules concerning the late submission of coursework see the Department's *Undergraduate Handbook*. You are also encouraged to consult your tutor about your essay during his office hour, for instance to discuss feedback on your work.

**Critical Reflection**

Learning from feedback is a crucial part of developing as a student, and for your 2nd, 3rd and 4th essays, you will be required to write no more than a few sentences outside of the body of your essay, explaining how you think this essay is an improvement on your last one and the ways in which you have addressed feedback from your previous essay. For example, you might have improved your referencing or the structure of your argument. If you were commended for something in your previous essay, you may have attempted to build on that success in this essay. The reflection is compulsory, and will be taken into consideration as part of your final mark.
Examinations
Examinations take place in the middle of the Summer term. The paper lasts for three hours, and has five sections corresponding to the five sections of the course. Students need to answer one compulsory question on the fifth section of the course and three questions relating to the other four sections.

COURSE WEBSITE

https://modules.lancs.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=5446
Course bibliographies, lecture handouts, and other materials will be posted here. This site will also be used by the Student Representatives, and you will be able to contact them through the site.
SYLLABUS
MICHAELMAS TERM

Philosophical Conceptions of God – Dr Gavin Hyman
Week 1  Introduction
Week 2  The Medieval God
Week 3  The Enlightenment God
Week 4  The 'God of the Philosophers'
Week 5  The Non-Realist God
Week 6  The Post-modern God

Sources and Resources for Christian Ethics – Dr Anderson Jeremiah
Week 7  Ethics and Morality
Week 8  Reason and Duty
Week 9  Understanding Christian Ethics
Week 10 Global Christianity and Christian Ethics
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<th>Week</th>
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<th>Title/Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Science and Religion – Dr Brian Garvey</td>
<td>Historical case-study 1: The 17th-century Scientific Revolution</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Historical case-study 2: Darwin</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Scientific accounts of the origins of religion</td>
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<td>Are science and religion compatible? Arguments against</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Are science and religion compatible? Arguments for</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Ethics, Philosophy and Religion in Hindu and Buddhist Traditions –</td>
<td>The Upanishads</td>
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<td>Dr Brian Black</td>
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<td>The Teachings of the Buddha</td>
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<td>Mahayana Buddhism</td>
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<td>Gandhi and the Dalai Lama</td>
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<td>Week</td>
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<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Introducing the Islamic Philosophical Tradition</td>
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<td>Knowing God through Revelation</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Knowing God through Reason</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Knowing God through Mysticism</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>God in Modern Muslim Thought</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Revision and course overview</td>
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The Course in Detail: Michaelmas Term

PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTIONS OF GOD – DR GAVIN HYMAN

LECTURES

Week 1  
**Introduction**  
Different ways of conceiving of God and their philosophical underpinnings

Week 2  
**The Medieval God**  
The theology of St Thomas Aquinas; transcendence, revelation and the 'doctrine' of analogy

Week 3  
**The Enlightenment God**  
Immanuel Kant: the noumenal status of God as a necessary practical postulate

Week 4  
**The 'God of the Philosophers'**  
Modern philosophical approaches to the nature of God, particularly in the work of Richard Swinburne

Week 5  
**The Non-Realist God**  
Non-metaphysical conceptions of God, particularly in the work of Don Cupitt

Week 6  
**The Post-modern God**  
Conceptions of God after modernity and their connections with pre-modern conceptions, especially in the work of Rowan Williams

SEMINARS

Week 1  
**What does this reading reveal about different ways of conceiving of God?**  
Week 2  What does Aquinas's 'doctrine' of analogy tell us about his conception of God?

Week 3  What does Kant's notion of a 'necessary practical postulate' tell us about his conception of God?

Week 4  What is distinctive about Richard Swinburne's conception of God?

Week 5  What continuities and discontinuities are there between Don Cupitt's non-metaphysical conception of God and earlier conceptions?

Week 6  How does Rowan Williams's conception of God differ from those of both Richard Swinburne and Don Cupitt?

ESSAYS AND READINGS

1.  'Aquinas's doctrine of analogy makes language too vague to tell us anything meaningful about God'. Assess this criticism.
2. Is Kant’s conception of God compatible with the mainstream Christian tradition?

Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Practical Reason*, sections V-VIII


Byrne, Peter, *Kant on God* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007)

Cupitt, Don, 'Kant and the Negative Theology' in Brian Hebblethwaite and Stewart Sutherland (eds.) *The Philosophical Frontiers of Christian Theology* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982)


Reardon, B. M. G., *Kant as Philosophical Theologian* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988)


3. Consider the criticism that Richard Swinburne’s philosophy makes his conception of God too anthropomorphic.


4. ‘Don Cupitt’s non-realist God is merely a form of atheism in disguise’. Assess this criticism.

Hebblethwaite, Brian, The Ocean of Truth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988)
Ward, Keith, Holding Fast to God: A Reply to Don Cupitt (London: SPCK, 1982).
The Course in Detail: Michaelmas Term

SOURCES AND RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN ETHICS – DR ANDERSON JEREMIAH

LECTURES

Week 7  **Ethics and Morality**
The relationship between the way the world is and how we should lead our lives

Week 8  **Reason and Duty**
The correlation of rationality, autonomy and the changing face of ethics in modernity

Week 9  **Understanding Christian Ethics**
The characteristics of ‘life worth living’ with reference to Jesus of Nazareth

Week 10  **Global Christianity and Christian Ethics**
The cross-cultural context of Christian Ethics and contemporary challenges

SEMINARS

Week 7  **What are the fundamental challenges that the modern world presents to ethical theories and practices?**

Week 8  **To what extent does the use of human reason liberate individuals from traditional forms of moral authority?**
Week 9  What do Christian Ethical framework offer modern moral deliberation?

Week 10  Discuss the future of Christian Ethics?

ESSAYS AND READINGS

1. Can virtue ethics contribute meaningfully to moral deliberation in the modern world?

2. Explain the meaning and significance of the term ‘natural’, as it is used in Natural Law theory.
3. Assess the extent to which Jesus of Nazareth might be said to have provided an ethical theory.


Peter Harvey, The Morals of Jesus (London: DLT, 1982).


4. Examine the Modern challenges to Christian Ethics.


The Course in Detail: Lent Term

SCIENCE AND RELIGION – DR BRIAN GARVEY

LECTURES

Week 1  Historical Case-study 1

The relationship between science and religion in the 17th century
Scientific Revolution; Whig history of science.

Week 2  Historical Case-study 2

The alleged link between Darwin’s theory of evolution and atheism;
the role of religion in contemporary responses to Darwin.

Week 3:  Scientific accounts of the origins of religion

Philosophical precedents for these accounts (Hume, Nietzsche);
Freud’s account; Evolutionary Psychology accounts.

Week 4:  Are science and religion compatible? Arguments against

Arguments based on modern physics (e.g. Stenger); arguments
based on the theory of evolution (e.g. West)

Week 5:  Are science and religion compatible? Arguments for

Arguments based on the incompleteness of a scientific world-view;
arguments that religion and science are doing different things (e.g.
Gould)

SEMINARS

Week 1:  In what ways was religion a support or an obstacle to the
development of science in the early modern period?

Reading: John Henry: “Religion and the Scientific Revolution.” In
Peter Harrison ed. The Cambridge Companion to Science and
Week 2: Is there any intrinsic connection between Darwinism and atheism? Or between theism and rejecting Darwin’s theory? 

Week 3: What insights can scientific psychology provide into the nature of religion?

Week 4: Why does Stenger think that belief in God is incompatible with modern physics? Why does West think it’s incompatible with Darwinian evolution?


Week 5: What, according to Gould, belongs to the magisterium of science, and what to the magisterium of religion?

ESSAYS AND READINGS

1. Is it a serious distortion of the history of science in the 17th century to see it in terms of scientists battling against religious prejudices? Or is that a broadly accurate picture?

Paul Feyerabend: “Galileo and the Tyranny of Truth.” In Feyerabend Farewell to Reason. Verso, 1987

Nick Jardine: “Whigs and Stories: Herbert Butterfield and the Historiography of Science.”


2. Are any secular psychological theories of the origins of religion plausible? Is religion discredited if they are true?

Scott Atran: In Gods We Trust: The Evolutionary Landscape of Religion. OUP, 2005


Sigmund Freud: Totem and Taboo and The Future of an Illusion.

3. Is Gould’s concept of ‘nonoverlapping magisteria’ a good way of showing that religion and science can peacefully coexist?


The Course in Detail: Lent Term

ETHICS, PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION IN HINDU AND BUDDHIST
TRADITIONS – DR BRIAN BLACK

LECTURES

Week 6  The Upanishads  
Teachings on the Self

Week 7  The Teachings of the Buddha  
Teachings on Not-self, Change and Interdependence

Week 8  The Bhagavad Gita  
Hindu conceptions of God and ethics

Week 9  Mahayana Buddhism  
Wisdom and Compassion

Week 10  Gandhi and the Dalai Lama  
Hindu and Buddhist responses to Modernity

Seminars

Week 6  Discuss some of the main teachings of the self in the 
Upanishads. How are they similar? How are they different?
Reading: The Upanishads (Bṛhadaranyaka Upanishad: Chapters 3,4; translations by either Olivelle, Roebuck, or Max Müller (Internet Sacred Text Archive: www.sacred-texts.com)

**Week 7**

Discuss the Buddha’s life story and early teachings.


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**Week 8**

What is Arjuna’s dilemma? What are some of Krishna’s arguments to dispel Arjuna’s doubts?
*Reading: The Bhagavad Gita (Chapters 1-11) translation by W.J. Johnson or Laurie Patton; or online translation by Kashinath Trimbak Telang (available at: [http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/sbe08/index.htm](http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/sbe08/index.htm))


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**Week 9**

Discuss Mahayana teachings, such as emptiness, skillful means, and compassion, in relation to the early teachings of the Buddha.

*Reading: The Bodhicaryavatara (Chapters 1-6) translation by Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton

In what ways do Gandhi and the Dalai Lama draw from traditional teachings of Hinduism and/or Buddhism in their philosophical outlooks?

Reading: Mohandas Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*; available online at: [http://www.soilandhealth.org/03sov/0303critic/hind%20swaraj.pdf](http://www.soilandhealth.org/03sov/0303critic/hind%20swaraj.pdf)


ESSAYS AND READINGS

1. Discuss the ethical implications of *karma* and *ātman* in the Upaniṣads.


2. Discuss the Buddhist teachings of *pratītyasamutpāda* (dependent origination), the four noble truths, and not-self and how they are inter-related.


3. Discuss the teaching of non-attached action in the Bhagavad Gita.


4. To what extent is Mahayana Buddhist philosophy an extension of the Buddha’s teachings?


5. Discuss Gandhi’s theories of *satyagraha* and *swaraj*.


KNOWING GOD IN ISLAM: ETHICS, PHILOSOPHY AND MYSTICISM
DR SHURUQ NAGUIB

LECTURES

Week 1  Introducing the Islamic Philosophical Tradition
Knowing God through Revelation
The development of ethical thought in Islam: God, Creation and human accountability - Al-Ghazali.

Week 2  Knowing God through Reason

Week 3  Knowing God through Mysticism
Direct Experience, annihilation of the self, and illumination.

Week 4  God in Modern Muslim Thought
Rethinking the relation between revelation and reason in Islamic ethics and philosophy.

SEMINARS

Week 1  To what extent is Muslim philosophy Islamic? How could one be delivered from error in knowledge and practice according to al-Ghazali?

Week 2  How does Ibn Rushd (Averroes) reconcile between the different sources of knowledge?
Week 3  
Is knowing God the same as or different from knowing the self in Islamic mysticism?  

Week 4  
How does Islamic thought deal with the philosophical challenges of modernity?  

**READINGS**


Amin Razavi, Mehdi. *Suhrawardi and the School of Illumination* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1997)


Cook, Michael. *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000)


Hourani, George F. *Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985)


Leaman, Oliver. *A Brief Introduction to Islamic Philosophy.* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999)

Leaman, Oliver. *An Introduction to Medieval Islamic Philosophy.* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985)


Nasr, Seyyed Hossein and Oliver Leaman, eds. (*History of Islamic Philosophy.* London: Routledge, 1996)


(Please note: there is no essay for this section)