

The Philosophy of Religion

Start date 23rd February 2018

End date 25th February 2018

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge

Tutor Karim Esmail

Course code 1718NRX046

Director of Programmes

Emma Jennings

**For further information on this
course, please contact**

Public Programme Coordinator, Clare Kerr
clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 746237

To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Karim Esmail BA, MPhil, MPhil, PhD.

Educated at Oxford, Cambridge, London, & Harvard.

Awarded a British Academy Studentship.

Awarded the Gregg Bury Prize, Cambridge.

Formerly, Research Fellow, Oxford & Visiting Fellow, Harvard & Burney Student, Cambridge.

Alongside international articles, he has recently published a clear, original and a best-selling work on God's nature and existence: *God A brief philosophical introduction* (2017).

Currently, he lectures at Oxford and Cambridge.

Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

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|---------------|------------------------------------------|
| 19:00 | Dinner |
| 20:30 – 22:00 | Religious language |
| 22:00 | Terrace bar open for informal discussion |

Saturday

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 07:30 | Breakfast |
| 09:00 – 10:30 | God's nature: omnipotence |
| 10:30 | Coffee |
| 11:00 – 12:30 | God's nature: omniscience |
| 13:00 | Lunch |
| 14:00 – 16:00 | Free |
| 16:00 | Tea |
| 16:30 – 18:00 | God's existence: an ontological argument |
| 18:00 – 18:30 | Free |
| 18:30 | Dinner |
| 20:00 – 21:30 | God's existence: some cosmological arguments |
| 21:30 | Terrace bar open for informal discussion |

Sunday

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------------------|
| 07:30 | Breakfast |
| 09:00 – 10:30 | God's existence: some design arguments |
| 10:30 | Coffee |
| 11:00 – 12:30 | God's existence: the problem of evil |
| 12:45 | Lunch |

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

- To provide primarily an understanding of some of the main (traditional) properties of God and some of the main arguments for and against God's existence.
- To provide also some understanding of religious language.

Content:

The Philosophy of Religion is concerned above all with the statement "God exists".

"God exists" is an instance of religious language. The first session will consider the claim (made by some) that religious language is without meaning. (There is no point proceeding if it is without meaning.)

The second and third sessions will consider the subject of the statement, *viz.* God. They will consider God's nature. Traditionally, God's nature includes particular properties. These sessions will consider at least two of these properties: being all powerful (or omnipotent) and being all-knowing (or omniscient).

The final sessions will consider whether the statement is true or false. They will consider some of the principal arguments for and against God's existence: an ontological argument, some cosmological arguments, some design arguments, and the problem of evil.

Presentation of the course:

Lectures and discussion.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should have:

- An understanding of some of the main (traditional) properties of God and some of the main arguments for and against God's existence.
- Some understanding of religious language.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

| Background | reading | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Author | Title | Publisher and date |
| Davies, B. , | <i>An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion</i> | (Oxford, 2004) |
| Esmail, K.H.A., | <i>God A brief philosophical introduction</i> | (Vernon Press, 2017) |
| A discount of 12% is available from the publisher www.vernonpress.com . The online discount code is FLYPR12. Any queries please contact - argiris.legatos@vernonpress.com | | |
| Taliaferro, C., | <i>Contemporary Philosophy of Religion</i> | (Blackwell, 1998) |

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 18 July 2017