



The Nature and Existence of God

Start date	16 September 2022	End date	18 September 2022
Venue	Madingley Hall Madingley Cambridge CB23 8AQ		
Tutor	Dr Karim Esmail	Course code	2223NRX002

For further information contact intenq@ice.cam.ac.uk

Tutor biography

Dr. Esmail was educated at London, Oxford, Cambridge, and Harvard. He was awarded a British Academy Studentship and the Gregg Bury Prize at Cambridge.

He was formerly a Research Fellow at Oxford and Burney, Student at Cambridge and a Visiting Fellow at Harvard.

Alongside international articles, he is the author of three volumes of an original philosophical work on the nature and existence of God. (The third volume includes an Appendix on the nature of free action.)

He lectures at both Cambridge and Oxford.

Classes with him consist of clearly structured lectures and an encouragement to ask questions and to make comments. Students are assisted in their understanding of the subject and in their critical engagement with it.

Course programme

FRIDAY

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

19:00 Dinner

20:30 – 22:00 Introduction

God's nature: omnipotence

22:00 Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

SATURDAY

07:30 Breakfast (for residents only)

09:00 – 10:30 God's nature: omniscience; perfectly good

10:30 Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 God's nature: perfectly good; incorporeality

13:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 Free time

16:00 Tea

16:30 – 18:00 God's existence: an ontological argument

18:00 – 18:30 Free time

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 (for residents only)

09:00 – 10:30 God's existence: some design arguments

10:30 Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 God's existence: the logical problem of evil

12:45 Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

1. To provide an understanding of some of the principal and traditional properties of God.
2. To provide an understanding of some of the principal and traditional arguments for and against the existence of God.

Content:

Many human beings have held the belief that God exists.

The first three sessions of this weekend course consider the nature of God. They consider some of His principal and traditional properties. These properties are being omnipotent, being omniscient, being perfectly good, and being incorporeal.

The four sessions which remain consider the existence of God. They consider some of the principal and traditional arguments for and against his existence. These arguments are an ontological argument, some cosmological arguments, some design arguments, and the logical problem of evil.

Presentation of the course:

Lectures principally and discussion. No use of film or media slides.

No prior specialist knowledge is required to attend this course.

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

1. An understanding of some of the principal and traditional properties of God.
2. An understanding of some of the principal and traditional arguments for and against the existence of God.

Reading and resources list

Some works at an introductory level:

Davies, B. *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* Oxford (2004)

Davies, B. *Philosophy of Religion; a guide and anthology* Oxford (2000)

A work at an intermediate level:

Taliaferro, C. *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion* Blackwell (1998)

Some works at an advanced level:

Adams, M.M.& R. M.(eds.), *The Problem of Evil* Oxford (1990)

Esmail, K.H.A., *God A brief philosophical introduction III* Vernon Press (2021)

An online resource

The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy: <https://plato.stanford.edu/>