Faith and Reason: Spring 2017

Course content and schedule: I offer you this schedule as a help to your planning. It does not constitute a formal undertaking on my part.

Fri Jan 20 Faith and religion. Faith and human trust. Faith and truth –only one truth


Weds Jan 25 Philosophy: application of reason to ultimate questions. Philosophy and God: “natural theology”. Logic, mathematics, science, ethics, law, literature, art, music

Fri Jan 27 Reason and emotion. Faith and reason in the history of thought.

Mon Jan 30 Is faith reasonable? Is it justifiable? Is it provable?

Weds Feb 1 Natural theology: is it possible? Discourse about God. Philosophical monotheism: a real or ideal position?

Fri Feb 3 The existence of God. Does God exist? Apparently not.

Mon Feb 6 Argument from evil,

Weds Feb 8 Argument from science

Fri Feb 10 God and experience. Ontological arguments.

Mon Feb 13 Arguments from design

Weds Feb 15 The five ways of St Thomas: their pattern

Fri Feb 17 first and Second Way

Mon Feb 20 Third and Fifth Way

Weds Feb 22 God’s unchangingness and eternity

Fri Feb 24 God as Creator and God’s almighty power

Mon Feb 27 God’s knowledge and will


Fri Mar 3 God revealing: Miracles and prophecy

Mon Mar 6 Can the immortality of the soul be proved? Is the soul the same as the self? Immortality and resurrection

Weds Mar 8 Review

Fri Mar 10 Mid-term test
Mon Mar 13  Spring Break

Weds Mar 15  Spring Break

Fri Mar 17  Spring Break

Mon Mar 20  God and Ethics. The “Euthyphro” question.

Weds Mar 22  Ethics as God’s law, ethics as natural law

Fri Mar 24 and Mon Mar 27  The fact-value distinction. The “Ghost of God”.

Weds Mar 29  Dostoevsky: “If God does not exist, everything is permitted”. The rejection of consequentialism – “I return the ticket”.

Fri Mar 31  Guilt vs merit, shame vs glory, excellence vs vice. Guilt, awareness of guilt, feelings of guilt, feelings of shame.

Fri Mar 31  Moral failure. Akrasia and akolasia. The need for salvation and an awareness of this: religious or natural reaction?

Mon Apr 3  Original sin as a causal thesis, based on faith, which explains an obvious series of facts.

Weds Apr 5  Humility and other “religious” virtues

Fri Apr 7 and Mon Apr 10  The problem of evil: insoluble by reason? Original sin and darkening of the intellect.

Weds Apr 12  The conflict between religion and science – a fiction? “Argument from science” as an objection to the existence of God.

Fri Apr 14  Good Friday – no class

Mon Apr 17 and Weds Apr 19  “Argument from science” as an objection to the existence of God.

Fri Apr 21  Science and non-science: Anthropic principle and the pluriverse are not science. Term paper due.

Weds Apr 26  Evolutionism

Fri Apr 28  What does science really do? Philosophy and science

Mon May 1  catch-up

Weds May 3  Review

Fri May 5  Last day of classes: review

Mon May 15  Exam 8.30 – 11.00 a.m.
**Texts**
I will make recommendations during the course of the semester

**Learning objectives:**
Originally, “learning objectives” were ways in which the behavior of “students” was to be modified after taking the course. I will not think in this way or use this jargon. For what I intend to explain, see the provisional syllabus above.

**Written work:**
Mid-term and final tests, and one paper of up to about 3,000 words, due on Apr 21st. I may substitute a further test for the paper, or a paper for one or more of the tests. I may set other short assignments or tests as seems opportune. There will be a final test (*not* take-home)

**Attendance policy:**
The university has a strong attendance policy, and I will be passing lists of attendance in class. Moreover, you are unlikely to be able to get a full understanding of the subject from the reading alone – I should not be giving these classes if you could learn the same from books. Non-attendance at class will not be regarded as an excuse for failing to be aware of matters I may from time to time announce in class.

**Office hours:**
Mon, Wed and Fri 8.30 – 10.00 a.m.

**Determination of final grades:**
In-term tests: at least 10%. Term paper: at least 25%. Final test: at least 50%. I shall also bear in mind class participation when giving a final grade. If I see fit to change these proportions, I will inform you.

**Final exam**
The final exam will take place on Mon May 15, 8.30 – 11.00 a.m.

**Myself**
My phone number: 713 831 7292; my e-mail: martincf@stthom.edu

**Disabilities**
Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact me after class or during office hours. Additionally, students will need to contact Counseling and Disability Services in Crooker Center. This office can be reached at (713) 525-2169 or 6953