

# Philosophy of Religion - Philosophy 240

## Essay Topics

**Note: Treat essays as if they were reports for an employer. They must be technically well presented (e.g., concerning spelling, grammar and print quality), clearly organized and well-written, and handed in on time.**

### Instructions:

- \* Length: 2,500 - 3,500 words (maximum). The essay is worth 40% of the *term* grade.
- \* All essays must be typed and employ a consistent style for format and references, suitable to research in the humanities.
- \* All essays must involve a philosophical presentation and analysis of 1 or 2 texts, and a discussion and evaluation of the arguments and conclusions of these articles. **You must not use sources** other than the assigned reading and **(if needed) a dictionary.**

**Hint:** If necessary, use a recent issue of a philosophy journal for models for style, structure and references.

**Deadline:** Monday, March 4, 2013 at 5 p.m.  
No extensions will be granted without a medical certificate.

### Choose one of the following topics.

1. What is religious experience? What does the occurrence of so-called religious experience tell us, if anything about the existence of God?
3. What is a miracle? What, if anything, do miracles prove?
5. What effects, if any, does religious diversity have for the truth or falsity of religious belief?

#### *A cautionary note concerning plagiarism:*

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense, and has, as a maximum penalty, immediate dismissal from the university. Students are expected to ensure that both written work and oral presentations respect this regulation. In this course, assignments with any plagiarism will be given a grade of 0, there will be no opportunity to redo the assignment, and the Dean will be notified. If you have any questions on this, see me.

### Bibliography:

#### Topic 1.

William James, "Mysticism" from *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), pp. 379-429  
William P. Alston, "Religious Experience and Religious Belief," *Noûs*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1982, pp. 3-12

#### Topic 2.

David Hume, *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, [Section X, "Of Miracles"]  
Robert A.M. Larmer, "Miracles, Divine Agency, and the Laws of Nature." *Toronto Journal of Theology*, Volume 27, Number 2 (2012) pp. 267-290.

#### Topic 3.

John Hick, *Problems of Religious Pluralism*, London, Macmillan, 1985