

**RGT3745HS // RGT6745HS**  
**ISSUES IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION AND *THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV***

**January—April 2022**

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 office hours: by appointment

Tuesday, 11am-1pm  
 Zoom Video // (Classroom C)  
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**Course Description**

This course explores issues in the philosophy of religion, with special reference to *The Brothers Karamazov*. Major themes include: the existence and nature of God, religious language, religious experience, faith and reason, the problem of evil, religion and morality, and afterlife beliefs. Readings include Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* and selections from theologians and philosophers of religion. Lecture, discussion, critical reflection papers.

**Course Outcomes**

Students will be able to describe, analyse, and critically evaluate various significant themes and issues in the philosophy of religion. See the course syllabus on pp. 7-9 for the listing of themes, issues and readings within which these issues will be contextualized. Students will also be able to appreciate the significance of Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* in drawing these issues into question and exploring them in critical and creative ways.

**Course Delivery**

This course begins as "Online – Synchronous" via Zoom video only. But it is possible that we might add "In Person" delivery, Classroom C, at Regis College, after January 31. For Zoom video, all students need to be able to navigate these systems to take the course.

- (i) Students will need to access readings from Quercus.
- (ii) Students will need to attend class lectures via Zoom video:
  - Students will be required to download the Zoom app and learn to navigate the Zoom system. (<https://zoom.us/download>)

- Students will need to be able reduce the size of the Zoom screen and access Powerpoint images at the same time as they are in Zoom dialogue with us and other students.
- Students might need to dialogue with classmates via Zoom breakout sessions.
- Students will be expected to stay visually connected via Zoom video throughout the whole class.
- Students will need to meet individually with the instructor via Zoom video on occasion.
- Students need to stay in regular email contact to receive links for our Zoom meetings and other course information. Students are required to set up their utoronto email address which is connected to the ACORN system.

**Required Books** (available electronically via U of T Libraries and at University of Toronto Book Store, 214 College Street)

- David Stewart, ed., *Exploring the Philosophy of Religion*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2010). U of T electronically accessible: <https://www.taylorfrancis.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/books/mono/10.4324/9781351219860/exploring-philosophy-religion-david-stewart>  
Or you can order a hard copy on-line: <https://www.amazon.ca/Exploring-Philosophy-Religion-David-Stewart/dp/0205645194>
- Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov, A Revised Translation, Context, Criticism*, 2nd ed., Susan McReynolds Oddo, ed., translated by Constance Garnett, rev. by Ralph E. Matlaw and Susan McReynolds Oddo (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011) (available at U of T Bookstore).
- **(Recommended only)** Chad Meister, *Philosophy of Religion* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) (e-book: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1057/9781137314758>)

Please note:

- Required readings from earlier editions of the David Stewart text are available on Quercus (Q), under “Modules”, “Readings” (see syllabus pp. 7-9).

### **Reserve Reading**

There are other required reading selections, listed on the course syllabus. These will be available on Quercus (Q) and on Reserve Reading (RR) in the Regis College Library. See the Reserve Reading list (p. 6-8) of this course outline.

## Grading

A numerical mark corresponding to the letter grade will be given for each course requirement. Following the final examination, a letter grade will be assigned on the following number and letter grade scheme:

A+	= 100-90. (Exceptional)	B	= 76-73. (Good)
A	= 89-85. (Outstanding)	B-	= 72-70. (Acceptable)
A-	= 84-80. (Excellent)	FZ	= 69-0. (Failure)
B+	= 79-77. (Very Good)		

## Graded Assignments

### For Basic Degree Students

#### 90% Three Critical-Reflection Papers

Paper #1 about 1500 words (5-6 typed pages or so), 30%; **due Sunday, Feb 13**

Paper #2 about 1500 words (5-6 typed pages or so), 30%; **due Sunday, March 20.**

Paper #3 about 1700 words (6-7 typed pages or so), 35%; **due Thursday, April 14.**

- Late submissions will be reduced by 10% per week. No papers accepted after April 15.
- Papers to be submitted electronically to [m.stoeber@utoronto.ca](mailto:m.stoeber@utoronto.ca), but only in MS Word (not Pages nor PDF).

5% Class Participation: attendance, evidence that students are keeping up with the readings, and class discussion. Students will be asked to think about various Discussion Questions for readings in preparation for class.

### Questions for BD/AD Critical-reflection papers

- 1) Choose one of the essay readings (or more than one reading) that address a common theme from David Stewart, ed., *Exploring the Philosophy of Religion*, which we have developed and discussed in class (e.g., Paper #1 on readings from "Existence and Nature of God" or "Faith and Reason.")
- 2) Carefully and creatively develop the significant elements of the readings and, if possible, situate these ideas within the context of *The Brothers Karamazov*.
- 3) Provide some critical-evaluative comment on the readings, with reference to other class readings on the topic or issues developed in class and/or other relevant material drawn from other sources (for example, see recommended book Chad Meister, *Philosophy of Religion*).

- 4) The critical reflection paper #3 can focus on a theme or issue related more directly to *The Brothers Karamazov* than to essays from the Stewart text, if this theme or issue has been approved in discussion with me.

### For Advanced Degree Students

- 50% Two Critical-Reflection Papers, on the essay readings from David Stewart, ed., *Exploring the Philosophy of Religion*. See “Questions for BD/AD Critical-reflection papers,” on p. 3, above.
- Paper #1 About 1800 words (6-7 typed pages or so), 25%; **due Sunday, Feb 13**
  - Paper #2 About 1800 words (6-7 typed pages or so), 25%; **due Sunday, March 20.**
  - Late submissions will be reduced by 10% per week. No papers accepted after April 15
- 40% Major reflection paper (topic developed in consultation with me) **due Thursday April 14.**
- Late submissions will be reduced by 10% per week. No papers accepted after April 19.
  - The essay should be about 3000 words (10-12 typed pages or so).
- 10% Class Participation: attendance, evidence that you are keeping up with the readings, class discussion, participation in two AD seminars (see below). Students will be asked to think about various Discussion Questions for readings in preparation for class, and there are extra readings assigned for AD Students.

### Advanced Degree Seminar:

- 1) The A.D. Seminars will be scheduled the weeks of **February 14-18** and **March 21-March 25.**
- 2) AD Seminar #1: Eugene d’Aquili and Andrew B. Newberg, “The Neuropsychological Basis of Religions,” *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, 33/2 (1998) pp. 187-201.
- 3) Students will develop three comments/questions appropriate for class discussion that relate to this essay and relevant class developments. These comments/ questions are to be written and copies emailed to me the night before the seminar—I will circulate these to seminar participants.
- 4) AD Seminar #2. Students are to come prepared to discuss ideas related to the nature, role and significance for *The Brothers Karamazov* of one of the major characters: Alyosha, Dmitri, Ivan, Fyodor, Smerdyakov, Grushenka, Katerina Ivanovna, Zosima, Madame Khokhlakov/Liza, Grigory, or the narrator.
- 5) Also, students will develop three comments/questions appropriate for class discussion that relate to one of these characters in *The Brothers Karamazov*. These comments/ questions are to be written and copies emailed to me the night before the seminar—I will circulate these to seminar participants.

### Format and Marking Criteria

1. The Critical Reflection Papers should show significant thought and effort. They should be well-developed and polished.
2. **Format:** papers must be **double spaced**, have **page numbers**, and appropriate **margin spacing**. **Footnotes** are necessary if you quote passages or are dependent for your ideas on another writer. Neglect of appropriate notation will result in a significant reduction of your grade, possibly even an "F".
3. **Plagiarism.** Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4871>).
4. Also, If the paper makes any major use of work done in another course, submit the work along with the paper. If there is not a significant amount of new work, the grade may be reduced. See me if you have any questions on this.
5. **Other academic offences.** TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>.
6. **Late work (BD):** Note carefully the date deadlines. A 10% reduction of the grade will be applied to late papers each week or part week they are late. **Standing Deferred Final Grades (SDF):** An SDF must be requested from the registrar's office in the student's college of registration no later than the last day of exam week in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

7. **Late work (Graduate):** Note carefully the date deadlines. A 10% reduction of the grade will be applied to late papers each week or part week they are late. The authority to grant an extension for the completion of work in a course beyond the original TST or college deadline (whichever is earlier) for that course rests with the student's college Graduate Director, not the instructor of the course. Nevertheless, the instructor's signature is required for course extension requests to be processed. Students will petition their college Graduate Director for extensions, using a standard form provided by TST on its website. See Section 7.11 of the Conjoint Graduate Degree Handbook.
8. **Obligation to check email.** At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses.

### Marking Criteria

- i) **Clarity** of the paper, in grammatical detail and expression, and in the overall structure. Be sure your paper is drawn together coherently; a strong introduction stating what you will do and how you will do it, and conclusion summarizing what you have done, are essential in this regard.
- ii) **Substance** of the paper, whether it is significant or superficial, rigorous or sloppy. You must take an appropriate objective and scholarly approach, and show some significant understanding of the material and relevant issues.
- iii) **Accuracy** of the paper, where it involves an exposition or explanation of information from books or lecture notes.
- iv) **Scope** of the paper: that is, be sure to develop the significant relevant issues and implications that arise from the problems, issues or themes of the material in question.
- v) **Conciseness** of the paper, in contrast with being wordy or overly elaborate or needlessly repetitive.
- vi) **Originality** of the paper: the analysis should show some critical reflection on the theme or question, whether it is your own or a synthesis of ideas connected to another course-reading or of ideas developed in class discussion. You must show some critical and creative development on your part.

## **Tentative Syllabus:**

Please note:

- Changes might be made to the syllabus as the course proceeds.
- Because I will be referring to *The Brothers Karamazov* throughout the course to illustrate various issues and themes, students are expected to read this novel as soon as possible, certainly by early February.
- Readings are from Stewart textbook, seventh edition, or are on Quercus under “Modules”, “Readings”. They can also be found in earlier editions of this textbook on Reserve Reading at the Regis Library.

**#1. Jan. 11. Course Introduction; *The Brothers Karamazov*, introduction and outline.**

**#2. Jan. 18; #3. Jan. 25. existence and nature of God.**

**Readings** – Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (all);  
– Stewart, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.:

Natural Theology, pp. 119-122

Paley, The Design Argument, pp. 142-150

(also Ewing, pp. 74-81, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Q))

Kant, The Moral Argument, pp. 151-159

(also Lewis, The Moral Argument, pp. 82-90, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Q)).

**Readings – AD Students:** David Ray Griffin, Chapter 4, “God in the Post-Modern World,” *God and Religion in the Postmodern World*, pp. 51-67.

**#4. Feb. 1; #5. Feb. 8; #6. Feb 15.**

**faith and reason.**

**Readings** – Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (all—finish by February 8);  
– Stewart, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.:

Faith and Reason, pp. 209-213

Flew, Belief and Falsification, pp. 214-226

(also Lewis, On Obstinacy in Belief, pp. 123-135, of 3<sup>rd</sup> or 113-125, of 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Q))

Kierkegaard, The Leap of Faith; pp. 253-261

James, Will and Belief, pp. 227-233

(also Tillich, Faith as Ultimate Concern, pp. 136-146, of 3<sup>rd</sup> ed; or 261-271, of 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Q));

**Readings – AD Students:** Eugene d’Aquili and Andrew B. Newberg, “The Neuropsychological Basis of Religions,” *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, 33/2 (1998) pp. 187-201.

**#6. Feb 15; #7. Mar. 1. #8. Mar 8. religious experience.****Readings – Stewart, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.:**(also Kolenda, *Reality and God*, pp. 74-81, of 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Q))(also Buber, *I and Thou*, pp. 30-37, of the 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Q))Hick, *Pluralistic Hypothesis* pp. 36-48

Religious experience, pp. 6-9

(also Otto, *Numinous Experience*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 16-28 (Q))James, *Mystical Experience*, pp. 9-15Kaufmann, *Critique of Mysticism*, pp. 28-35**Readings – AD Students:** Melissa Raphael, "Feminism, Constructivism and Numinous Experience," *Religious Studies* 30.4 (December 1994), 511–526 (Q)**\*Paper #1 due Sunday, Feb 20.****\*Feb 22 Reading week—no class****\*Sometime the week of February 28—March 4, AD Seminar #1, to be scheduled.****#9. March 15. religious language.****Readings – Stewart, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.**Ruether, *The Female Nature of God*, pp. 277-283– Stewart, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. only.(also *Religious language*, pp. 257-259 (Q))(also Aquinas, *On Analogy*, pp. 276-283 (Q))(also Ramsey, *Talking of God*, pp. 284-295 (and in 5<sup>th</sup> ed, pp. 293-307) (Q));**Readings – AD Students:** Michael Stoeber, "Mysticism in the Brothers Karamazov", *Toronto Journal of Theology*, 31/2 (2015), pp. 249-271 (Q).**#10. March 22 religion and morality.****Readings – Stewart 7<sup>th</sup> ed.:**

Religion and Life, pp. 49-52

Nietzsche, *Life's Goal is to Achieve Greatness*, pp. 58-63Tolstoy, *Life is Not Meaningful Without God*, pp. 64-70Nielsen, *Life is Meaningful Without God*, pp. 71-83**\*Paper #2 due Sunday, March 20****\*Sometime the week of March 21-March 25, AD Seminar, to be scheduled.**



#11. March 29; #12. April 5. the problem of evil and afterlife issues.

Readings – Stewart, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.:

Problem of Evil, pp. 159-165//161-167

Hick, The Vale of Soul-Making Theodicy, pp. 195-207

Lewis, Divine Omnipotence, pp. 168-176

Religion and Human Destiny, pp. 85-87;

(and Russell, The Finality of Death, pp. 263-268, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Q))

(and Stoeber, "Roman Catholic Eschatology," pp. 1-17). (Q)

(and Hick, Immortality and Resurrection, pp. 279-291, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Q))

Doniger, Karma and Evil, pp. 188-194;

(and Tom Shroder, "A Matter of Death & Life", *The Washington Post Magazine* (August 18, 1999) pp. 16-27 (Q))

**\*BD/AD Paper #3 due Thursday, April 14**

Reserve Reading

(See Quercus "Library Reading List" for electronic availability and Regis College Library RR)

- Elizabeth A. Blake, *Dostoevsky and the Catholic Underground* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2014).
- Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov, A Revised Translation, Context, Criticism*, 2nd ed., Susan McReynolds Oddo, ed., translated by Constance Garnett, rev. by Ralph E. Matlaw and Susan McReynolds Oddo (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011). This book includes some fine critical essays and much helpful editorial commentary and a bibliography.
- Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhinsky, trs., (N.Y.: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2002).
- P. H. Brazier, *Dostoevsky: A Theological Engagement* (Eugene: Oregon, Pickwick, 2016)
- David Ray Griffin, *God and Religion in the Postmodern World*, (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1989).
- Beverly Lanzetta, *Radical Wisdom: A Feminist Mystical Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005).
- Melissa Raphael, "Feminism, Constructivism and Numinous Experience," *Religious Studies* 30.4 (December 1994), 511–526 (Q).
- Tom Shroder, *The Scientific Evidence for Past Lives*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001.
- David Stewart, ed., *Exploring the Philosophy of Religion*, fourth ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1998).

- David Stewart, ed., *Exploring the Philosophy of Religion*, fifth ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1999).
- David Stewart, ed., *Exploring the Philosophy of Religion*, sixth ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2006).
- David Stewart, ed., *Exploring the Philosophy of Religion*, seventh ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2010).
- Michael Stoeber, "Dostoevsky's Devil: The Will to Power", *Journal of Religion*, Vol. 74, No. 1 (1994) pp. 26-44. **(Q)**
- Michael Stoeber, "Mysticism in the Brothers Karamazov", *Toronto Journal of Theology*, 31/2 (2015), pp. 249-271 **(Q)**
- Michael Stoeber, *Reclaiming Theodicy: Reflections on Suffering, Compassion and Spiritual Transformation*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
- Victor Terras, *A Karamazov Companion* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981).

**Other Books/Articles of interest, related to *The Brothers Karamzov* in the University of Toronto Library system.**

- Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Caryl Emerson, ed. and tr. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).
- Robert Belknap, *The Structure of the Brothers Karamazov*, (Paris: Mouton, 1967).
- Vaclav Cerny, *Dostoevsky and His Devils* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Ardis, 1975).
- A. Boyce Gibson, *The Religion of Dostoevsky* (London: SCM Press Ltd 1973).
- Sergai Hackel, "The Religious Dimension: Vision or Evasion? Zosima's Discourse in the *The Brothers Karamazov*, in Harold Bloom, ed., *Fyodor Dostoevsky* (New York: Chelsea House, 1989): 211-235.
- Leonid Grossman, *Dostoevsky: A Biography*, Mary Mackler, tr. (N.Y.: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc, 1975).
- Robert Louis Jackson, ed., *A New Word on the Brothers Karamazov* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2004).
- Malcolm Jones, *Dostoevsky and the Dynamics of Religious Experience* (London: Anthem Press, 2005).
- Vladimir Kantor, "Pavel Smerdyakov and Ivan Karamazov: The Problem of Temptation", in Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov, A Revised Translation, Context, Criticism*, 2nd ed., Susan McReynolds Oddo, ed., translated by Constance Garnett, rev. by Ralph E. Matlaw and Susan McReynolds Oddo (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011).
- D. H. Lawrence, "Preface to Dostoevsky's *The Grand Inquisitor*", René Wellek, ed., *Dostoevsky* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1962).

- W. J. Leatherbarrow, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Dostoevskii*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- Henri de Lubac, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*, Edith M. Riley, tr. (New York: Meridan, 1966).
- C. A Miller, "Nietzsche's 'Discovery' of Dostoevsky", *Nietzsche Studien*, Band 2, (1973), pp. 248-254.
- Konstanin Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky: His Life and Work*, Michael A. Minihan, tr., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).
- George A. Panichas, *The Burden of Vision: Dostoevsky's Spiritual Art* (Chicago: Gateway Edition, 1985).
- George Pattison and Diane Oenning Thompson, eds., *Dostoevsky and the Christian Traditions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
- James L. Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art: An Essay in Literary and Medical History* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis Publishers, 1985).
- James P. Scanlan, *Dostoevsky the Thinker* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).
- Frank Friedeberg Seeley, "Smerdiakov", *Dostoevsky Studies*, Vol. 7 (1987).
- Victor Terras, "Religion and Poetics in Dostoevsky", *Dostoevsky Studies, New Series* Vol. VII (2003): 109-114.
- Rowan Williams, *Dostoevsky: Language, Faith and Fiction* (Baylor University Press, 2008).
- Robert V. Wharton, "Evil in an Earthly Paradise: Dostoevsky's Theodicy", *Thomist*, 41 (1977): 567-69.