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# Philosophy of Religion

Taught by: Professor James Hall  
University of Richmond

## Part 1

Course Guidebook

THE TEACHING COMPANY®

**Professor James Hall** is the James Thomas Professor and Chair of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Richmond, where he has taught for over 35 years. He earned a Masters of Theology from Southeastern Theological Seminary and his Ph.D. from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Professor Hall is the recipient of the University of Richmond's Distinguished Educator Award. He has written two books and many articles.



### Guidebook Contents

#### Part 1 of 3

- Lecture 1: What is Philosophy?
- Lecture 2: What is Religion?
- Lecture 3: What is Philosophy of Religion?
- Lecture 4: How is the Word "God" Generally Used?
- Lecture 5: How Do Various Theists Use the Word "God"?
- Lecture 6: What is Knowledge?
- Lecture 7: What Kinds of Evidence Count?
- Lecture 8: What Constitutes Good Evidence?
- Lecture 9: Why Argue for the Existence of God?
- Lecture 10: How Ontological Argument Works
- Lecture 11: Why Ontological Argument is Said to Fail
- Lecture 12: How Cosmological Argument Works

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James Curtis Jr

November 24, 2015 7:50 AM

Philosophy of Religion

Part 1, Lecture 1

Page 1 of 2

- 1 Professor, James Wall, University of Richmond, 2003
- 2 - course guide book, part 1 of 6, DVD, 1 of 6
- 3 Epistemology - Theory of Knowledge
- 4 Belief in the existence of God
- 5 Belief in what a person could know
- 6 Philosophy of Education - 'I'm for it'
- 7 Philosophy is more than how one feels
- 8 Philosophy is searching for the meaning of life
- 9 - see course guide, part 1, page 3
- 10 Philosophy is about having reasons for what you think
- 11 Philosophy began historically BC of calendar time
- 12 - People we call scientist today were philosophers
- 13 - Philosophy has become narrower over time
- 14 - History of Ideas is not Philosophy because it's not argumentative
- 15 - Philosophy is complicated in terms of what it is about

- 16 Philosophy - four kinds of questions
- 17 - questions of fact
- 18 -- physical things (physics), living things (biologist), historical things (historian)
- 19 -- 100 years ago (philosophy), 20 years ago (psychology)
- 20 - questions of value
- 21 - questions of explanation (why)
- 22 -- detailed description, reasons - intentions - what for (how, what)
- 23 -- not based on experience
- 24 - questions of the conceptual apparatus
- 25 -- world (physics), what comes under physics (meta-physics)
- 26 -- trying to make sense of the conceptual apparatus
- 27 -- law, ethics, education (physics), science, religion, (philosophy)
- 28 -- the goal would be to synthesize it to 1 big picture



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Philosophy of Religion  
Part 19 Lecture 2

Page 1 of 2

- 1 Professor, James Hall, University of Richmond, 2003
- 2 - course guide book, part 1 of 3, DVD 1 of 6
- 3 Religion is a very complicated phenomenon, socially, historically
- 4 Definition of Religion, background
- 5 - Historically, Plato - essential... essence
- 6 - Philosophical Investigations, P.F., family resemblance
- 7 -- an overlapping ... characteristic
- 8 -- representative sampling ... overall ... (characteristic)
- 9 - ostensive, point something out
- 10 - there is ambiguity in 'what I am pointing at'
- 11 - operational, observable
- 12 -- gravity, ~~operational~~ definition, (identity - formal)
- 13 Definition of Religion
- 14 - a representative sample will show up in defining
- 15 - tend to involve a system of beliefs

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Philosophy of Religion

Part 1, Lecture 2

Page 2 of 2

- 16 -- Religious beliefs tends to be all encompassing)
- 17 -- (background)
- 18 -- supernatural, beyond the limits of the material, God?
- 19 --
- 20 -- some notion of (an) after life, right + ful (exalted)
- 21 -- our lives are perpetually being weighed,
- 22 what goes on in the natural is structured in
- 23 terms of intentions, everything has a way,
- 24 everything has a destiny
- 25 -- A take, an attitude, or stance has now
- 26 to do (with beliefs) than a single concept
- 27 (30 lecture later)
- 28 -- the way in which we orient towards
- 29 that being, complex system (of behavior)
- 30 (course guide book, part 1, page 6)
- 31 -- religions generate churches, structures, hierarchies
- 32 -- capitulates they're begun in the church in the Middle Ages



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November 24, 2015 9:30 AM

Philosophy of Religion

Part 1, Lecture 3

Page 1 of 3

- 1 Professor, James Hall, University of Richmond, 2003
- 2 - course guide book, part 1 of 3, DVD 1 of 3
- 3 Philosophy - logic
- 4 Religion - (glimer)
- 5 Philosophy of Religion, Isr't
- 6 Apologetics - A rational defense of the faith,
- 7 defending religion with rational arguments
- 8 - How can there be a God and terrible things happening
- 9 - There is an irreconcilable (understanding)
- 10 Comparative Religion
- 11 - comparing religion to Muslims or other religions
- 12 - comparative is descriptive
- 13 - philosophy is critique
- 14 Psychology of Religion
- 15 - What is it in the human personality ...
- 16 that causes us to adopt ... religious practice.
- 17 - How does arise in the human psyche (psychology)

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18

19

20 The history of religion

21 - how religion interacts with economics of the state

22 - historians - attempting to explain

23 Theology

24 - Religious philosophy vs philosophy of religion

25 -- theology - systematic study of beliefs

26 -- philosophy - point of view

27 My point is not to encourage you what to think;

28 my point is to encourage you to think for yourself

29 Replacing religion

30 - USSR, substituting Marxism for religion

31 CENTRAL QUESTION

32 Epistemological question

33 Is religious knowledge possible?



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Philosophy of Religion

Part 1, Lecture 3

Page 3 of 3

- 34 Why focusing in on a religious this sort of a
- 35 different sort
- 36 Why narrow our focus
- 37 - only 36 lectures
- 38 - Christianity, Judaism, Islam have been
- 39 most important
- 40 Lecturer's perspective
- 41 - lecturer's 'people' small town, Southern Illinois
- 42 - grand father 1st to do something beyond 8th grade
- 43 - protestant, aggressive... east Texist... revivalist
- 44 - twice on Sunday, once in middle of the week church
- 45 that's an understatement
- 46 - Agnostic Episcopalian

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November 24, 2015 9:30 AM

Philosophy of Religion

Part 1, lecture 4

Page 1 of 2

- 1 Professor, James Hall, University of Richmond, 2003
- 2 - course guide book, part 1 of 3, DVD 1 of 6
- 3 What it is - first three lectures
- 4 what does religion do - Good
- 5 CENTRAL CLAIMS
- 6 Ethical Monotheism
- 7 - God vs Gods
- 8 God - the ground on which ~~we~~ must be measured
- 9 something that is other... better... beyond... transcendent
- 10 something that is supreme... absolute.
- 11 something that has subservients
- 12 God - title vs name
- 13 Title - El Shadi, Yaweh, certain characteristics
- 14 Did the world have a maker, Darwin vs Evolution
- 15 should we call the maker, God
- 16 Applying a title to the object of our awareness



17. These things which your worshipping don't measure up
18. - an artifact
19. Deserving of obedience, tied into network of events
20. - three responses, (Affirmative) (monotheistic) and (idiotic)
21. Affirmative
  - 22. - Dynamism, object of awe, location of tremendous power
  - 23. - Animism, location of discrete spirits
  - 24. - Pantheism, uniformly distributed throughout ~~everything~~
  - 25. - Polytheism, portions of hierarchy
  - 26. - Henotheism, gods of different tribes
  - 27. - Dualism/Ditheism, two
  - 28. - Deism, one, similar monotheism
  - 29. - - Ausderely differences

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November 25, 2015 5:40 AM

Philosophy of Religion

Part 1 Lecture 5

Page 1 of 1

- 1 Professor, James Hall, University of Richmond, 2003
- 2 - course guide book, part 1 of 3, DVD 1 of 6
- 3 THEISM - beings, spirits . capable of
- 4 interactions with humans
- 5 - contrast deism, dynamism, animism
- 6 - Polytheism - many theistic gods
- 7 -- ancient Greece and Rome
- 8 - Dualism, Bithesism - 2 theistic gods
- 9 -- ancient Persians, contemporary Pursees
- 10 - Monotheism - 1 theistic god
- 11 -- Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- 12 -- Aseity - proper worship cannot be limited
- 13 -- Idolatry - substituting proper worship
- 14 -- Omniscience, omnipotence - all powerful, all knowing
- 15 - Ethical Monotheism - 1 theistic god without flaw
- 16 -- Can a 'theistic god be (omni-) and good, the world the way it is?

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- 1 Professor James Hall, University of Richmond, 2003
- 2 - course guide book, part 1 of 3, DVD 1 of 6
- 3 KNOWLEDGE
- 4 - The steps from belief to knowing, not knowing
- 5 -- factual knowing, i.e. historical dates
- 6 -- formal knowing, i.e. numeral logic, sequences
- 7 -- normative knowing, i.e. better, bad, good
- 8 - difference of beliefs, 'hence, don't know'
- 9 -- factual knowing, i.e. health remedies?
- 10 -- formal knowing, i.e. travel, maps, geometry?
- 11 -- normative knowing, i.e. intimacy, ~~social~~ norms
- 12 - traditional knowing, historically, dates back to Socrates
  - Evidence, what kind?, how good?, how much?

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November 27, 2015 3:41 PM

Philosophy of Religion

Part 1, Lecture 7

Page 1 of 2

- 1 Professor, James Hull, University of Richmond, 2003
- 2 - course guidebook part 1 of 3, DVD 2 of 6
- 3 EVIDENCE
- 4 - Knowledge ~~vs~~ Belief
- 5 -- what kinds of evidence might provide
- 6 Disbelief to belief or
- 7 belief to knowledge
- 8 Experience, Modes of Experience
- 9 - (Modes of) sensing, sight, taste, smell, feeling, hearing
- 10 i empirical? i equilibrium?
- 11 Reason
- 12 - the mode by which proposition gets to another
- 13 - ~~History~~ 5 Centuries ago, Socrates, Deductive
- 14 - Inductive, generalize, limited by probabilistic
- 15 - construct, test, (experiment) hypotheses
- 16 - limited by memory, classifications, minds,



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November 27, 2015 3:52 AM

Philosophy of Religion

Part 1, Lecture 7

Page 2 of 2

17 Authority

18 - Authority of expertise, minimum 're-inventing'

19 - Authority of position, example, ...

20 CEO of a Major Educational Institution, ...

21 but that didn't mean he (had expertise), ... he was in charge

22 Intuition, the ability to grasp a situation as a whole

23 - understanding without knowing how we got from A to B

24 Revelation, experience/knowledge claims in religious contexts

25 Faith, knowing without explaining, linked to believing

26 Summary, moving from disbelief to belief, belief to knowledge is best

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November 27, 2015 3:57PM

Philosophy of Religion

Part 1, Lecture 8

Page 1 of 1

- 1 Professor, James Hall, University of Richmond, 2003
- 2 - course guide book part 1 of 3, DVD 2 of 6
- 3 GOOD EVIDENCE (compary evidence) theoretically
- 4 Relevance,
- 5 Non-equivocation, avoiding ambiguous equivalence
- 6 Non-circularity, avoiding circular arguments
- 7 Replicability testability, field checks before press releases
- 8 publishing, instruments data analyzed before release
- 9 Limiting conditions, disabilities in apparatus
- 10 The matter of articulation in a cogent theoretical/interpretation
- 11 HOW MUCH GOOD EVIDENCE
- 12 (Sociological arbitrators) beyond reasonable doubt
- 13 Certainty vs Radical SKEPTICISM
- 14 Consensus... usually ... reliable mark of success
- 15
- 16



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November 22, 2015 3:52 AM

Philosophy of Religion

Part 1, Lecture 9

Page 1 out 1

- 1 Professor, James Hall, University of Richmond, 2003
- 2 - course gentle book part 1 of 3, DVD 2 of 6
- 3 Argument, sorting
- 4 Argument, monotheism vs ethical monotheism
- 5 - Omnipotence, all powerful
- 6 - Omniscience, all knowledge
- 7 - Omnipresence, moral
- 8 - Omnipresence, everywhere vs unlimited wisdom power localized
- 9 Argument, the existence of God
- 10 - Ontological ... divine existence solely as a concept
- 11 - Cosmological ... inference ... full scope human experience
- 12 - Teleological ... construct ... detailed structure demands coincidence

- 1 Professor, James Hall, University of Richmond, 2003
- 2 - course book guide part 1 of 3, DVD 2 of 6
- 3 Argument, A priori vs a posteriori,
- 4 - A priori, conclusions without any experience
- 5 -- classical philosopher, St Anselm, René Descartes
- 6 -- ontological, Lectures 10-11
- 7 -- other classical philosopher, G. Cantor, Kant, lecture 11
- 8 - A posteriori, inference, experience, sufficient reason
- 9 - - cosmological, Lectures 12-13, Teleological, Lectures 14-16
- 10 THOUGHT | justifying my bad experiences? | (God's existence? | authority of God?)