PHIL-134/RELI-126 Reason, Faith, and God:

Philosophy of Western Religion

Fall 2024

<u>Course Instructor:</u> Meredith Sheeks

<u>Course Description:</u>

Most people identify with a major world religion. Yet as commonplace as religious identification is today, religion and religious concepts are strikingly complex. Who, or what, is God? What is religion? Is it rational to believe in God? This course serves as an introduction to the philosophy of religion, the critical analysis and evaluation of religious concepts, practices, and beliefs in the Western tradition.

The course will proceed in three stages. We will begin with a brief introduction to the philosophy of religion—its considered methods, aims, and scope—followed by a survey of attempts to specify the nature of religion and other religious concepts, including God. We will then question the extent to which it is *reasonable* to believe in the existence of God or to practice a theistic religion. In doing so, we will consider the "classic" philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God. In the third stage of the course, we will turn our attention to the role that *faith* may play in the critical examination of religion and religious concepts. In light of the role of faith in religion, we will explore the intriguing relationships between religion and science; religion and morality; and Christianity and hell.