

Phil 1002 – Intro: God, Faith, & Reason

Instructor: [Lex Newman](#)

Additional course information will become available at the start of the semester. In the meantime, here is some preliminary information. (Feel free to email me, Lex.Newman@utah.edu, if you have any questions about the course that are not answered below, but which you'd like answered ahead of time.)

Canvas

The course web will be supported through Canvas – the Canvas page should be up and running the week before class begins.

Course Content

The course focuses on recent science-inspired debates about God. This means we'll be reading/discussing science-based arguments from the (so-called) "new atheists", as well as science-based arguments from the other side of the issues, made by those who affirm God's existence. For what it's worth, my own goal (as instructor) in the course is to clarify the best arguments on both sides of the debates, as opposed to trying to settle the debates. As it happens, there are some very interesting arguments on both sides. In any case, you'll probably discover that the "other side" (whichever side you happen to be on) has much better arguments than you'd previously realized. Note, too, that I encourage significant debate amongst ourselves – i.e., civil debate – in the classroom. This *is* a philosophy course, after all!

Course Texts

Rather than a traditional textbook (a significant expense in most cases), all course readings will be distributed via the course web. This will allow for more flexibility in the readings that we'll use (rather than having to settle for the particular essays that happen to be collected together in any single text). Among the nice benefits, to you, is that the text readings are all *free*! Furthermore, they can be read on any computer, e-reader, iPad, etc. A yet further benefit to the text being free is that it will be somewhat *less* painful for you, when you learn the price of the "clicker" that you'll need to buy for the course (I think they're in the \$50 range).

Clickers

You *need* either to purchase one (the bookstore sells them new, or used), or else to own one already (perhaps you bought one for another course). They are not cheap, though they are *much* cheaper than a typical course textbook. Once you own a clicker, you will be able to use it in any other course that uses clickers. The university has now standardized its policy to ensure that clickers bought for one course will be compatible with any other course using clickers.

The Campus Bookstore sells the clickers. Instructions for *registering* your clicker (for our course) will be posted at the start of the semester.

Computer Lab use (note for Mac users)

There are three quiz assignments that draw on *beginning* logic material. This logic material is contained in a free app, called Reasoning Tutor. The good news is that this app is very easy to use and prepares students very well, for each of the three quizzes. The bad news is that it *only* runs on Windows computers, not MACs. Windows users will be able to download the app for free and run it on their own computers. MAC users will need either to borrow a Windows computer, or use a campus computer lab. (In typical cases, preparation for these quizzes involves one session on a computer (a session that's a couple of hours long) for each of the three quizzes.)

Course Evaluation

Final course grade is based on two in-class exams, a short paper (about 4-5 pages), participation and quizzes.