GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: Fall 2010
Instructor: Robert Masson
Course #: THEO 8511
Course Title: Atheism and Theism

Content:

Exploration of the basic theistic and atheistic options regarding the ultimate meaning and value of human life. Socio-cultural and religious roots of these options. Criteria of truth for determining validity. Examination of representative writings, classical and modern, which discuss these options.

The course will cover significant historical atheists (Feuerbach, Freud, and Dewey) and the so-called “new atheists” (Dawkins, Dennett, Hitchens, Aronson, and Harris). Particular emphasis will be devoted to investigating the analogical and metaphoric nature of knowledge and language about God. Attention will be given to the exploration of these issues in Catholic and Protestant philosophical theology and in cognitive science and linguistics including figures such as Thomas Aquinas, Karl Rahner, Paul Tillich, Eberhard Jüngel, Charles Taylor, David Burrell, Michael Buckley, Hans Kung, William Desmond, Denys Turner and George Lakoff and his various collaborators.

Format:

Seminar discussion.

Assignments and/or Examinations:

- Abstracts of class readings, book reviews, class presentation, and research paper