This course offers an introduction to past and current philosophical debates about religion from a global and feminist perspective. The main topics of discussion include: (1) the problem of defining "religion" as a social and cultural phenomenon; (2) conceptions of ultimate reality; (3) ultimate reality and gender issues; (4) arguments for and against the existence of a maximal being; (5) varieties of religious attitudes (e.g., pluralism, inclusivism, exclusivism, etc.); (6) the problem of reconciling scientific and religious worldviews; (6) the rationality and/or emotionality of religious belief; and (8) the impact of globalization, ecology, and secularism on traditional religious metaphysics and ethics. This is a philosophy course, which means that emphasis will be placed not on individual religions and their doctrines so much as on critical reflection about a variety of philosophy of religion questions. Our readings are taken from an array of pre-modern and modern philosophy of religion, including recent feminist philosophy of religion.

Required Texts
(Available at the College of Charleston Bookstore).

Gary E. Kessler  
_The Philosophy of Religion: Toward a Global Perspective_ (Wadsworth)  
Pamela Anderson & Beverly Clack  
_The Feminist Philosophy of Religion: Critical Readings_ (Routledge)

Tentative Reading Assignments

**January 9-11**  
**Introduction: What is Religion?**  

**January 14-18 (1st rp)**  

**January 21**  
Martin Luther King Holiday – No Classes

**January 23-25 (2nd rp)**  
**Views of Ultimate Reality.** Readings: Lao-tzu, _The Tao_ (PR: 44-50); Cobb, _Emptiness and God_ (PR: 69-81); Wainwright, _Is the Concept of Ultimate Reality Coherent?_ (PR: 87-96).

**January 28 - February 1 (3rd rp)**  
**Proofs of Ultimate Reality.** Readings: Aquinas, _The Five Ways_ (PR: 102-105); Udayana, _The Seven Ways_ (PR: 97-102); Rowe, _Cosmological Argument_ (PR: 105-114); Dhammasiri, _A Buddhist Critique_ (PR: 114-122).

**February 4-8 (4th rp)**  

**February 11-15 (5th rp)**  
**Religious Experience.** Readings: Smart, _The Experiential Dimension_ (150-162); Black Elk, _Black Elk’s Vision_ (PR: 162-170); Buber, _I and Thou_ (PR: 170-176); Jantzen, _Feminist, Philosophers, and Mystics_ (PR: 192-210).

**February 18-22 (6th rp)**  

**February 25-27**  
**Religion and Metaphor.** Readings: McFague, _Metaphorical Theology_ (PR: 405-426); O’Grady, _Sacred Metaphor_ (FPR: 153-167).

**February 29**  
MIDTERM EXAM (12:00-12:50 p.m.).
March 3-7  
SPRING BREAK

March 10-14 (7th rp)  

March 17-21 (8th rp)  

March 24-28 (9th rp)  

March 31 – April 4 (10th rp)  

April 4  
**ESSAY DUE IN CLASS.**

April 7-11 (11th rp)  

April 14-18 (12th rp)  

April 21-23  

April 30  
**FINAL EXAM (12:00-3:00 p.m.).**

**You must bring the assigned text to class**

**Requirements and Grading Scale:**

- Twelve short response papers (1-2 pages, 2% each) due at the beginning of each class on Fridays.
- One essay (8-10 pages, 30%) due in class on Friday, April 4.
- Midterm exam (16%) in class on February 29 (12:00-12:50 p.m.).
- Final exam (25%) in class on April 30 (12:00-3:00 p.m.).
- Participation (5%).

**Attendance:** It is essential that you attend classes! You may be allowed four unexcused absences without any penalty. Additional absences will adversely affect your grade, unless you provide a legitimate (i.e. documented excuse). **Also make sure you come to class on time.**

**Late policy for response papers:** Please let me know in advance if you cannot turn a response paper on time. A paper turned in late without an extension will be marked down for every day it is late, including weekends.

**Exams policy:** You must complete all assignments in order to obtain a final grade for this course. Late (or early) exams will only be given if you can show that a real emergency prevents you from taking the exam on the due date.