

# Philosophy of Religion: Phenomenology and Fideism

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## Course Description

This course in the philosophy of religion surveys the issue of faith and reason. A central topic in the philosophy of religion, traditionally conceived, is the question of God's existence. There are many kinds of arguments for and against God's existence that have been offered in the history of philosophy. This class will examine none of them. Instead, we will explore a different path: what, if anything, might intelligibly be said of a God who is revealed apart from traditional rationalistic arguments? Philosophers and theologians who think knowledge of God is neither mediated nor determined by these arguments of 'natural reason' are typically derided and dismissed as 'fideists'. In this course, we will examine the fideism of Pascal, Kierkegaard, and contemporary French phenomenology, to see whether fideism is in fact a bad thing, and if not, why it might be a good thing.

### *Weeks 1 and 2*

Pascal, Blaise. 'The Wager', in *Pensées*. (London: Penguin Books).

Marion, J-L. 1982. *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

### *Weeks 3 and 4*

Marion, J-L. *The Idol and the Distance*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson. (New York: Fordham University Press).

### *Week 5*

Marion, J-L. 'The Impossible, or what is Proper to God', in *Negative Certainties*, trans. Stephen Lewis. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

### *Week 6*

Henry, Michel. 'The Second Birth', in *I am the Truth: Towards a Philosophy of Christianity*, trans. S. Emmanuel. (Stanford University Press, 2003).

### *Week 7*

Henry, M. 'The Christian Ethic', in *I am the Truth: towards a philosophy of Christianity*, trans. S. Emmanuel. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

### *Week 8*

Marion, J-L. 'The Possible and Revelation', in *The Visible and the Revealed*, trans. Christina Gschwandtner. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

Marion, J-L. 'Metaphysics and Phenomenology: A Relief for Theology', in *The Visible and the Revealed*, trans. Christina Gschwandtner. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

*Week 9*

Chrétien, J-L. 'Biblical Figures of Joy', in *Under the Gaze of the Bible*, trans. J. Dunaway. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015).

Steinbock, A. 2013. 'Evidence in the phenomenology of religious experience'. In *The Oxford Handbook to Contemporary Phenomenology*, ed. D. Zahavi.

*Weeks 10 and 11*

Janicaud, D. (2001). *French Phenomenology and the 'Theological Turn': the French Debate*, (eds.) D. Janicaud and J.F Coutine. New York: Fordham University Press.

*Week 12*

Kierkegaard, Søren. 'The Sin of Dismissing Christianity *modo ponendo*, of Declaring It to Be Untruth', in *The Sickness unto Death*, trans. Howard and Edna Hong. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983).