

1000-E26;The Philosophy of Religion After the Death of God - Class B S

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Fall Semester 2026

Course Content:

In this course, we will explore the possibility of religious conviction in a secularized world. Questions like these are central: In a world in which religious narratives and doctrines strike the contemporary mind as unbelievable as history or scientific explanation, upon what might the modern, educated person base her religious convictions? Are religious sensibilities ultimately expressions of a deep sense of morality? Is the religious attitude better described as a feeling or intuition for the infinite behind the finite world? Is personal religious conviction based on experience of the divine? Is contemporary faith an intellectually indefensible but nonetheless hopeful subjective decision to adopt religious traditions and doctrines?

This course will concentrate on the the evolution of philosophy of religion during the nineteenth with particular attention on the thought of Copenhagen's most famous philosophical mind, Søren Kierkegaard. Most of the authors we read argue that the philosophy of religion should avoid the temptation to justify religion solely in terms of rationality and that it ought to take into account the experiential aspects of religious life, as well. Our goal in this class is to gain a critical

appreciation of this kind of religious philosophy. We will study a handful of highly influential texts by Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Friedrich Nietzsche, Søren Kierkegaard, and Gianni Vattimo.

Learning objectives

To be able to:

- Read and understand the texts on the course syllabus.
- Account for the major themes and key concepts in the philosophy of religion of Kant, Schleiermacher, and Kierkegaard.
- Consider differences and similarities between the philosophies of religion presented in the course.
- Reflect on how the themes and concepts of the course can be of relevance for our understanding of the role of religion in contemporary society.

Course Instructor:

Bjarke Stigel, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Copenhagen. Email: bmh@sk.ku.dk

Class Meetings:

Tuesday 13:15-15:30 (first class: 25 August, 2026)

Room: 7C.1.05

Map link: <https://teol.ku.dk/kontakt/findvej/> ↗ (<https://teol.ku.dk/kontakt/findvej/>)

Language of instruction and discussion:

English. (Final papers, however, may also be written in Danish).

Streaming:

If you wish to participate by live streaming, please contact the course responsible, as the requirements for the final paper will be different.

Zoom link: <https://ucph-ku.zoom.us/j/6394532211?pwd=e6AYcg9kn1KEXKZvt9eGHw8ovzICU0.1> ↗ (<https://ucph-ku.zoom.us/j/6394532211?pwd=e6AYcg9kn1KEXKZvt9eGHw8ovzICU0.1>)

Expectations of the students:

The students are expected to have prepared themselves carefully for each class, that is, to have done the required reading and to think about issues, problems, and questions to be discussed in class. Moreover, the students are expected to engage in the discussions as well as in the group work, and to make use of both the course material when discussing the issues in question. According to UCPH policy, all students must be present a minimum of 75% of the time to receive a grade. (For DIS students: the DIS Director of Teaching and Learning, and the Director of Student Affairs, will be notified if you are absent four times or more).

Requirements for DIS-students:

For undergraduate students (bachelor students):

Active attendance (at least attendance in 75% of the sessions documented by protocol). The syllabus volume and content are determined by the teacher, and two papers are to be submitted to the teacher of each 4-5 pages, as well as a final major assignment, which has a size of 19,200-24,000 characters.

Requirements for KU-students (both Danish students and Exchange students):

For undergraduate students (bachelor students):

Active attendance (at least attendance in 75% of the sessions documented by protocol). A final major assignment, which has a size of 24.000-28.800 characters. The assignments is assessed by the teacher and a grade is given in accordance with the 7-point grading scale. If participation takes place via streaming for more than 25% of the sessions, the following is required to pass the course: A final assignment assignment that has a scope of 36,000-48,000 characters.

For graduate students (kandidat/master students):

Active attendance (at least attendance in 75% of the sessions documented by protocol). A final paper of 36.000-48-000 characters. The assignment is assessed by the teacher, and a grade is given in accordance with the 7-point grading scale. If participation takes place via streaming for more than 25% of the sessions, the following is required to pass the course: An assignment of 60,000-72,000 characters.

Course Evaluation for DIS students:

https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/%24CANVAS COURSE REFERENCE%24/file_ref/gc091475ddcwrap=1. Final paper: 45% (submission via Absalon: TBA, 23:59)

First short paper: 20%

https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/%24CANVAS COURSE REFERENCE%24/file_ref/gc091475ddcwrap=1

Second short paper: 20%

Attendance and participation: 15%

Course Evaluation for KU-students (both Danish students and Exchange students):

Final paper: 100% (submission via Digital Eksamen: TBA, 11:59)

GAI (Generativ Artificial Intelligence) Policy:

GAI is not allowed in this course.

Plagiarism Policy:

In accordance with UCPH rules for academic ethics, there will be a no tolerance policy towards cheating and plagiarism. The submission of any paper which is not your own work will result in an automatic fail and may have severe consequences for your future studies.

Recording Policy:

Recording of the classes is prohibited without the consent of all parties (i.e. all students and teacher) involved.

Readings:

Completion of reading assignments as scheduled is required and is a prerequisite for participating in class discussions.

For students who read Danish: Kierkegaards samlede værker, *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter* (SKS), is available online at www.sks.dk  (<http://www.sks.dk>). I have provided references to SKS for the Kierkegaard readings (e.g., Danish: SKS 4, 148-151) in this reading plan. (Note: To see page breaks, place a checkmark in the middle box, next to SKS, on the top left-hand side of the screen).

Course texts:

Books to be purchased:

Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, Cambridge, 1998. ISBN: 978-1-316-60402-1.

Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, Cambridge, 1996. ISBN: 978-0-521-47975-2.

Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, Penguin, 1985. ISBN: 978-0-140-44449-0.

Primary texts on Absalon (under Modules):

Immanuel Kant, selected texts from, *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of Practical Reason*.

Immanuel Kant, *The Conflict of Faculties*, in *Religion and Rational Theology*, ed. by A. W. Wood and G. di Giovanni, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

G.W.F. Hegel, "Reason and Religious Truth: Hegel's Forward to Hinrichs' *Die Religion im inneren Verhältnisse zur Wissenschaft* (1822)".

G.W.F. Hegel, "Christianity" from *Philosophy of History*.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Anti-Christ*.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*.

Gianni Vattimo, *The Future of Religion*, in *A Farewell to Truth*.

Background material (optional and additional reading)

Allen W. Wood, *Kant and Religion*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2020. (<https://doi-org.ep.fjernadgang.kb.dk/10.1017/9781108381512> ⇨ (<https://doi-org.ep.fjernadgang.kb.dk/10.1017/9781108381512>).

Jon Stewart, *An introduction to Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2022. (<https://doi-org.ep.fjernadgang.kb.dk/10.1093/oso/9780192842930.001.0001> ⇨ (<https://doi-org.ep.fjernadgang.kb.dk/10.1093/oso/9780192842930.001.0001>).

John Lippitt, *The Routledge Guidebook to Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling*, London: Routledge 2015. (<https://doi-org.ep.fjernadgang.kb.dk/10.4324/9781315673691> ⇨ (<https://doi-org.ep.fjernadgang.kb.dk/10.4324/9781315673691>).

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▼ SESSION 1: What Does the "The Death of God" Mean?



Required reading



The Emergence of Modern Philosophy of Religion - Westphal (in A Companion to Philosophy of Religion - 2010 - Taliaferro).pdf



	Nietzsche: The Gay Science, §125 & §343		
	Reading Questions		
	Optional reading		
	Philosophy of religion after the death of God - Jaeschke-1.pdf		
	Power Point		
	RC Session 1 ES 2026.pptx		

	▼ SESSION 2: Nietzsche: On "the Death of God"	✓ ▼
		+
	Required reading	✓
	Nietzsche The Gay Science.pdf	✓
	Twilight of the Idols.pdf	✓
	Reading Questions	✓
	Optional reading	✓
	The Place of God in Post-Kantian Philosophy - Mulhall (in Oxford Handbook of Continental Philosophy).pdf	✓

Power Point	 
First short paper (hand out)	 
 RC Session 2 ES26.pptx	 
  SESSION 3: Kant and Nietzsche: on the critique of God's existence	   
Required reading	 
 The Anti-Christ.pdf	 
 Kant, CPR, the-ideal-of-pure-reason (p. 563-569)	 
 Ontological Argument - The_Kant_Dictionary.pdf	 
 Kant, CPrR, dialectic_of_pure_practical_reason (p. 100-107)	 
 Reading Questions	 
Optional reading	 
 Philosophy of religion after the death of God - Jaeschke.pdf	 
 Wood rational theology moral faith and religion.pdf	 

Power Point



▼ SESSION 4: Kant: Religion and Moral Duty, part 1



Required reading



Kant, "Preface" and "The Victory of the Good Principle over the Evil Principle, and the Founding of a Kingdom of God on Earth" ("Division One") in Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason. p. 39-48 + 125-152



Reading Questions-2



Optional reading



Allen W. Wood, Ethical Community and the Church



Allen Wood - kant-and-religion-roundtable.pdf



Power Point



▼ SESSION 5: Kant: Religion and Moral Duty, part 2.



Required reading	 
Kant, "The Victory of the Good Principle over the Evil Principle, and the Founding of a Kingdom of God on Earth" ("Division Two")in Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason. p. 152-172	 
 Reading Questions-4	 
Optional reading	 
 Wood, Ethical_community_and_the_church.pdf	 
Power Point	 

  SESSION 6: Schleiermacher: Religious Intuition and Feeling, part 1	   
Required reading	 
Friedrich Schleiermacher, "First Speech" in On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers.	 
 Reading Questions-5	 

Optional reading	✓	⋮
Richard Crouter, Introduction, p. xi-xxxix	✓	⋮
Power Point	✓	⋮

▼ SESSION 7: Schleiermacher: Religious Intuition and Feeling, part 2

+

Required reading

✓

Friedrich Schleiermacher, "Second Speech" and "Fourth Speech" in On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers.

✓

Reading Questions-6

✓

Optional reading

✓

Theodor Vial, On Schleiermacher in Routledge Handbook on philosophy of religion.pdf

✓

Power Point

✓

	▼ SESSION 8: Kierkegaard: Faith and Madness +	✓ ▼
Required reading		✓
	Søren Kierkegaard, "Preface," "Attunement," and "Speech in Praise of Abraham," in Fear and Trembling (Penguin English edition, pp. 41-56 (Danish edition: SKS 4, s. 99-120)	✓
	Genesis, chapter 22	✓
	John Lippit, Introduction, Routledge Philosophy GuideBook to Kierkegaard and Fear and Trembling.pdf	✓
	Reading Questions-7	✓
Optional reading		✓
	John Lippitt, Chapter 2, Routledge Philosophy GuideBook to Kierkegaard and Fear and Trembling	✓
	A reading of FT - Evans.pdf	✓
Power Point		✓
	▼ SESSION 9: Kierkegaard: Faith +	✓ ▼

Required reading



Søren Kierkegaard, "Preamble from the Heart," in Fear and Trembling (Penguin English edition, pp. 57-82 (Danish: SKS 4, s. 121-147))



Reading Questions



Optional reading



John Lippitt, Chapter 3, Routledge Philosophy GuideBook to Kierkegaard and Fear and Trembling



Second short paper (hand out)



Power Point



▼ SESSION 10: Kierkegaard: Faith and Ethics



Required reading



Søren Kierkegaard, "Problemata 1-2," in Fear and Trembling (Penguin English edition, pp. 83-108 (Danish: SKS 4, s. 148-171))



	Kant Conflict of Faculties (1798) excerpt.pdf		
	Reading Questions-9		
	Optional reading		
	John Lippitt, Chapter 4, Routledge Philosophy GuideBook to Kierkegaard and Fear and Trembling		
	Soderquist, "On Faith and Reasons"		
	Power Point		

	▼ SESSION 11: Vattimo: A Nonreligious Philosophy of Religion?				
	Required reading				
	Vattimo Future of religion (pp. 63-79).pdf				
	Vattimo Christianity and conflicts in europe.pdf				
	Reading Questions-9 Kopi				
	Optional reading				
	Vattimo God who is dead.pdf				

 Vattimo West or christianity.pdf		
Power Point		

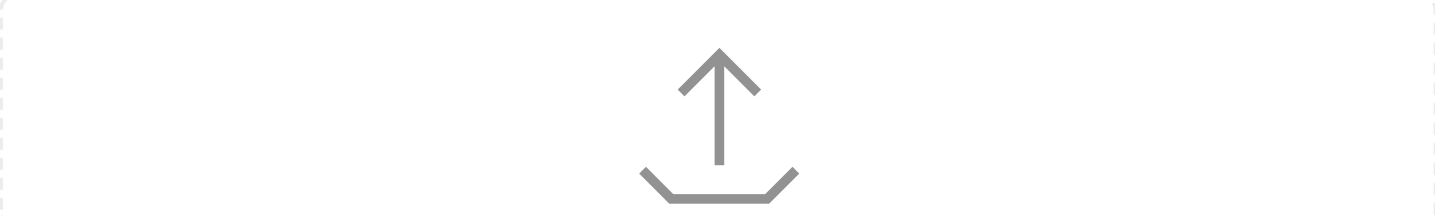
 ▼ Hegel: Philosophy of Religion	 ▼  
Required reading	 
 Hegel, Philosophy of History, Christianity.pdf	 
Optional reading	 
Second short paper (Hand out)	 
Power Point	 

 ▼ Hegel: Philosophy of Religion, Part 2	 ▼  
Required reading	 
Optional reading	 

Merold Westphal, Introduction		
Additional reading		
 Hegel, Philosophy of Religion (intro).pdf		
Power Point		

▼ Background Material	▼  
Optional and Additional Readings	 
The Place of God in Post-Kantian Philosophy - Mulhall (in Oxford Handbook of Continental Philosophy).pdf	 
Hegel, Reason and Religious Truth Forward to Hinrichs Die Religion im inneren Verhältnisse zur Wissenschaft.pdf	 
Hegels Philosophical Interpretation of Christianity - Stewart.pdf	 

▼ Final paper	▼  
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