

God and evil

Advanced BA course
Eötvös Loránd University, spring 2017/18
Daniel Kodaj (dkodaj@gmail.com)

If an omnipotent and infinitely good being governed the universe, then there wouldn't be suffering. There is suffering. Therefore God does not exist.

The course explores philosophical responses to this simple but remarkably powerful proof of atheism. The problem of evil is the most important argument against rational belief in God, one that spawned a large and very exciting body of philosophical literature over recent decades.

Requirements: attendance (80% of classes), term paper (2000 words).

Weekly schedule:

- 1 Introduction
- 2 The irrationality of theism
Mackie (1955): Evil and omnipotence. *Mind*
- 3 The free will theodicy
Plantinga (1974): *God, Freedom, and Evil*. William B. Eerdmans.
- 4 Soul-building
Hick: Soul-making theodicy. In Rowe (2001).
Swinburne: Some major strands of theodicy. In Rowe (2001).
- 5 Sceptical theism
Rea: Sceptical theism and the “too much skepticism” objection. In McBrayer and Howard-Snyder (2013).
- 6 Arguments for and against theism: Beyond the problem of evil
no reading
- 7 Animal suffering
Murray: *Nature Red in Tooth and Claw: Theism and the Problem of Animal Suffering*. Oxford University Press, 2008, chs. 2 & 5.
Graves, Hereth & John: In defense of animal universalism. In Byerly and Silverman (eds), *Paradise Understood*, Oxford University Press, 2017.
- 8 “God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are like animals”
Mobini, Mohammad Ali (2013): Earth’s epistemic fruits for harmony with God: an Islamic theodicy. In McBrayer and Howard-Snyder (2013).
- 9 The challenge of maltheism
Law (2010): The evil god challenge. *Religious Studies*.

References

McBrayer and Howard-Snyder (eds) (2013): *The Blackwell Companion to the Problem of Evil*. Blackwell.

Rowe (ed.) (2001): *God and the Problem of Evil*. Blackwell.