

Research in Philosophy of Religion

Death, Immortality and the Afterlife

- Grant project
- Funded by the Analytic Theology Project at the University of Innsbruck
- David Cheetham and Yujin Nagasawa

The goal of the project is to create an opportunity for theologians and philosophers to present issues on death, immortality and the afterlife that are characteristic of their respective interests and develop ideas that are both philosophically rigorous and theologically coherent. Philosophers will address metaphysical and ethical issues about death, such as personal identity and post-mortem survival, moral puzzles concerning death, metaphysical models of the soul, and the relationship between justice and immortality, while theologians will address theological issues about death, such as scriptural accounts of immortality, the meaning of the 'image of God' and the purposes of human existence, the resurrection of Jesus, and the importance of eschatology and hope for theological coherence.

Exploring alternative concepts of God

- Grant project
- Funded by the John Templeton Foundation
- [Yujin Nagasawa \(/staff/profiles/philosophy/nagasawa-yujin.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/philosophy/nagasawa-yujin.aspx) and Andrei Buckareff at Marist College

The aim of this project is to organize the first major initiative to shed light on, explore, and evaluate alternatives to the classical concept of God, which are often overlooked in contemporary debates among analytic philosophers on the nature and existence of God.

The concept of God according to traditional Judeo-Christian-Islamic theism minimally includes the following theses: (i) There is exactly one God; (ii) God is an omniscient, omnipotent, and morally perfect agent; (iii) God is the creator *ex nihilo* of the universe and the sustainer of all that exists; and (iv) God is an immaterial substance that is ontologically distinct from the universe.

Alternative concepts of God exclude at least one of (i)-(v).

A number of prominent philosophers and scientists—such as Nicholas of Cusa, Baruch Spinoza, John Locke, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Adam Smith, T.H. Green, Samuel Alexander, Albert Einstein, and Stephen Hawking—have expressed sympathy with alternative concepts of the divine. However, voices raised in defense of these concepts tend not to be taken seriously in philosophy of religion. This project aims to attract further attention to alternative concepts of God and to thoroughly consider their merits and demerits.

Scientific approaches to the philosophy of religion

- Book project
- [Yujin Nagasawa \(/staff/profiles/philosophy/nagasawa-yujin.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/philosophy/nagasawa-yujin.aspx)

Philosophy has been mainly a conceptual subject. That is, philosophers have relied primarily on intuition and analysis of concepts in order to make progress in their research.

While most philosophers remain in agreement that conceptual thinking is indispensable, appeals to empirical research have become increasingly prevalent in philosophy in recent years. This edited collection tries to show that empirical approaches can be useful even in the philosophy of religion, one of the oldest areas of philosophy.

Contributors include: Robin Le Poidevin, Benjamin Murphy, Michael Ruse, Paul Draper, Graham Wood, William Lane Craig, James Sinclair, Klaas J. Kraay, David Leech, Aku Visala, T. J. Mawson, Steve Clarke, David Eford, and Katherine Rogers.

Ways of meeting and the theology of religions: A philosophical exploration

- Book project
- [David Cheetham \(/staff/profiles/tr/cheetham-david.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/tr/cheetham-david.aspx)

This book seeks to tackle the question of the meeting of religions by looking at how people meet and various conceptual 'spaces': aesthetic, ethical, religious, personal/impersonal they inhabit.

The book occupies the boundary between theology and philosophy in that it considers theological problems associated with the meeting of religions but also engages in philosophical speculation concerning ideas of the self, the character of 'aesthetic' engagement, notions of 'performance' and questions of 'attitude' towards the other.