



By

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*Approaching Philosophy of Religion: An Introduction to Key Thinkers, Concepts, Methods & Debates* (IVP Academic, 2018) is written by Anthony C. Thiselton. He is Emeritus Professor of Christian Theology at the University of Nottingham and a Fellow of the British Academy. Thiselton is also the author of several other books (e.g. *Discovering Romans, Systematic Theology, The Holy Spirit, and The Last Things.*)

Thiselton began teaching the philosophy of religion in 1963 and shares his wealth of knowledge about the topic in his new book, which definitely lives up to its title.

He opens the book with a Chronology of the philosophy of religion that runs from the 9th Century BC to the 20th Century AD. The Introduction deals with landmarks in philosophy of religion that includes the ancient world (e.g. Greece, Near East, Far East), Hebrew, Jewish and Christian thought, and medieval to modern thought.

Some of the arguments explained in the Introduction include arguments for the existence of God, faith and reason and the problem of knowledge, and other problems in the philosophy of religion (e.g. the problem of evil).

Thiselton also devoted space in the Introduction to Hegel, Kant and Darwin. From that point the author addressed the argument from design.

The three primary parts of the book look at Approaches, Concepts and Issues, and Key Terms. Here's a brief overview:

### **Part 1: Approaches**

1. Analytic philosophy
2. Continental philosophy
3. Empiricism and rationalism
4. Existentialism
5. Feminist philosophy
6. Personalism

7. Phenomenology
8. Pragmatism

## **Part 2: Concepts and Issues**

Subjects addressed include:

- Cosmological argument
- Design argument
- Divine action
- Evolution
- Faith
- Free will
- Gender
- God (attributes and existence of)
- Good and evil
- Humanity
- Life after death
- Miracles
- Morality
- Ontological argument
- Religious experience

- Religious knowledge
- Religious language
- Revelation

### **Part 3: Key terms**

This is an excellent section where Thiselton gives brief definitions and descriptions of dozens of important aspects about religious philosophy. Here are some examples:

- Agnosticism
- Atheism
- Causality
- Creationism
- Deism
- Determinism
- Enlightenment (the)
- Epistemology
- Eternity
- Ethics
- Evolution
- Fideism

- Foundationalism
- Humanism
- Idealism
- Logic
- Materialism
- Metaphysics
- Mind
- Modernism
- Monism
- Monotheism
- Mysticism
- Myth
- Naturalism
- Natural theology
- Neoplatonism
- Nihilism
- Ontology
- Panentheism
- Pantheism
- Pluralism
- Postmodernism
- Reductionism

- Realism
- Relativism
- Skepticism
- Scientism
- Soul
- Spirit
- Teleology
- Theism
- Theodicy
- Transcendence
- Utopia

I recommend this book for anyone interested in the subject of the **philosophy of religion**. It will help you understand thousands of years of religious thinking in a short book that you will be able to reference for study and teaching for years to come. The author has taken a complex subject and made it easy to read and understand.



# Reviews

“Anthony Thiselton has written a fine companion to his earlier *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Religion*. In this particular volume, his treatment of seminal philosophy of religion topics reveals a remarkable breadth and depth of scholarship, and presents these topics incisively and accessibly. An excellent resource!” Paul Copan, professor, Pledger Family Chair of Philosophy and Ethics, Palm Beach Atlantic University, author of *A Little Book for New Philosophers* and *An Introduction to Biblical Ethics*”

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