

Kalam Cosmological Argument Course at Tubingen

A group of graduate students from Tubingen, Munster, Berlin, Istanbul, and Cambridge participated in a 5-day long crash course on the Kalam Cosmological Argument in Analytic Philosophy and Traditional Kalam. The crash course was held at the Center for Islamic Theology at the University of Tubingen and taught by Dr. Bruce Reichenbach (Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Augsburg College), Hamza Karamali (KRM), and Yasser Qureshi (PhD candidate in Islamic theology at the University of Cambridge). Dr. Saeed Fodeh (Jordan) was originally scheduled to teach at the course but was unable to attend in person. He did, however, deliver a 2-hour lecture to the students over Skype.

The course was based around Dr. Reichenbach's Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy article on the Cosmological Argument and a new article by Dr. Fodeh on cosmological arguments in the kalam tradition. The topics covered included philosophical debates around the Principle of Sufficient Reason, the relationship between the ontological and cosmological arguments in analytic philosophy, the Gale-Pruss cosmological argument, Swinburne's inductive cosmological argument, the scriptural backdrop of traditional kalam arguments, an overview of kalam arguments for God's existence and attributes, the debate between Ghazali and Ibn Rushd over the beginning of the universe, modality and necessity in the kalam tradition, and arguments for the impossibility of an infinite series of causes.

One of the highlights of the event was a visit by one of the world's leading Islamicists, Dr Josef Van Ess, Emeritus Professor of Islamic Studies and Semitic Languages, University of Tübingen, who joined the participants for lunch and discussed with them issues in Islamic theology.

Students will spend the next month writing a 2000-word essay to pursue a line of inquiry that was raised in the course. These essays will be reviewed and commented on by both Dr. Reichenbach and Dr. Fodeh.

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