

PHILOSOPHY 10100-03, -05
INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY
Fall 2008

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Section 03: MWF 10:00 am - 10:50 am Friends Hall 304

Section 05: MWF 1:00 pm - 1:50 pm Friends Hall 209

Office Hours:

MW 11:30 - 12:30, & by appt.
Park 235

Course Description:

Philosophy 10100 provides an introduction to philosophy by critically examining issues in metaphysics (theories of reality) and epistemology (theories of knowledge). We will examine six broad areas: (1) Does God exist? (2) Do we really know anything? (3) What is the relationship between the mind and the body? (4) What factors are relevant to the identity of a material object or a person? (5) Do we have free will? (6) What factors are relevant to moral responsibility?

Texts:

Knowledge, Nature, and Norms: An Introduction to Philosophy, Timmons and Shoemaker, eds.
A couple supplemental readings may also be posted on Blackboard.

Blackboard:

I will likely use the site to post grades, and any supplementary readings and handouts/powerpoint slides. We'll see whether we want to use it for other purposes as well. To access Blackboard, go to <http://courses.ithaca.edu>, but go into Blackboard (on the right side of the page) instead of webCT. If you have problems, contact me or ITS.

If I need to contact you, I will e-mail you using the e-mail account listed in Homer (that is almost certainly your IC account). I will expect that you check that account regularly (either directly, or through e-mail forwarding).

For any help on Blackboard:

Contact me or ITS; I'll be learning it right along with you.

Objectives:

You will be asked to read, write, and think critically. Like other skills, philosophy requires practice. I expect you to come to class (on time) ready to discuss the material. In other words, you should come to class having already read and thought about the issues.

When you read, you should try to keep in mind the big picture. What is the author's main point? Why does s/he hold the view he is defending? How does each part of the article fit into the argument? If you can't answer these questions, reread the article – I can't overemphasize the importance of *reading an article multiple times*. Once you understand the author's argument, ask yourself whether you agree with the author's position. If not, at which point in the argument do you disagree with the author, and why? Thinking about each article in this way is what I mean by reading and thinking critically; you may find it difficult to understand fully the article, but this is the goal we are working toward.

Course Requirements:

There are three units in this course: (I) Philosophy of Religion and Knowledge; (II) Mind/Body and Personal Identity; (III) Free Will and Moral Responsibility. For each unit, you will take an exam; you have the option of writing a paper in place of an exam. [***If you elect to write a paper for any unit, you must get your paper topic approved by me at least four days before the paper is due.***]

25%: - First in-class exam (or paper).

25% - Second in-class exam (or paper).

25% - Final exam (non-cumulative) (or paper).

Exams are short- and long-answer.

Papers should be approximately 1000-1500 words; you should demonstrate that you understand what we've covered, and try to convince the reader of some particular thesis. This is not meant to be a research paper; outside sources are unnecessary. **Papers should be submitted via e-mail.**

12% - 3 Assignments related to readings. (4% for each one).

Once each unit, you will pick a reading about which to write a brief reaction/objection, or to write about something in the reading that puzzles you. The approximate length should be 250-300 words. Students sometimes complain that the readings for this class are difficult and/or confusing. One of the key elements to developing critical thinking is identifying what it is that may be confusing, and attempting to figure out what is going on. For instance, you might write something to the effect that you are confused by passage X, but your best guess as to what X is saying is ... Alternatively, you might write that you understand passage Y, but you disagree with the author with respect to Y, and explain why you disagree. This is definitely not meant to be a research paper.

Papers should be submitted via e-mail.

13%: - Participation.

I grade this by the quantity and quality of your questions, comments, etc. Participation includes attendance, talking in class, e-mailed questions/comments, and visits to office hours. Absences from class can negatively affect your participation grade. This is a fairly subjective portion of your grade, but the rough idea is that everyone starts with an 80 [equivalent to a B-], and one can increase (or decrease) that grade by participating throughout the semester.

To translate between numbers and letters, I will use the following grading scale:

A 93-100, A-: 90-92.9, B+: 87-89.9, B: 83-86.9, B-: 80-82.9, C+: 77-79.9,
C: 73-76.9, C-: 70-72.9, D+: 67-69.9, D: 63-66.9, D-: 60-62.9, F: Below 60.

Note that I round to the nearest tenth, not to the nearest integer. An 86.6, for example, is a B, not a B+.

I do not offer extra credit in this class. If you are worried about your grade you should focus on participation and preparing carefully for the tests/papers.

Important Dates:

Wed Aug 27	1 st day
Mon Sept 1	no class - Labor Day
Wed Sept 3	last day for add/drop
Wed Sept 17	last day for S/D/F
Fri Oct 3	Unit I exam (or paper due).
Fri Oct 17	no class – Fall Break
Tues Oct 21	midterm grades due
Wed Nov 5	Unit II exam (or paper due).
Fri Nov 7	last day for W
Nov 22-30	thanksgiving break
Fri Dec 12	last day of classes
Mon Dec 15 (5:45 pm)	optional alternate final exam time (you must request to take your exam at this time if you want this option; space is limited). <i>Friends 303</i>
Thur Dec 18 (7:30 am)	final exam for MWF 10 am section 03: (unless you really want to show up at 7:30, we'll probably arrange to start at 8:45). <i>Friends 304</i>
Fri Dec 19 (1:30 pm)	final exam for the MWF 1 pm section 05: <i>Friends 209</i>

Make-Ups:

If an emergency prevents you from taking an exam, you should contact me beforehand (or as promptly as possible). No make-up will be offered unless you present *proper documentation* justifying your absence. *Without a justified excuse, I will not offer a make-up for any missed exam.*

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what was covered that day.

Academic Dishonesty:

I will rigorously enforce the university policy regarding academic dishonesty, as detailed in the handbook in section 7.1.2.6. Exams will be closed-book, closed-note; violations will be dealt with by assigning a 0 for the assignment in question, and I will report the incident to the Dean.

Accommodations:

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodation will be provided to students with documented disabilities on a case by case basis. Students must register with the Office of Academic Support Services and provide appropriate documentation to the college before any academic adjustment will be provided.

Policy Regarding Academic Dishonesty

I. Statement of Policy

I encourage students to share philosophical ideas with one another. However, some practices are not permitted. The College states in the student conduct code (online at <http://www.ithaca.edu/faculty/rlesses/academic%20honesty%20statement.html>):

“Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's published or unpublished ideas, whether this use consists of directly quoted material or paraphrased ideas.

Although various disciplines follow styles of documentation that differ in some details, all forms of documentation make the following demands:

- * That each quotation or paraphrase be acknowledged with footnotes or in-text citation;
- * That direct quotations be enclosed in quotation marks and be absolutely faithful to the wording of the source;
- * That paraphrased ideas be stated in language entirely different from the language of the source;
- * That a sequence of ideas identical to that of a source be attributed to that source;
- * That all the sources the writer has drawn from in paraphrase or direct quotation or a combination of paraphrase and quotation be listed at the end of the paper under "Bibliography," "References," or "Works Cited," whichever heading the particular style of documentation requires.

A student is guilty of plagiarism if he/she fails, intentionally or not, to follow any of these standard requirements of documentation.”

Assigned Readings:

(Subject to change at my discretion, naturally. It is unlikely we will get to everything listed here; the pace of the class will be determined in large part by your interest and the quality of class discussion. As a result, I have refrained from attaching dates to these readings. I will announce in class what you should read for the following meeting, and I will try to keep post that information on Blackboard as well; when in doubt just ask what you should be reading for the next class).

Unit I: Philosophy of Religion and Knowledge:

Does God exist? Do we need evidence? Do we know anything? How do we know?

1.1 The Ontological Argument

Anselm/Gaunilo, ‘The Ontological Argument’/‘The Lost Island Objection’

- 1.2 The Teleological Argument
Paley, 'The Teleological Argument'.
- 1.3 The Problem of Evil
Hume, 'The Problem of Evil'
Stump, 'The Mirror of Evil'
- [1.4 The Cosmological Argument]
Aquinas, 'The Cosmological Argument'
- 1.5 Faith and Evidence
Pascal, 'The Wager'.
Clifford, 'The Ethics of Belief'.
- [1.6 Miracles]
Craig and Sinnott-Armstrong, 'The Evidence of Miracles: An Exchange between a Christian and an Atheist'.
- 1.7 Skepticism
Unger, 'A Defense of Skepticism'.

F 10/3: Exam (or paper due).

Unit II: The Mind/Body Problem and Identity:

What is the relationship between a mental state and bodily states? Can non-humans have mental states? How do things change while still counting as the same object? What aspects of a person must remain for her to count as the same person?

- 2.1 Dualism
Ducasse, 'In Defense of Dualism'
Churchland, 'Dualism: For and Against'
- 2.2 Behaviorism
Fodor, 'The Mind-Body Problem', pages 96-100
- 2.3 Mind-Body Identity
Fodor, 'The Mind-Body Problem', pages 100-102
- 2.4 Functionalism
Fodor, 'The Mind-Body Problem', pages 102-110
- 2.5 Artificial Intelligence
Searle, 'Minds, Brains, and Machines', pages 119-127
- 2.6 The Afterlife
Darrow, 'The Myth of the Soul'

2.7 Personal Identity

Locke, 'The Prince and the Cobbler'

Perry, 'A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality'

Parfit, 'The Unimportance of Identity'

W 11/5: Exam.

Unit III: Free Will and Moral Responsibility:

Do we have free will, and what does it mean to be free? What situations would preclude freedom and/or moral responsibility? What can be said for or against some common views about morality?

3.1 Hard Determinism

Darrow, 'Leopold and Loeb'

3.2 Compatibilism

Stace, 'The Problem of Free Will'

[possibly a supplemental reading to be posted on Blackboard by Frankfurt]

3.3 Libertarianism

Campbell, 'Has the Self "Free Will"?'

3.4 Determinism and Moral Responsibility

P. Strawson, 'Freedom and Resentment'

G. Strawson, 'The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility'

3.5 Questions about Morality

Benedict, 'A Defense of Ethical Relativism'

Nagel, 'Right and Wrong'

Plato, 'The Myth of Gyges'

12/15 - 19 Exam.