

**Introduction to Philosophy**  
**730-103: Summer 2009**  
Monday-Thursday, 10:30am-12:20pm  
Douglass Campus

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Office hours: By appointment  
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**Introduction**

The main purpose of this course is to gain familiarity with traditional philosophical issues like skepticism, free will and the problem of evil. This includes understanding both what the issues are and why they are important. We will approach the issues through research not only in philosophy but also in other areas of cognitive science, e.g. psychology and neuroscience.

In addition to this main purpose, we will pursue a number of other goals. These include learning how to:

- Understand and summarize philosophical arguments
- Make and respond to philosophical arguments
- Conduct well-reasoned debates about controversial topics
- Use findings in other areas of cognitive science to inform philosophy (and vice versa)

**Required texts**

- (1) Core Questions in Philosophy by Elliott Sober
- (2) Reason & Argument by Richard Feldman

These texts are available at NJ Books. Additional readings will be available online through the Rutgers University libraries website (<http://libraries.rutgers.edu>) or via links provided in class.

**Course requirements**

*Signed syllabus (5% of grade):*

I will hand out copies of the syllabus on the first day of class. You should carefully read your copy and ensure that you are familiar (and willing and able to comply) with the course requirements and policies. Indicate that you have read, understand and agree to the terms of the syllabus by signing the last page and handing it in to me.

- *Due date: **May 28***

*Reading quizzes (15%):*

There will be pop reading quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes will be graded on a 0-2 point scale. Except in cases of excused absences, if you fail to turn in a quiz, you will get a 0 on it. If you turn in an incorrect answer, you'll get 1 point and, if you turn in a correct answer, you'll get

2 points. I'll drop up to two 1-point quizzes for each student. All 0- and 2-point quizzes will be counted.

*Short answer questions (20%):*

I will assign four sets of questions from Reason & Argument. You should answer these questions.

- *Due dates: **June 2, June 9, June 16, June 25***

*Peer review (20%):*

Constructively critique a classmate's paper. You can include some discussion of stylistic, spelling, grammatical, etc. issues in your review but the bulk of it should be substantive; your main points should be about the *content* of the paper. Your review can be as long or short as required to communicate your critique effectively (a guideline length is 2-3 pages).

- *Due date: **June 23***

*Paper (30%):*

Make your own original argument about one of the issues we discuss in class. Your argument can be either an objection to an argument in the readings or a new argument for a position on one of the issues. The paper should include two parts:

- *Essay:* An essay that lays out your argument in paragraph form
- *List:* A bullet-pointed list of the major parts of the argument (premises, intermediate conclusions and main conclusion)

The essay part can be as long or short as required to communicate your argument effectively (a guideline length is 5-7 pages).

- *First draft due date: **June 18***
- *Final draft due date: **July 1***

*Class participation (10%):*

Class participation is very important. One of the stated purposes of the course is to learn how to conduct well-reasoned debates. Therefore, it's essential that you come to class and participate in discussion.

## **Course policies**

*Classroom climate:*

It's ok to have strong opinions and to express them. However, it's important that you maintain a level of respect for others in the class while doing so. Personal insults and the like aren't constructive and won't be tolerated.

*Attendance:*

On the first day of class, I will ask you to record some information on an index card. I take attendance by having you initial and date the back of your card. Cards will be available at the front of the room for the first 10 minutes of each class session. **You are responsible for marking yourself present each day.** If the back of your card is not initialed and dated for a given class period, you will be marked absent for that class period. **If you have three or more unexcused absences, you will receive a zero for class participation.**

*Grading:*

Some general guidelines for papers and peer reviews are:

- 12 pt. Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1-in. margins
- Numbered pages
- Submitted electronically or stapled (no loose sheets, cover folders, etc.)

For some assignments, I will also post more specific guidelines on Sakai. Failing to follow the guidelines will significantly impact your grade. **For example, failing to include either an essay or a bullet-pointed list in your final paper will decrease your grade by two whole letter grades and failing to meet one or more of the above general guidelines will decrease it by one half letter grade.** My grading scale is:

A	90-100
B+	87-89
B	80-86
C+	77-79
C	70-76
D	65-69
F	64 and below

*Late work:*

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the indicated due date. Except in cases in which you have a legitimate (and documented) excuse, I do not accept late work. **If you don't turn in an assignment when it is due, you will receive a zero on the assignment.**

*Academic integrity:*

I encourage you to discuss the issues we raise in class with each other, friends, family, etc. However, all work you turn in to me should be produced entirely on your own and all information or arguments you obtain from other sources should be properly cited (APA style is preferred). **If you cheat on or plagiarize an assignment, you will receive a zero on that assignment. Remember that plagiarism is not limited to word-for-word copying; using someone else's ideas without citing him or her also counts as plagiarism.** Suspected cheating, plagiarism and other academic integrity violations will be reported to the appropriate dean. If you have any questions about academic integrity, please contact me or consult the Rutgers Policy on Academic Integrity (<http://ctaar.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html>).

*Disability accommodation:*

If you have a disability that requires special accommodation, please contact me as soon as possible. If you have any questions about disability accommodation, please contact me or consult the Rutgers Guide to Disability Accommodation (<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/fachand.shtml>).

*E-mail and office hours:*

Questions about grades should be brought to me during office hours; I can't answer them over e-mail. I'll try to answer all other e-mails as quickly as possible.

## Topics and readings

### I. Introduction to philosophical argument

<b>Date</b>	<b>Reading assignment</b>	<b>Written assignment</b>
May 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Syllabus</li> <li>• Summaries of Ch. 1-3 (<u>Reason &amp; Argument</u>)</li> <li>• Ch. 4 (RA)</li> <li>• Ch. 5 (RA)</li> </ul>	
May 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 6 (RA)</li> <li>• Ch. 7 (RA)</li> </ul>	
May 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 8 (RA)</li> <li>• Summaries of Ch. 9-13 (RA)</li> </ul>	<b>Signed syllabus</b>

### II. Existence of God

<b>Date</b>	<b>Reading assignment</b>	<b>Written assignment</b>
June 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five ways to prove that God exists (Core Questions in Philosophy)</li> <li>• The ontological argument (CQP)</li> </ul>	
June 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The argument from design (CQP)</li> <li>• The wager</li> </ul>	<b>Short answer questions</b>
June 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The problem of evil</li> <li>• Evil and omnipotence</li> </ul>	
June 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lectures 4-11 (CQP)</li> </ul>	

### III. Free will

<b>Date</b>	<b>Reading assignment</b>	<b>Written assignment</b>
June 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determinism rules out freedom (CQP)</li> <li>• Of liberty and necessity (CQP)</li> </ul>	
June 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the self 'free will'? (CQP)</li> <li>• Do we have free will?</li> </ul>	<b>Short answer questions</b>
June 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternate possibilities and moral responsibility</li> <li>• Living without free will: The case for hard incompatibilism</li> </ul>	
June 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lectures 24-27 (CQP)</li> </ul>	

#### IV. Mind-body problem

<b>Date</b>	<b>Reading assignment</b>	<b>Written assignment</b>
June 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meditations 2 and 6</li><li>• The nature of mind</li></ul>	
June 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mental processes are physical (CQP)</li><li>• What is functionalism?</li></ul>	<b>Short answer questions</b>
June 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What Mary didn't know</li><li>• Mad pain and Martian pain</li></ul>	
June 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lectures 19-23 (CQP)</li></ul>	<b>First draft of paper</b>

#### V. Personal identity

<b>Date</b>	<b>Reading assignment</b>	<b>Written assignment</b>
June 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The prince and the cobbler</li><li>• Of identity and Locke's account</li></ul>	
June 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The self</li><li>• Where am I?</li></ul>	<b>Peer review</b>
June 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Was Jekyll Hyde?</li><li>• Divided minds and the nature of persons</li></ul>	
June 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A dialogue on personal identity and immortality</li></ul>	<b>Short answer questions</b>

#### VI. Skepticism

<b>Date</b>	<b>Reading assignment</b>	<b>Written assignment</b>
June 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meditations on first philosophy (CQP)</li></ul>	
June 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Three dialogues between Hylas and Philonous</li></ul>	
July 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Induction cannot be rationally justified (CQP)</li></ul>	<b>Final draft of paper</b>
July 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lectures 12-18 (CQP)</li></ul>	

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I have read, understand and agree to comply with the course requirements and policies for the Summer 2009 session of Introduction to Philosophy.

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**Signature**

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**Date**

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**Printed name**