

PHIL 103 | Introduction to Philosophy | Spring 2020

T / R 2:50 - 4:10 | Frelinghuysen Hall B1

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Office hours T 1:30 - 2:30 | 106 Somerset St., Rm. #543

Description. This course is an introduction to philosophy in the Western tradition. Philosophy has historically been concerned with the most basic questions confronting human existence, such as questions about the nature of knowledge, the existence of God, free will, the fundamental nature of reality, the relationship between consciousness and the brain, and the basic source of morality. These are some of the central topics that make up the historical subject matter of philosophy. But there are also various methods and techniques for doing philosophy that allow effective inquiry into its subject matter. Philosophers investigate answers to difficult philosophical questions by relying on the tools of analytical reasoning and rational argument. In this course, we will consider some of the classic arguments and positions in Western philosophy, and how to do philosophy in a careful and rigorous way.

Readings. *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings, 8th edition*, edited by John Perry, Michael Bratman, and John Martin Fischer.

- Page numbers refer to the 8th edition. If you purchase a used copy of the 7th edition you will need to find the correct page numbers in that edition.
- All other readings not in the book will be available on Canvas.

Website. Course website can be found at <https://canvas.rutgers.edu/>. Paper and homework assignments will be posted, submitted, and graded on Canvas. Attendance will be documented on Canvas. Any course announcements or additional course readings will be posted to Canvas.

Learning goals. This course is designed to achieve the following learning goals:

- (i) Familiarize students with some of the most important arguments and positions in Western philosophy.
- (ii) Teach students to critically examine philosophical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production. This course thus satisfies Core Code AHo.
- (iii) Provide students with the skills and tools needed to identify and articulate philosophical arguments found in written texts, and to assess and evaluate the quality of those arguments.
- (iv) Improve students' ability at explaining and defending their own philosophical arguments and positions.

Requirements. Papers (90%). Two 3-5 page papers each worth 25% of your final grade and one 5-7 page paper worth 40% of your final grade. Papers function as a way of testing both your comprehension of the material and your capacity to think critically and philosophically about the material. Papers must be turned in by uploading them directly to the Canvas site.

Participation (10%). Your participation grade will be determined by (i) homework, (ii) class contributions, and (iii) attendance. There will be weekly homework assignments posted to Canvas. Homework assignments are either marked complete or incomplete. You are expected to contribute to class discussion. Attendance will be recorded in Canvas.

Grade breakdown summary:

- Paper 1: 25%
- Paper 2: 25%
- Paper 3: 40%
- Participation: 10%

Late paper policy. Your paper grade will be reduced by one grade level for each calendar date it is late. For example, if a paper is due at 5:00 PM on a Tuesday, and you submit it to Canvas on Wednesday, then the paper will be reduced by one grade level (e.g. an A paper will be reduced to a B+). If you submit it on a Thursday, then the paper will be reduced by two grade levels (e.g. an A paper will be reduced to a B). Papers received late may be returned later than papers submitted on time.

There are exceptions to this policy in cases where you have a serious and documented excuse (medical or family emergency). Mistakes using Canvas such as submitting incorrect documents or submitting links or attachments that are broken will not be excused.

Late homework policy. You will only be given half credit for any late homework assignment. You will have a full 24 hours after an assignment is due during which you can turn in the assignment late. No homework will be accepted after this period and you will receive 0 points for the assignment. The assignment will close on Canvas 24 hours past the due date and it will no longer be possible to upload the assignment to Canvas.

Paper extensions. Paper extensions may be granted if you notify me before the due date.

Absences. You are expected to attend every class. Each absence will be recorded in Canvas and will count against your participation grade. Absences can be excused if I am notified in advance. If you expect to miss class, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. The system sends an email to me automatically.

Plagiarism & Academic Integrity. All work you submit must be your own. You must properly cite any sources you consult in any work you submit. *Do not plagiarize.* The consequences are serious. Plagiarism violates the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy, which all students are required to abide. Canvas has an automatic plagiarism detection software called Turnitin that will scan all your paper submissions for plagiarism. If your paper is flagged for suspected plagiarism in Canvas, I am required to report it to the Academic Integrity Board where the case will go for further assessment. You can review information about the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy in the following link: <https://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/>.

Emails. If you email me, you should only expect a response during normal business hours (Monday through Friday, approx. 8:00 AM – 5:30 PM).

Tentative Schedule (subject to revision)

Asterisks () designates a reading that is not in the Perry, Bratman, and Fischer text and that will be available on Canvas.*

Introduction

1/21 Introduction: What is Philosophy?

- Perry, Bratman, and Fischer “Introduction”, 1-7
- Perry, Bratman, and Fischer, “Logical Toolkit”, 8-13

1/23 Introduction: Why do Philosophy?

- Russell, “The Value of Philosophy”

The Existence of God

1/28 The Cosmological Argument

- Aquinas, “The Existence of God” (from *Summa Theologica*), just the paragraph on 43 starting “the second way derives...”
- * Russell, “Why I am Not a Christian”, just the section called ‘The First Cause Argument’

1/30 Pascal’s Wager

- Pascal, “The Wager”, 50-53

2/4 Pascal’s Wager, cont.

- Pascal, “The Wager”, 50-53

2/6 The Problem of Evil

- Leibniz, “God, Evil, and the Best of All Possible Worlds”, 89-90

2/11 The Problem of Evil, cont.

- * Mackie, “Evil and Omnipotence”

2/13 The Problem of Evil, cont.

- * Lewis, “Evil for Freedom’s Sake”, sections 1-3
- Adams, “Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God”, sections 4.0-4.2

2/18 Philosophical Writing

- *Paper #1 topics posted*
- Perry, Bratman, and Fischer, "Writing Philosophy Papers" 14-16
- * Bennett, "Some Helpful Hints for Writing Philosophy Papers"
- * Lenman, "How to Write a Crap Philosophy Essay"
- Optional: *Pryor, "Guidelines for Writing a Philosophy Paper"

Free Will

2/20 The Problem of Determinism

- * Holbach, "The Illusion of Free Will"
- * van Inwagen, excerpt from "The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will", pp. 202-205

2/25 Simple Compatibilism

- *Paper #1 due*
- * Stace, "The Problem of Free Will"

2/27 Sophisticated Compatibilism

- Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person"

3/3 Sophisticated Compatibilism cont.

- Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person"

3/5 Incompatibilism

- Chisholm, "Human Freedom and the Self", 449-456
- * van Inwagen, excerpt from "The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will", from p. 210

The Mind/Body Problem

3/10 Substance Dualism

- Perry, Bratman, and Fischer "Descartes's Dualism", p. 271-272
- Descartes, "Meditations on First Philosophy", Meditation VI

3/12 Substance dualism, cont.

- * Atherton, "Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia"
- * Selections from Princess Elisabeth's correspondence with Descartes

3/17 No class

3/19 No class

3/24 Identity Theory and Physicalism

- * Smart, "Sensations and brain processes"
- * Nagel, "What Is Like to Be a Bat?"

3/26 Identity Theory and Physicalism, cont.

- Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know"

3/31 Zombies and Property Dualism

- ***Paper #2 topics posted***
- * Chalmers, excerpts from *The Conscious Mind*

Ethics

4/2 Cultural Relativism and Divine Command Theory

- * Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"

4/7 Act Utilitarianism

- ***Paper #2 due***
- Bentham, "The Principle of Utility", 528-531
- Carritt, "Criticisms of Utilitarianism", 549-551

4/9 Rule Utilitarianism

- Smart, "Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism", 552-558

4/14 Kant

- Kant, excerpts from *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 583-599

4/16 Kant

- Kant, excerpts from *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 583-599

4/21 Some Issues in Applied Ethics

- Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" 575-582
- * Du Bois, excerpts from "Of The Ruling of Men"

4/23 Puzzles of Ethics

- ***Paper #3 topics posted***
- * Nagel, "Moral Luck"

4/28 Puzzles of Ethics

- Perry, Bratman, and Fischer, "The Trolley Problem"

4/30 Puzzles of Ethics

- ***Paper #3 due***

- * Wolf, "Moral Saints"

Student-Wellness Services.

Just In Case Web App. <http://codu.co/cee05e>.

Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901/

<http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/>

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

Crisis Intervention : <http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/crisis-intervention/>

Report a Concern: <http://health.rutgers.edu/do-something-to-help/>

Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

(848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / www.vpva.rutgers.edu/

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

Disability Services

(848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.