

Philosophy 103: Introduction to Philosophy

Instructor: Aaron Rabinowitz
Email: aaron.rabinowitz@rutgers.edu

1. Course Location and Meeting Times:

1.730.103.1 Monday/Wednesday 1:10pm-2:30pm in SC106
Office Hours: Thursdays 1pm-3pm in Miller 212
Online Office Hours: By Appointment

2. Course Description:

In this course we will examine key questions in several of the major fields of philosophy, including Epistemology, Ethics, and Metaphysics. We will explore questions concerning consciousness, the self, God, moral responsibility, and various other problems that directly impact our lives. In the process, you will learn how to better argue for your positions, both in class and in written form.

3. Course Materials and Assignments:

Exploring Philosophy: An Introductory Anthology Steven M. Cahn Oxford University Press

All other materials will be made available through the sakai site.

4. Core Curriculum Information:

This course meets the Aho (Area of Inquiry: Arts and Humanities) requirement.

5. Class Schedule:

Date	Topic	Reading	Homework
9/5	First Meeting	The Value of Philosophy by Russell pg.13 Read Syllabus	
9/10	Forming Good Arguments	The Elements of Argument by Cahn et al pg.45	Topic 1: Form a basic argument about something you find interesting. (due 9/14)
9/12	Recognizing Bad Arguments	Improving your thinking by Barker pg.53 Necessary and Sufficient Conditions by Cahn pg.58	
9/17	The Mind-Body Problem	The Mind-Body Problem by Churchland pg. 140	Topic 2: What do you think is the relationship between minds and bodies? (due 9/21)
9/19	Qualia and The Hard Problem of Consciousness	The Qualia Problem by Jackson pg. 156 Knowing What It's Like by Lewis pg. 159 What Is It Like to Be a Bat? by Nagel pg. 153	

Date	Topic	Reading	Homework
9/24	AI Personhood	Computing Machinery and Intelligence by Turing pg. 161 Do Computers Think? by Searle pg. 165	Topic 3: Do you believe AI can be persons? (9/28)
9/26	Identity Over Time	A Case of Identity by Smart pg. 229 The Problem of Personal Identity by Perry pg. 231	
10/1	Split Personhood	Dennett Where Am I? (Sakai)	Topic 4: Would you submit to an experiment like the one Dennett describes? (10/5)
10/3	Deontology vs. Utilitarianism	Assessing Utilitarianism by Pojman pg. 342 Kant's Ethics by O'Neill pg. 340	FIRST PAPER DUE
10/8	The Trolley Problem	The Trolley Problem by Thomson pg. 629 Turning the Trolley by Thomson pg. 630	Topic 5: Concoct a version of the trolley problem which highlights an interesting ethical principle. (10/12)
10/10	Virtue Ethics and Care Ethics	Virtue Ethics by Driver pg. 349 The Ethics of Care by Held pg. 352	

Date	Topic	Reading	Homework
10/15	Buddhism	The Buddha's Message by Gowans pg. 697	Topic 6: Which idea from Buddhism or Taoism do you find most valuable? (10/19)
10/17	Taoism	The Tao by Billington pg. 710	MIDTERM DUE
10/22	The Nature of Ethics	How Not to Answer Moral Questions by Regan pg. 331 Moral Isolationism by Midgley pg. 335	Topic 7: Do you believe humans construct or discover morality and why? (10/26)
10/24	The is/ought divide	Hume's Moral Philosophy (Sections 1-6) https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hume-moral/#pred	
10/29	Abortion	On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion by Warren pg. 406 Why Abortion is Immoral by Marquis pg. 418	Topic 8: Do you believe abortion should be legal? Restricted? Why or why not. (11/2)
10/31	In Class Debate: Topic TBD by class		

Date	Topic	Reading	Homework
11/5	Free Will and Moral Luck	Free Will by Nagel pg. 181 Free Will and Determinism by State pg. 186	Topic 9: Name one behavior you believe you engage in freely. Explain why you engage in that behavior. (11/9)
11/7	Free Will and Determinism	Freedom and Determinism by Cahn pg. 189 Moral Luck (PDF on Sakai)	
11/12	Theism	Does God Exist? by Nagel pg. 253	Topic 10: What argument for or against God do you find most compelling? (11/16)
11/14	The Problem of Evil	Why God Allows Evil by Swinburne pg. 260 The Problem of Hell by Adams pg. 275	
11/19	In class debate on God	Pick one of the argument papers in the section on god, read it, and summarize it's central argument.	SECOND PAPER DUE
	Thanksgiving Break 11/22-11/25		

Date	Topic	Reading	Homework
11/26	Aesthetics	Excerpt from Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance by Pirsig (Sakai) Aesthetic Concepts by Sibley pg.595	Topic 11: Are there any aesthetic claims you consider objectively true? (11/30)
11/28	The Meaning of Life	The Handbook by Epictetus pg. 658	
12/3	Projects of Worth	Meaning in Life by Wolf pg. 687 Meaningful Lives by Vitrano pg. 691	Topic 12: What do you find is the most compelling meaning of life, if any? (12/7)
12/5	On Liberty	On Liberty by Mill pg. 525	
12/10	The Importance of Philosophy	What Is a Liberal Education by Hook pg. 488	Topic 13: Has your view on any topics changed over the course of this class? (12/14)
12/12	Final Review		
			Final Exam due Dec 19th at 11am

6. Grading and Assignments:

A. Quizzes (10%)

There will be a short quiz posted on Sakai relating to each reading due before the start of each class. The quizzes are meant to be completed alongside the reading to make sure you are getting through the material.

B. Forum Responses (10%)

Each week I will post a forum discussion prompt related to that week's topic. You will have until the end of the day on Friday to post a 100-200 word response to the prompt. The goal is to make sure you are absorbing and retaining the material.

C. First Paper (20%)

You will write a 1,000-1300 word argumentative paper on one of the topics we cover in class. If you want to write on something we haven't covered yet, please see me for approval. I will provide a list of potential topics as well as a grading rubric that explains the desired structure for the paper, and a sample essay. Papers will be submitted online through Sakai. Late papers will receive 2 points off (out of 40) for every day that they are late.

D. Second Paper (20%)

You will write a 1,300-1,600 word argumentative paper on one of the topics we cover in class. If you want to write on something we haven't covered yet, please see me for approval. I will provide a list of potential topics as well as a grading rubric that explains the desired structure for the paper, and a sample essay. It is expected that the quality of your writing will improve based on feedback from the first paper. Papers will be submitted online through Sakai. Late papers will receive 2 points off (out of 40) for every day that they are late.

E. Midterm (20%)

There will be a take home, open notes midterm posted on Sakai covering topics from the first half of the class. It will contain 15 multiple choice questions.

F. Final Exam (20%)

There will be a take home, open notes midterm posted on Sakai covering primarily topics from the second half of the course, though you will be expected to retain key ideas from the first half. It will contain 15 multiple choice questions.

Late Work Policy: If you don't submit an assignment on time, you will not be able to submit it late unless you have an appropriate excuse and the relevant documentation.

Your letter grade will be determined by the following grading scale:

A	B+	B	C+	C	D	F
100%-90%	89%-87%	86%-80%	79%-77%	76%-70%	69%-60%	59%-0%

7. Sakai Site:

Some reading materials and important information, including your grades, will be available on the site. You can check Sakai for this information, and an email will be sent to you when any information is added to the site. Emails sent through Sakai will be sent to your Rutgers email address. So, if you do not check the Sakai site regularly and primarily use another email aside from your Rutgers one, you should set up the email that you primarily use so that messages sent from Sakai to your Rutgers email account can be forwarded to your primary email address.

The Sakai site can be accessed at:

<https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>

8. Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to attend all classes. Attendance will be taken each class. For every unexcused absence beyond the first two (free passes) you will lose one point off your final grade. If you require an excused absence beyond the first two, you will need to provide me a copy of the excused absence form on Sakai as well as documentation of some sort.

My policy for missed classes is that students who miss classes are responsible for finding out **from other students** what they missed.

If you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

9. Behavior Policy:

Please note that none of the following disruptive activities are permitted:

- a) Engaging in private conversations during lecture components of the class;
- b) Using cell phones or laptops in class; or
- c) Engaging in discussions unrelated to the course during group work time.

If you cannot adhere to this code of conduct on a particular day, please don't attend class on that day. If you repeatedly disrupt class, I will ask you to leave.

A note on in class discussion:

Productive intellectual inquiry – the basic purpose of colleges and universities – requires respectful, constructive discussion that enables all parties to participate fully. Philosophy

has an especially vital role to play in facilitating such inquiry, because philosophers have been developing and honing practices of critical discussion over many centuries: techniques for uncovering, justifying, and assessing assumptions lurking behind any claim, from the most obvious to the most controversial.

Philosophy is thus a valuable tool for self-reflection and for communal debate. This is especially true at a time when so much is being debated, in such heated terms. But like any tool, in order to work, it must be used well. In our community we expect all participants to observe basic norms of civility and respect. This means stating your own views directly and substantively: focusing on reasons, assumptions and consequences rather than on who is offering them, or how. And it means engaging other's views in the same terms. No topic or claim is too obvious or controversial to be discussed; but claims and opinions have a place in the discussion only when they are presented in a respectful, collegial, and constructive way.

10. Policy on Cheating:

Anyone caught cheating in any way, or aiding anyone else in cheating, will receive an automatic F for the course and be referred to the appropriate authorities for further measures to be taken. These further measures may include suspension or expulsion.

Rutgers Academic Integrity Information: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

Tutorial about plagiarism:

<http://library.camden.rutgers.edu/EducationalModules/Plagiarism/>

11. 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/

www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professionals 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.

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>.

Scarlet Listeners

(732) 247-5555 / <http://www.scarletlisteners.com/>

Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.