

PHIL 104
Introduction to Philosophy, Writing Intensive
Fall 2020

Professor Michael Glanzberg

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106 Somerset St., #536, but on Zoom for the foreseeable future

Office hours: Mondays 2:00-3:00 and by appointment

Overview

This course is an introduction to philosophy in the western tradition. It has two central goals. The first is to give you an understanding of what philosophical problems are, and how they might be solved. This will be done through consideration of some perennial philosophical problems, drawing on readings from important figures in the history of philosophy, as well as contemporary authors. The second goal is to develop your analytic and argumentative skills. Topics to be discussed include the existence of God, the nature of knowledge, the relation of mind to body, free will, and ethics and the nature of right and wrong.

Learning Goals

- Acquaint students with some of the important positions and arguments on a number of central questions in Western philosophy. Critically examine philosophical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production. [AHO]

- Effectively communicate philosophical ideas and arguments; evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly; and analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights [WCd]

- Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience, and respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, &/or supervisors through successive drafts & revision. [WCr]

- Improve students' skills at a) identifying and articulating arguments in texts, b) analyzing and criticizing those arguments, and c) explaining and defending their own philosophical views.

Course Format

Philosophy 104 involves both lecture and discussion section. Lectures by Professor Glanzberg will be Asynchronous. Videos and other lecture material will be available on the Canvas site. Generally, lectures will be made available weekly. In addition, each student is assigned to a discussion section led by a teaching assistant. There are 12 discussion sections. It is important that you know which section you are signed up for, and that you attend the correct section. Check your class schedule if you are unsure.

Teaching Assistants

Adam Gibbons	ag1371@philosophy.rutgers.edu
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Required text

The Elements of Philosophy: Readings from Past and Present, edited by Tamar Szabó Gendler, Susanna Siegel, and Steven M. Cahn, Oxford University Press, 2008.

Readings

All readings will be drawn from this anthology, but many are available from other sources and some are in the public domain. The text is available both new and used. The readings are not easy: they are not introductions to philosophy but rather examples of it. Though the number of pages in each reading is small, you should expect them to require careful and often slow reading.

Canvas

<https://rutgers.instructure.com/login/canvas>

Login with your NetId.

Evaluation

- Discussion section attendance and participation: 15%

- Section-based assignments: 15%

Your TA will regularly assign small things like online discussion forums, brief homework assignments, and so forth.

- Writing assignments: 70%

You will complete four writing assignments for this course. The first is very short, purely expository, and only worth 5% of your grade. The second assignment is an exercise in constructing an argument, worth 15% of your grade. The final two assignments will be 5-7 page argumentative papers. These will be due in three parts: a “prewrite”, a first draft, and a final draft (The class meets Core Curriculum Requirement WCr.). The prewrite will not be graded, but simply marked as complete/incomplete; if you do not do it, your final draft will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade. The first drafts will be graded and worth 5% for third assignment and 10% for the fourth assignment; the final drafts will be graded and worth 15% for the third assignment and 20% for the fourth assignment. More details on the writing assignments to come, of course.

Grading Policies

1. Extensions can be granted on papers, but you have to talk to your at least 24 hours in advance. If you do not make arrangements beforehand, late papers will be downgraded by 1/3 letter grade per day.

2. To pass this class, you must complete all four writing assignments and at least 50% of your section-based assignments.

Notes on Academic Integrity

1. Every student is required to adhere to Rutgers’ Academic Integrity Policy:

<https://nbprovost.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-students>

It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with this policy, and what constitutes a violation of it. All work submitted must be your own, and all sources must be properly cited. Changing a few words from an online source does not make the material your own.

2. All papers will be submitted to Turnitin.com (via Canvas) for the detection of plagiarism. Further, all papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com service is subject to the usage policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

3. Students are not permitted to buy or sell any course materials, online or otherwise. This includes handouts, paper topics, homework questions, slides, etc. Such behavior constitutes academic misconduct.

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>.

A Special Note

Obviously, this course and most likely all your courses will be run differently than normal due to the COVID-19 situation. This will present some unique challenges, and may also raise some unique concerns. Feel free to discuss any concerns or issues that arise during the semester with Professor Glanzberg or your TA.

Tentative Schedule

Notes:

- This will certainly change somewhat. There is slack at the end to catch up, as we will likely fall behind schedule.
- I have included the dates that lectures would have happened if we were meeting in person. This is just for reference (both for you and me) of how things would have gone in more normal times. Lectures are Asynchronous, so the specific dates don't mean anything.

Introduction

Week 1 (September 3)	Organization and introduction Blackburn, "What is Philosophy"
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The Existence of God

Week 2 (September 7, 10)	Anselm, "The Ontological Argument" Guanilo, "In Behalf of the Fool" Moore, "Is Existence a Predicate?" Rowe, "Why the Ontological Argument Fails"
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Freedom of Will

Week 3 (September 14, 17) September 14, Assignment 1 due	Ayer, "Freedom and Necessity"
Week 4 (September 21, 24)	Chisolm, "Human Freedom and the Self" Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment"

Knowledge and the World

Week 5 (September 28) September 28, Assignment 2 due	Chalmers, "The Matrix as Metaphysics"
Week 5 continued (October 1)	Stoljar, "Physicalism"

More on the Mind

Week 6 (October 5, 8) October 5, Assignment 3 topics circulated	Jackson, "The Knowledge Argument" Nagel, "What is it Like to be a Bat?"
Week 7 (October 12, 15) October 12, Assignment 3 prewrite due	Dennet, "Quining Qualia" Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence"
Week 8 (October 19) October 19, Assignment 3 draft due	Searle, "Can Computers Think?"

Ethics

Week 8 continued (October 22) Mill, "Utilitarianism" section labeled Chapter 2 only

Week 9 (October 26, 29) Mill, continued
Smart, "Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism"

October 26, drafts returned

Week 10 (November 2, 5) Kant, "Selections from the Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals"
November 2, Assignment 3 final version due

Week 11 (November 9, 12) Kant continued
O'Neill, "A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics"

November 9, Assignment 4 topics circulated

Week 12 (November 16, 19) Thomson, "The Trolley Problem"
Wolf, "Moral Saints"

November 16, Assignment 4 prewrite due

Week 13 (November 23) Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"
(Thanksgiving is November 26, so we'll have a light week)

November 23, Assignment 4 draft due

Life and Death

Week 14
(November 30, December 3) Nagel, "The Absurd"
Nagel, "Death"
(NB a good chance we will have fallen behind and will not get to these)

November 30, drafts returned

Week 15 (December 7, 10) Catch-up and review

December 7, Assignment 4 final version due