

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy 103 -- Fall Term 2020

Professor Stephen Stich

Syllabus Part II – Topics and Readings

Textbook: *Philosophy: Asking Questions – Seeking Answers* by Stephen Stich & Tom Donaldson (Oxford University Press, 2019). New and used copies of the textbook can be purchased on Amazon and on many other online booksellers. There is a digital version available here: [HERE](#).

In the reading assignments below, the textbook is abbreviated **S&D**.

All assigned and recommended readings that are not in the textbook and don't include an internet link are in the Resources folder on the class Sakai website and in the Files folder on the class Canvas website.

Assigned reading, listening and viewing should be completed **before** the class for which they are assigned.

Please Note: Revised and updated versions of the *Topics and Readings* may be posted from time to time. Whenever a change is made, it will be announced in class and in the Announcements section on class Sakai and Canvas sites.

September 2

Topics:

- (i) Introduction to the Course
- (ii) What Is Philosophy?

Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Preface & Chapter 1 “What Is Philosophy?” Introduction, pp. xi-xvi & 1-6
- (ii) Plato, *Apology*

Listening:

Philosophy Bites Podcast: “What Is Philosophy?” (Click [HERE](#)) Listen to the whole podcast if you have time, but be sure to listen thru 10:53 (= 10 minutes, 53 seconds)

September 8 (This week only, Monday classes meet on Tuesday)

Topic:

The Philosophy of Religion – Basic Questions & Important Distinctions

Reading:

- S&D**, Chapter 2, “What Are Arguments, and How Should We Evaluate Them?” pp. 7-28
- S&D**, Chapter 3, “Does God Exist?” pp. 29-31

September 9

Topics:

- (ii) The First Cause Argument
- (iii) Leibniz's Cosmological Argument

Reading:

S&D, Ch. 3, “Does God Exist?” pp. 31-38

Listening (Strongly recommended, but not required): The BBC debate between Frederick Copleston & Bertrand Russell
Part 1 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BWFpBTgSN0>), and
Part 2 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7kJOENaNo>)
Each part is about 9 minutes.

September 14

Topic:

The Design Argument (a.k.a. The Teleological Argument)

Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Chapter 3, "Does God Exist?" pp. 38-46
- (ii) Paley, "Natural Theology"
- (iii) **(Recommended but not required):** Selections from Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Parts 2, 5 & 9)

Viewing: (Strongly recommended but not required): "Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2xyrel-2vl>). This is a well-made and very engaging video. But it's almost 2 hours long, and some of the best material is toward the end.)

September 16

Topics:

- (i) Anselm's Ontological Argument
- (ii) Alvin Plantinga and the *Sensus Divinitatis*

Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Chapter 3, "Does God Exist?" pp. 46-50
- (ii) "An interview with Alvin Plantinga"

September 21

Topic:

- (i) Pragmatic Arguments for God's Existence: The Ethics of Belief & Pascal's Wager

Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Chapter 3, "Does God Exist?" pp. 50-58
- (ii) Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief," pp. 1-6
- (iii) Saka, "Pascal's Wager About God"

September 23

Topic: The Problem of Evil & Other Arguments Against the Existence of God

Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 4, "Why Does God Leave Us to Suffer?" pp. 59-75
- (ii) John Mackie, "Free Will and the Problem of Evil"
- (ii) **(Recommended but not required):** Selection from Hume's *Dialogues* (Part 10)

September 28

Topic: Can We Be Completely Certain of Anything?

Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 5, "Can We Be Completely Certain of Anything?" pp. 77-95
- (ii) Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, First Meditation, pp. 1-4
- (ii) **(Recommended but not required):** Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, pp. 4-19

Viewing: (Strongly recommended but not required): *The Matrix* (the classic film directed by Lana & Lilly Wachowski). The Wachowskis got the basic idea from Descartes! If you haven't seen it, you definitely should. If you have seen it, you might want to watch it again. It is available on YouTube for \$3.99.

September 30

Topic: Can We Trust Our Senses?

Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 6, "Can We Trust Our Senses?" pp. 97-106
- (ii) **(Recommended but not required):** Locke, Selections from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*

October 5

Topic: Can We Trust Our Senses? (continued)

Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 6, "Can We Trust Our Senses?" pp. 106-119
- (ii) **(Recommended but not required):** Berkeley, Selections from *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous* (If you would like to read more than this brief selection, a link to the complete text of Berkeley's *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous* is available the course Sakai site.)

October 7

Topic: The Problem of Induction

Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 7, "Will the Sun Rise Tomorrow?" pp. 121-139
- (ii) **(Recommended but not required):** Hume, Selections from *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*
- (iii) **(Recommended but not required):** Salmon, "An Encounter With David Hume"

October 12

Topic: Epistemology a.k.a. The Theory of Knowledge

Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 8, "What Is Knowledge?" pp. 141-150

October 14

Topic: Epistemology a.k.a. The Theory of Knowledge

Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 8, "What Is Knowledge?" pp. 150-159
- (ii) Christina Starman & Ori Friedman, "Expert or Esoteric? Philosophers attribute Knowledge Differently Than All Other Academics"

October 19

Mid-Term Exam Review

October 21

There will be no regular classes on October 21. On October 21, 22 & 23, each student will schedule a 20 minute oral exam. Questions will be distributed in advance.

October 26

Topic: Free Will

Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 9, "Do We Have Free Will?" pp. 161-170
- (ii) **(Recommended but not required):** Hume, "Of Liberty and Necessity," = Section 8 of Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, available online at <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/hume1748.pdf>

October 28

Topic:

Free Will

Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 9, “Do We Have Free Will?” pp. 170-177
- (ii) **(Recommended but not required)**: William James, “The Dilemma of Determinism”

November 2

Topic: The Philosophy of Mind: Dualism & Behaviorism

Reading:

S&D, Ch. 10, “How Is Your Mind Related to Your Body?” pp. 179-193

November 4

Topic: The Philosophy of Mind: The Mind-Brain Identity Theory & Functionalism

Reading:

S&D, Ch. 10, “How Is Your Mind Related to Your Body?” pp. 193-210

November 9

Topic: Personal Identity: The Soul Theory

Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 11, “Will You Be the Same Person in Ten Years? Could You Survive Death?” pp. 213-221
- (ii) Perry, *A Dialogue on Personal Identity & Immortality*, The First Night

November 11

Topic: Personal Identity

Reading:

- i) **S&D**, Ch. 11, “Will You Be the Same Person in Ten Years? Could You Survive Death?” pp. 221-242
- ii) Perry, *A Dialogue on Personal Identity & Immortality*, The Second Night & The Third Night

November 16

Topic: Applied Ethics – Poverty, Vegetarianism, Abortion

Reading:

S&D, Ch. 15, “What Should We Do? (Part II)” pp. 309-332

Viewing:

TED Talk: Peter Singer “The Why and How of Effective Altruism” (Click [HERE](#))

Listening (Strongly recommended, but not required):

Philosophy Bites Podcast: Jeff McMahan on vegetarianism (Click [HERE](#))

Practical Ethics Bites Podcast: Rebecca Roache “The Rights & Wrongs of Abortion” (Click [HERE](#))

November 18

Topic: Normative Ethics, Part 1: What Really Matters?

Reading:

S&D, Ch. 13, “What Really Matters?” pp. 267-285

Listening:

Philosophy Bites Podcast: Susan Wolf on the meaning of life (Click [HERE](#))

November 23

Topic: Normative Ethics, Part 2: Utilitarianism & Kantian Ethics

Reading:

S&D, Ch. 14, "What Should We Do? (Part I)" pp. 287-308

November 30

Topic: Critical Ethics (a.k.a. Meta-Ethics) Part 1: The Divine Command Theory & Cultural Relativism

Reading:

S&D, Ch. 12, "Are There Objective Truths About Right and Wrong?" pp. 243-253

Viewing:

Stephen Darwall on God and Morality, Parts 1 & 2 (Click [HERE](#) and [HERE](#))

December 2

Topic: Critical Ethics (a.k.a. Meta-Ethics) Part 2: Subjectivism, Expressivism and the Qualified Attitude Theory

Reading:

S&D, Ch. 12, "Are There Objective Truths About Right and Wrong?" pp. 253-266

December 7

Topic: Race - Is Race an Illusion?

Reading:

Joshua Glasgow, "Is Race an Illusion or a (Very) Basic Reality?"

Viewing:

Race: The Power of an Illusion – Episode 1, "The Difference Between Us" (Click [HERE](#))

December 9

Topic: Race – Is Race a Social Construction

Reading:

Sally Haslanger, "Tracing the Sociopolitical Reality of Race"

Viewing:

Race: The Power of an Illusion – Episode 2, "The Story We Tell" (Click [HERE](#))