

PHIL 103
Introduction to Philosophy
Fall 2021

Professor Michael Glanzberg

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106 Somerset St., 5th floor, Room TBA (probably 520, but I'm moving offices)

Office hours: Wednesdays 12:00-1:00 (in person, situation permitting, or via Zoom) and by appointment

Course Format

T/TH 1:00-2:20

Via Zoom

Canvas

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

Login with your NetId.

Grader

Ang Li, al937@linguistics.rutgers.edu

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

- This course satisfied the Core Curriculum Goal AHo: "Examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production."
- In addition, it will help 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.
- It will also help students to communicate complex ideas effectively.

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. (Available at the Bookstore, and on Amazon, etc. The text is available both new and used.)

Readings

All readings will be drawn from this anthology, but many are available from other sources and some are in the public domain. You are welcome to access the readings any way you like, but you will need to find them somewhere.

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.

Evaluation

- Two short assignments. These are warm-up exercises to get you used to writing about philosophy. They will be counted as follows:

- Assignment 1: 5%
- Assignment 2: 10%
- Two exams: Midterm and Final, both take-home. They will be counted as:
 - Midterm: 25%
 - Final: 35%
- Short paper, 3-5 pages, 25%

Grading Policies

1. Extensions can be granted on papers, but they have to be approved at least 24 hours in advance (barring serious and documented medical or family emergencies). 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 the 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 work 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>.

Tentative Schedule

Note: This will certainly change somewhat. There is slack at the end to catch up, as we will likely fall behind schedule.

Introduction

Week 1 (September 2)

Organization and introduction
Blackburn, "What is Philosophy"

The Existence of God

Week 2 (September 7, 9) Anselm, "The Ontological Argument"
Guanilo, "In Behalf of the Fool"
Moore, "Is Existence a Predicate?"
Rowe, "Why the Ontological Argument Fails"

Freedom of Will

Week 3 (September 14, 16) Ayer, "Freedom and Necessity"

September 14, Assignment 1 circulated (short)

September 16, Assignment 1 due

Week 4 (September 21, 23) Chisolm, "Human Freedom and the Self"
Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment"

Knowledge and the World

Week 5 (September 28, 30) Chalmers, "The Matrix as Metaphysics"
Stoljar, "Physicalism"

September 28, Assignment 2 circulated (short, but longer than assignment 1)

September 30, Assignment 2 due

More on the Mind

Week 6 (October 5, 7) Chakrabarti, "Understanding Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Dualism"
Jackson, "The Knowledge Argument"

Week 7 (October 12, 14) Nagel, "What is it Like to be a Bat?"
Dennet, "Quining Qualia"

Week 8 (October 19, 21) Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence"
Searle, "Can Computers Think?"

October 19, take-home midterm circulated

October 21, take-home midterm due

Ethics

Week 9 (October 26, 28) Mill, "Utilitarianism" section labeled Chapter 2 only

Week 10 (November 2, 4) Smart, "Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism"
Kant, "Selections from the Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals"

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

Week 12 (November 16, 18) Thomson, "The Trolley Problem"
Wolf, "Moral Saints"

Week 13 (November 23) Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"
(Thanksgiving is November 25, so we'll have a light week)

November 23, paper topics circulated

Life and Death

Week 14 Nagel, "The Absurd"
(November 30, December 2) Nagel, "Death"
(NB a good chance we will have fallen behind and will not get to these)

December 2, paper due

Week 15 (December 7, 9)

Catch-up and review

Take-Home Final Exam

Circulated December 16

Due December 23, by noon (the official exam time for the course)

Key Dates

September 16, Assignment 1 due

September 30, Assignment 2 due

October 21, take-home midterm due

December 2, paper due

Due December 23, take-home final due by noon (the official exam time for the course)