



PHI 103

Introduction to Philosophy

M 11:30-12:50, F 1:10-2:30

SC-205



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Office Hours: W 1-2 PM or by appointment

This syllabus may be modified to fit the needs of the course. Any such change will be announced.

Course Description: This course is an introduction to key questions, texts, and methods of the western philosophical tradition. Students will be assigned readings on several key questions in analytic philosophy, taught to read philosophical writing, and to analyze philosophical arguments.

Credit Hours: 3

Text(s): No books required. Readings will be provided by the instructor via sakai.

Course Objectives:

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Learn how to read philosophy texts, with an emphasis on argument extraction and reconstruction
2. Learn about the conversations sparked by several important questions within western philosophy
3. Discuss their readings with peers and with the instructor
4. Learn to develop and present their own thoughts on important philosophical issues

Grade Distribution:

Reading Quizzes	20%
Question Summaries	30%
Attendance and Participation	10%
Final Presentation	40%

Letter Grade Distribution:

≥ 93.00	A	70.00 - 79.99	C
90.00 - 92.99	B+	60.00 - 69.99	D
83.00 - 89.99	B	≤ 59.99	F
80.00 - 82.99	C+		

Course Policies:

• Grades and Grading

- Grades in the **C** range represent performance that **meets expectations**; Grades in the **B** range represent performance that is **substantially better** than the expectations; Grades in the **A** range represent work that is **excellent**.
- The instructor will maintain a gradebook. Students may request progress reports at any time.
- Grading for this course will be blind. Students are required to use their RUID numbers in place of names on all assignments.
- Late work will not be accepted except in extraordinary circumstances. Students wishing to submit late work must contact the instructor with a good reason for missing the deadline. The instructor reserves the right to reject any late work for any reason or to impose any late penalty the instructor deems reasonable.

• Readings

- It is expected that students complete all reading assignments prior to the class in which they are to be discussed.
- All readings will be provided by the instructor.

• Daily Quizzes

- In each class session for which readings are assigned, a short quiz drawn from the readings will be given
- The student's four lowest quiz scores will not count against the final score
- Daily Quizzes cannot be taken late, for any reason

• Question Summaries

- The course centers around readings on (some) important philosophical questions. Students will have the opportunity to pick 3 of these questions to explore in more depth, by writing a question summary.
- A question summary is an essay, at least 500 words in length, which summarizes the major positions in some philosophical debate.
- Question summaries must be written in clear English, with proper spelling and grammar.
- Question summaries must include the following:
 - * A clear statement of the question
 - * A brief summary of the major answers to the question, including those we explored in class but involving at least one which the student has located through their own research.

- * A clear statement of the student's preferred answer, with some reasoning in support.

- **Final Presentation**

- The capstone project for this course will be a presentation on some philosophical question. Each student will be expected to give a 10-minute presentation, followed by a 5 minute question-and-answer session giving the rest of the class an opportunity to ask questions.
- The presentation must take up one of the questions the student explored in their question summary assignments, it must provide an answer to the question and it must provide a philosophical argument or arguments in defense of that answer.
- In addition to the presentation, each student must prepare a handout and a bibliography. These will constitute 20% of the presentation grade. The bibliography should follow the most recent edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
- It is expected that students will explore lines of argumentation that go beyond the material included in the course readings.
- It is expected that students will conduct research adequate to their thesis, including the use of not less than 5 reputable scholarly sources (no wikipedia) beyond the course readings.

- **Attendance and Absences**

- Rutgers requires: "Students are expected to attend all classes; 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."
- Attendance is expected and will be taken each class. Completion of the daily reading quiz is necessary for the student to count as having attended class.
- Excused absences will be at the discretion of the instructor. They will be granted sparingly. Things like medical problems, family emergencies, and religious observances are good reasons. Schedule conflicts and forgetfulness are not.
- Students are responsible for all missed work, regardless of the reason for absence. It is also the absentee's responsibility to get all missing notes or materials. All assignments will be turned in in class. It is the absentee's responsibility to make other arrangements for an excused absence. No arrangement will be made for unexcused absences.
- Attendance on the days when other students are giving their final presentations is very important. As a result, half of the attendance and participation grade will be determined by attendance during these sessions (5% of total grade). The other half will be determined by attendance in the other class sessions.
- This policy will take effect at the end of add/drop.

Academic Honesty Policy Summary:

Introduction

In addition to skills and knowledge, Rutgers aims to teach students appropriate Ethical and Professional Standards of Conduct. The Academic Honesty Policy exists to inform students and Faculty of their obligations in upholding the highest standards of professional and ethical integrity. All student work is subject to the Academic Honesty Policy. Professional and Academic practice provides guidance about how to properly cite, reference, and attribute the intellectual

property of others. Any attempt to deceive a faculty member or to help another student to do so will be considered a violation of this standard. It is important to keep in mind that if you use material from an on-line source (or any other source), you must acknowledge this and provide a reference to the source. Changing a few words in the material that you have borrowed does not exempt you from this requirement. For additional information on the Rutgers University policies on academic integrity, go to <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>.

Consequences

An instructor may impose a sanction on the student that varies depending upon the instructor's evaluation of the nature and gravity of the offense. Possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) Require the student to redo the assignment; (2) Require the student to complete another assignment; (3) Assign a grade of zero to the assignment; (4) Assign a final grade of "F" for the course. Any violations of this policy will result in a referral to the Office of Student Conduct for possible additional sanctions.

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 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.

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/> The Office of Disability Services works with students with a documented disability to determine the eligibility of reasonable accommodations, facilitates and coordinates those accommodations when applicable, and lastly engages with the Rutgers community at large to provide and connect students to appropriate resources.

Scarlet Listeners

(732) 247-5555 / <http://www.scarletlisteners.com/> Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.

Course Schedule:

A detailed course schedule will be released when the add/drop period ends, because the number of students enrolled in the course will determine how many class sessions will be devoted to student presentations. Here is the schedule for the first two weeks, and a list of questions we will take up throughout the course.

Readings:

W 1/17 Introduction

F 1/19 Plato, *Crito*

W 1/24 Robin Collins, "God, Design, and Fine-Tuning."

F 1/26 Sean Carroll, "Does the Universe Need God?"

Questions to be addressed:

Metaphysics

- Is there a God?
- Do humans have free will?
- Is the world wholly physical?
- What makes for personal identity?

Epistemology

- Are we justified in believing in an external world?
- What is knowledge?

Ethics

- Is there objective morality?
- What makes right actions right?
- What is justice?
- What are our duties to the less fortunate?