

Introduction to Philosophy

Spring 2018

Rutgers College Ave

01:730:103:90

Instructor: Peter V. Warden

Instructor email: petervwarden@gmail.com

Course Description:

In this course, we will be exploring what it is that makes a human person just the way they are; what kind of frameworks humans have used for deciding how they should conduct themselves (Ethics); what is the part of us that thinks and is that part contiguous with our physical self, identical to our physical self, or wholly other than our physical self? And we will be reading historically important philosophers (in what we now call the Philosophy of Mind) who hold variously to each of these positions! We will also be looking at ways of conceiving the basic structure of the world around us (Cosmology and Metaphysics) if not in this course the creation of that world (Cosmogony). We will wind up with a consideration of various modes of Epistemology, and in particular the skepticism heralded by Descartes' famous *Meditations* and never quite completely resolved to everyone's satisfaction! And finally, toward the very end of the course, we will take a look at how the human person is interacting with Technology and also the Environment—which two questions these days are not always unrelated, and of ever increasing importance for the life and world of the human and non-human inhabitants of this earth.

Course Material:

All readings for this course will be made available through Sakai. Lectures and assignments for the course will be posted weekly.

Grading Scale:

A	B+	B	C+	C	D	F
85-100	80-84	70-79	65-69	55-64	50-54	0-49

Grading Scheme

Weekly Forum Posts:	15%	(begins week 3)
Quizzes:	25%	(throughout semester)
Short Response Papers	15%	(begins week 2)
Philosophical Papers	20%	(10% each)
Short Exams	20%	(10% each)

The weekly **forum posts** will be graded more upon existential criteria than aesthetic or logical/syntactical criteria. The **quizzes** will be short and with few tricks, more just to gauge whether people have read the assignments or not. The **short response papers** will not be held to the same rigorous standards as the

philosophical papers—and will be very brief and informal—more designed to get a litmus on how people are perceiving and digesting the material in the course. The **philosophical papers** on the other hand must be well organized and argued, and we will discuss these themes well in advance of any paper due dates. The two **short exams** will be thematic in nature, and not so much data or historical factually focused. These schema are provisional, and subject to some addition and/or subtraction as the semester goes along—all of which will be clearly updated and published if need be.

Reading Schedule for January and February:

Weeks 1 & 2: (1/16 to 1/26)

Plato's *Meno*. We will be reading the text of the *Meno* in its entirety. The text is available on the Sakai site and also all over the web and in the library as well.

Weeks 3&4: (1/29 to 2/9)

Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* and Plato's *Republic*. These two seminal texts will be featured in the third and fourth weeks, with a view toward a better understanding of some of the crucial foundations of philosophy, ethical theory, and social political theory in the Western hemisphere and world.

7. Academic Honesty

Students caught plagiarizing in forum posts or essays will be subject to consequences depending on the severity of the offense. In the worst case, students violating this policy may receive an F for the course and the case may be reported to the Rutgers Office of Student Conduct. Students are advised to familiarize themselves with the current Rutgers policy on academic integrity located at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>.

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.