

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY/Phil 103

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

SPRING 2019

INSTRUCTOR

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a broad introduction to academic philosophy. This discipline is notoriously hard to define; however, we can say that philosophy—which etymological derives from two greek words meaning “love of wisdom”—concerns thinking hard about life’s most important questions. Particularly, in this course we will examine the following questions: Do we know there is an external world? Does God exist? How one ought to live? Moreover, we will learn the tools by which philosophers answer these questions.

OFFICE HOURS

These will take place by appointment or via Skype. Please feel free to email me anytime to book an appointment.

COURSE TEXTS

There is no course textbook. PDF copies of the readings are uploaded to Sakai.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the main areas of philosophy—particularly, epistemology, philosophy of religion, and ethics.
2. To evaluate the arguments for the main positions which we will consider in the above subdisciplines.
3. To write a substantial, argumentative paper in philosophy.

EVALUATION

Exams: Midterm (20%)/Final (20%) = 40% total

Papers: 3-5 page paper (10%), 5-7 page paper (20%) = 30% total

Weekly Discussion Board posts: 15 = 15 % total

Weekly Quizzes: 15 = 15 % total

Exams: there will be a midterm and a final exam; the final will not be cumulative.

Papers: there will be two papers, one short and one long due towards the end of the semester. More information on how to complete the papers will be uploaded to Sakai in due time.

Discussion Posts: You will be required to write 7 original discussion posts, and 7 comments on an original post, throughout the semester.

Weekly Quizzes: There will be weekly quizzes on the readings.

Important Dates:

Quizzes: (each week by Sunday)

Discussion Posts: (1 each week, 7 original and 7 comments on original)

Paper 1: March 10th

Paper 2: May 5th

Midterm (online): March 15th

Final (in person): TBA

Note: To be successful on this course, you should read every assigned article (slowly) at least once, and hopefully twice. Additionally, you must watch every assigned unit video.

GRADING SCALE

> 90.00 A

88.00 - 89.00 B+

83.00 - 87.99 B

80.00 - 82.99 C+

70.00 - 79.99 C

60.00 - 69.99 D

<= 59.99 F

Jan 22-27: Introduce yourself

- Write a discussion post stating your name, major, and why you are interested in philosophy

I. PHILOSOPHICAL PRELIMINARIES (Weeks 1-2; Jan 28-Feb 3)¹

E.J. Coffman, "Finding, Clarifying, and Evaluating Arguments"

Jim Pryor, "Philosophical Terms & Methods"

Jim Pryor, "Guidelines on Reading Philosophy"

Quiz 1: Coffman/Pryor, by Sunday, February 3rd.

Watch videos 1-6 in the following playlist:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtKNX4SfKpzWFyj7ZF6v0shrCdL0XcdrJ>

¹ This schedule is not a contract and is subject to change as per the instructor's judgment.

II. SKEPTICISM (Weeks 3-7; Feb 4- Mar 10)

Rene Descartes, *First Meditation* and *Second Meditation*

Peter Unger, "An Argument for Skepticism"

Douven and Olders, "Unger Revisited"

G.E. Moore, "Proof of an External World"

Barry Stroud, "The Problem of the External World"

Watch Videos 5, 9-13 in this playlist:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtKNX4SfKpzWo1oasZmNPOzZaQdHw3TIE>

Quiz 2: Descartes, by February 10th.

Quiz 3: Unger, by Feb 17

Quiz 4: Douven and Olders Feb 24

Quiz 5: Moore's "Proof" Mar 3

Quiz 6: Stroud, by Mar 10

Paper 1 due: March 10

MIDTERM: MARCH 15 BY 11:59PM

SPRING BREAK: MAR 16-24

III. PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION (Weeks 8-11; Mar 11-Apr 14)

THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

Thomas Aquinas, "The Five Ways"

Conee, Ch 4 "God" in *Riddles of Existence*

William Rowe, "The Cosmological Argument"

- "Religion: Cosmological Argument 1 and 2" or numbers 5-6 on the following playlist:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtKNX4SfKpzWO758QwHqq1pJkba4LaRZ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmTsS5xFA6k>

- "Aquinas and Cosmological Arguments" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TgishuGOyY>)

Quiz 7: Aquinas Mar 31

Quiz 8: Conee Apr 7

Quiz 9: Rowe Apr 14

THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

Anselm, "The Ontological Argument"

Gaunilo, "On Behalf of the Fool"

William Rowe, "The Ontological Argument"

Conee, Ch 5 "Why Not Nothing?" in *Riddles of Existence (OUP)*

Videos:

- "Anselm and the Ontological Argument" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmTsS5xFA6k>

Quiz 10: Anselm, Apr 21

RATIONALITY OF THEISM

W.K. Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief"

(http://people.brandeis.edu/~teuber/Clifford_ethics.pdf)

William James, "The Will to Believe"

(<https://www.mnsu.edu/philosophy/THEWILLTOBELIEVEbyJames.pdf>)

Kelly James Clark, "Without Evidence or Argument"

(http://people.brandeis.edu/~teuber/without_evidence_or_argument.pdf)

Videos:

- "The Will to Believe" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uzmLXIuAspQ>
- "Faith and Reason" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTPHXNMi9tA>

Quiz 11 Clifford, Apr 28

Quiz 12 Clark, Apr 28

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Fyodor Dostoevsky, "Rebellion"

J.L. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence"

Richard Swinburne, "Why God Allows Evil"

Watch videos 1-4 on the following playlist:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtKNX4SfKpzWO758QwHqq1pJkbb4LaRZ>

Quiz 13: May 5

IV. ETHICS (Weeks 12-15; Apr 15 - end)

Conee, "The Metaphysics of Ethics" in *Riddles of Existence* (OUP)

LaFollete "Theorizing About Ethics"

(http://www.normanschultz.com/ethics/LaFollette_intro.pdf?i=1)

Thomas Nagel, "Moral Luck"

<https://www.iep.utm.edu/ethics/>

Videos 10, 12-19, 26,27 in the following playlist:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-V8t8beCnnY&list=PLtKNX4SfKpzWO2Yjvkv-hMS0gTI948pIS>

Quiz 14: Conee, May 9

Quiz 15: Freebie

Paper 2 due: May 5th

Final Exam IN CLASS: TBA

STUDENT WELLNESS

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.

HELPFUL PHILOSOPHY RESOURCES

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu>

Dictionary of Philosophy of Mind: <http://philosophy.uwaterloo.ca/MindDict/>

David Chalmers' bibliography of Philosophy of Mind: <http://consc.net/biblio.html>