

PHIL101-01: PROBLEMS IN PHILOSOPHY

MWF 12:30-1:35

Bogar 102

Instructor

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Office hours: MWF 2:00-3:00 and by appointment

Course Description

This is a general introduction to philosophy, designed to acquaint students with certain significant problems as they are considered by major philosophical figures. These are not esoteric questions but instead ones central to ordinary human experience. Students will be encouraged to formulate and defend their own answers to these questions, using the concepts and methods of inquiry introduced in the course. This process will help improve students' abilities to think more critically and to communicate with greater clarity and precision.

This course counts towards the Ethics requirements of the central curriculum, with the following learning goals:

- Articulate the implications of ethical questions for human life.
- Demonstrate an understanding of multiple theories for evaluating normative ethical claims.
- Use these theories to evaluate specified ethical claims.
- Take and justify an ethical position.
- Address the question of who or what is to be included in moral consideration.

Core Text

- Perry, Bratman, and Fischer (eds.), *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, Fifth Edition (2009: Oxford: ISBN: 978-0-1953-9036-0)

(Additional readings will be available in PDF format on my website, www.typtoken.com. These are indicated under the course schedule below as “[WEB]”).

Course Requirements

Your final grade will depend on the percentage you earn of the total points possible in the class:

A+: 97-100; A: 94-96; A-: 90-93; B+: 87-89; B: 84-86; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-79; C: 74-76; C-: 70-73; D+: 67-69;

D: 64-66; D-: 60-63.

Papers

There are two papers assigned during the course of this term. The first paper will be worth 20% of your final grade and will be returned to you with comments. The second paper will be worth 25% of your grade, but will not be returned to you unless specifically requested by you.

- First paper assigned Wednesday, September 26, and due Wednesday, October 10.
- Second paper assigned Friday, November 19, and due Friday, December 7.

Assignments submitted late without explicit extensions or authorized excuses will receive a penalty of one letter grade (10%) per day since the due date. Final papers will not be accepted after December 11 for any reason.

Exams

There will be two exams for this class, with the midterm held on Wednesday, October 10, and the final held Tuesday, December 11, 8:00-10:00 am. The midterm exam is worth 20% of your final grade, and the final exam is worth 25%.

Quizzes

There will be eight short pop quizzes held throughout the term, some during lecture and others during discussion sections. The six quizzes with the *highest* scores will make up 10% of your grade; the two quizzes with the *lowest* scores will be dropped. Quizzes will last approximately five minutes, and will focus on the readings assigned for the day the quiz is held, or readings from that week.

Special Accommodations

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the university makes efforts to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. To be considered for disability accommodations, the student should forward recent documentation of the disability to the director of the counseling center. Full information about the required documentation and steps for obtaining accommodations is discussed in the disabilities policy available at www.susqu.edu/counseling/disabilities.htm.

Classroom Courtesy

Please be courteous to your fellow students and avoid unnecessary disruptions. Arrive on time, leave on time, and *turn off your cell phone during class*. Note that if your cell phone rings during class, *I will answer it*. Laptops are permitted in class, but please do not abuse this privilege. Text-messaging is *not* permitted during my class. If I see you text-messaging during class-time, your participation grade will be deducted 1 point. This is your only warning.

Academic Honesty

I take incidences of academic dishonesty *very* seriously. Plagiarism or cheating of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in failing the class. Any instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the university judicial board. It is your responsibility to read and abide by the university's policy on plagiarism (<http://www.susqu.edu/studentlife/16594.asp>).

Course Schedule

Topic	Date	Readings	Assignments
Introduction	(M) Aug 27	<i>No Readings</i>	
Arguments	(W) Aug 20	<i>No Readings</i>	
The Meaning of Life	(F) Aug 31	Albert Camus: "The Myth of Sisyphus"; Thomas Nagel: "The Absurd"	
	(M) Sept 3	Richard Taylor: "The Meaning of Human Existence"	
	(W) Sept 5	Raymond Martin: "A Fast Car and a Good Woman" [WEB]	
	(F) Sept 7	<i>(discussion)</i>	
Ethics	(M) Sept 10	Aristotle: "Nicomachean Ethics"	
	(W) Sept 12	Thomas Nagel: "Aristotle on <i>Eudaimonia</i> "	
	(F) Sept 14	<i>(discussion)</i>	
	(M) Sept 17	Jeremy Bentham: "The Principle of Utility"; John Stuart Mill: "Utilitarianism"	
	(W) Sept 19	Peter Singer: "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"	
	(F) Sept 21	<i>(discussion)</i>	

	(M) Sept 24	Immanuel Kant: "Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals"	
	(W) Sept 26	Onora O'Neill: "Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems"	Paper #1 Assigned
	(F) Sept 28	<i>(discussion)</i>	
	(M) Oct 1	John Rawls: "A Theory of Justice"	
	(W) Oct 3	J.L. Mackie: "The Subjectivity of Values"	
	(F) Oct 5	<i>(discussion)</i>	
Midterm Review	(M) Oct 8	<i>No Readings</i>	
Midterm Exam	(W) Oct 10	<i>No Readings</i>	Paper #1 Due
Minds & Consciousness	(F) Oct 12	René Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> I and II	
	(M) Oct 15	<i>No Class</i>	
	(W) Oct 17	David Armstrong, "The Nature of the Mind"	
	(F) Oct 19	<i>(discussion)</i>	
	(M) Oct 22	A.M. Turing: "Computing Machinery and Intelligence"	
	(W) Oct 24	<i>No Class</i>	
	(F) Oct 26	<i>No Class</i>	
	(M) Oct 29	John Searle: "Minds, Brains, and Programs"	
	(W) Oct 31	<i>(discussion)</i>	
	(F) Nov 2	Thomas Nagel: "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?"	
	(M) Nov 5	Frank Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know"; David Lewis, "Knowing What It's Like"	
Personal Identity	(W) Nov 7	<i>(discussion)</i>	
	(F) Nov 9	John Perry: "A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality"	
	(M) Nov 12	Bernard Williams: "The Self and the Future"	
	(W) Nov 14	<i>(discussion)</i>	
	(F) Nov 16	Derek Parfit: "Personal Identity"	
	(M) Nov 19	Daniel Dennett: "Where Am I?"	Paper #2 Assigned
	(W) Nov 21	<i>No Class</i>	
	(F) Nov 23	<i>No Class</i>	
Freedom & Determinism	(M) Nov 26	Roderick M. Chisholm: "Human Freedom and the Self"	
	(W) Nov 28	Peter Van Inwagen: "The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will"	
	(F) Nov 30	<i>(discussion)</i>	
	(M) Dec 3	David Hume: "Of Liberty and Necessity"	
	(W) Dec 5	Richard Taylor: "Freedom and Determinism" [WEB]	
Final Exam Review	(F) Dec 7	<i>No Readings</i>	Paper #2 Due

Final Exam scheduled for Tuesday, December 11, 8:00-10:00 am