

PHIL101-02: PROBLEMS IN PHILOSOPHY

MWF 3:00-4:05

Bogar 213

Instructor

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Office hours: MWF 10:00-11:00 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.tytoken.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, February 15, and due Wednesday, February 29.
- Second paper assigned Monday, April 16, and due Monday, April 30.

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 May 5 for any reason.

Exams

There will be two exams for this class, with the midterm held on Friday, March 2, and the final held Friday, May 4, 11:30-1:30. 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>).

Topic	Date	Readings	Assignments
Introduction	(M) Jan 16	<i>No Readings</i>	
Arguments	(W) Jan 18	<i>No Readings</i>	
The Meaning of Life	(F) Jan 20	Albert Camus: "The Myth of Sisyphus"; Thomas Nagel: "The Absurd"	
	(M) Jan 23	Richard Taylor: "The Meaning of Human Existence"	
	(W) Jan 25	Raymond Martin: "A Fast Car and a Good Woman" [WEB]	
	(F) Jan 27	<i>(discussion)</i>	
Ethics	(M) Jan 30	Aristotle: "Nicomachean Ethics"	
	(W) Feb 1	Thomas Nagel: "Aristotle on <i>Eudaimonia</i> "	
	(F) Feb 3	<i>(discussion)</i>	
	(M) Feb 6	Jeremy Bentham: "The Principle of Utility"; John Stuart Mill: "Utilitarianism"	
	(W) Feb 8	Peter Singer: "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"	
	(F) Feb 10	<i>(discussion)</i>	
	(M) Feb 13	Immanuel Kant: "Groundwork of the	

		Metaphysic of Morals”	
	(W) Feb 15	Onora O’Neill: “Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems”	Paper #1 Assigned
	(F) Feb 17	<i>(discussion)</i>	
	(M) Feb 20	John Rawls: “A Theory of Justice”	
	(W) Feb 22	J.L. Mackie: “The Subjectivity of Values”	
	(F) Feb 24	<i>(discussion)</i>	
	(M) Feb 27	Gilbert Harman: “Ethics and Observation”	
Midterm Review	(W) Feb 29	<i>No Readings</i>	Paper #1 Due
Midterm Exam	(F) Mar 2	<i>No Readings</i>	

March 5-9 *No Classes* (Spring Break)

Minds & Consciousness	(M) Mar 12	René Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> I and II	
	(W) Mar 14	David Armstrong, “The Nature of the Mind”	
	(F) Mar 16	<i>(discussion)</i>	
	(M) Mar 19	A.M. Turing: “Computing Machinery and Intelligence”	
	(W) Mar 21	John Searle: “Minds, Brains, and Programs”	
	(F) Mar 23	<i>(discussion)</i>	
	(M) Mar 26	Thomas Nagel: “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?”	
	(W) Mar 28	Frank Jackson, “What Mary Didn’t Know”; David Lewis, “Knowing What It’s Like”	
Personal Identity	(F) Mar 30	<i>(discussion)</i>	
	(M) Apr 2	John Perry: “A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality”	
	(W) Apr 4	Bernard Williams: “The Self and the Future”	

Apr. 6 & 9 *No Classes* (Easter Break)

	(W) Apr 11	Derek Parfit: “Personal Identity”	
	(F) Apr 13	<i>(discussion)</i>	
	(M) Apr 16	Daniel Dennett: “Where Am I?”	Paper #2 Assigned
Freedom & Determinism	(W) Apr 18	Roderick M. Chisholm: “Human Freedom and the Self”	
	(F) Apr 20	Peter Van Inwagen: “The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will”	
	(M) Apr 23	<i>(discussion)</i>	
	(W) Apr 25	David Hume: “Of Liberty and Necessity”	
	(F) Apr 27	Richard Taylor: “Freedom and Determinism” [WEB]	
Final Exam Review	(M) Apr 30	<i>No Readings</i>	Paper #2 Due

Final Exam scheduled for Friday, May 4, 11:30-1:30