

Philosophy 101: Introduction to Philosophy Syllabus

Summer Session II, 2014
UNC Chapel Hill
Weekdays 9:45am–11:15am
Davie 101

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Office Hours: Wednesdays and Thursdays
11:30am–12:30pm (or by appointment)

1 Course Description

This course is a general introduction to philosophical questions, methods, discussion, reading, and writing. It presumes no background in philosophy. We will be surveying various philosophical topics in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of science. Some examples of questions we will be addressing are: What is the nature of consciousness? Is the mind distinct from the brain? Do we have free will (and if not, what are the consequences for ethics)? Is determinism true (and what is it, exactly)? How do we confirm scientific theories and gain knowledge of the external world? There will be a heavy emphasis on learning to discuss and write about philosophical issues, so class discussion will be an important component of the course.

2 Required Texts

The required text is *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, 6th Edition, ed. John Perry, Michael Bratman, and John Martin Fischer. The book is available in the bookstore or from other retailers. I strongly advise you purchase this book, as all of our readings will come directly from it.

3 Course Requirements

This is a reading intensive course. There will be roughly 7-10 pages of reading every night. This may not sound like a lot, but understanding philosophical texts requires careful reading, often more than once. Most nightly readings should take about an hour and a half, sometimes more for denser readings.

Class time will be spent summarizing and evaluating the readings. To be able to participate appropriately, you should come to class with some questions, confusions, or opinions in mind about the assigned reading. The end of each reading in the course text contains some study questions. Thinking about these is a good way to prepare for class. Simple daily reading quizzes will be given to ensure everyone is doing the readings. (These are designed solely as a reading check; they will not ask substantive philosophical questions.)

You will write three papers throughout the course. Two of them will be 5-7 pages, and the third will be 3-5 pages. Formatting specifications for the papers are in §5 below.

Your grade will be calculated as follows:

- Daily Quizzes: 25%
- Paper 1 (5-7 pages): 25%
- Paper 2 (5-7 pages): 25%
- Paper 3 (3-5 pages): 15%
- Participation: 10%

4 Attendance and Lateness

Since this is a discussion-oriented class, attendance is required, and will factor into your participation grade. Except in extreme circumstances, missing a daily quiz for any reason will result in a zero (though one or two missed quizzes will not have a significant effect on your final course grade). Under no circumstances whatsoever will late papers be accepted. This is a time-limited course, and all relevant deadlines are listed on the schedule below (§8).

5 Paper Formatting Guidelines

Papers will be graded blindly, so your name (or any other identifying information) should not appear anywhere in your submission. Instead, write your student ID number at the top of each page. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman (or similar) font, with 1-inch margins. Outside sources should generally be avoided. When citing the assigned readings, you may use any standard citation style (MLA, Chicago Manual Style, etc.) as long as you are consistent throughout the paper. Papers should be submitted electronically by 5pm on the due date to my email (dorst@live.unc.edu). Acceptable file types are .doc, .docx, and .pdf.

6 Grading

Being able to write and think philosophically is a challenging skill to acquire. Most students will struggle with the first paper, so it is in your interest to attend office hours, email me with questions, and spend time outlining your papers before writing them. I am happy to read paper drafts. Papers will be due on Mondays, and drafts must be submitted by the preceding Thursday if you want my feedback. When I hand back each graded assignment, I will explain how the grades were assigned.

I also recommend reading the introductory chapter to the course text. Pages 15-17 contain sound advice about writing philosophy papers. For additional advice on writing papers, I recommend Jim Pryor's guide to writing philosophy papers, available at the following address:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Pryor's guide to *reading* philosophy is also very useful, and is available at:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>

7 Plagiarism and Honor Code

The UNC Instrument of Student Governance defines plagiarism as “deliberate or reckless representation of another’s words, thoughts, or ideas as one’s own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise.” As students, you are required to observe the honor code. You are not to commit plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty. As instructor, I am required to report any suspicions of plagiarism to the Honor Court. If you are ever in doubt about whether something is acceptable, please contact me. Anything not in quotations should be your own work.

8 Schedule

All readings scheduled for a particular date must be read prior to class on that date. The schedule indicates which papers we will be discussing on that day. Note: *PBF* stands for Perry, Bratman, and Fischer (course text, see §2).

- 6/19: Course Overview
Introduction to Part II: God and Evil (*PBF* pp. 39-41)
- 6/20: William Paley, "Natural Theology" (*PBF* pp. 47-51)
Blaise Pascal, "The Wager" (*PBF* pp. 52-55)
- 6/23: Bertrand Russell, "Why I Am Not a Christian" (*PBF* pp. 56-59)
- 6/24: Introduction to Part III: Knowledge and Reality (*PBF* pp. 121-125)
Plato, *Theaetetus* (*PBF* pp. 126-133)
- 6/25: Descartes, Meditations I and II (*PBF* pp. 136-142)
- 6/26: Descartes, Meditations III and IV (*PBF* pp. 142-151)
- 6/27: Hume, "An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding"
Sections II-V (*PBF* pp. 190-205)
- 6/30: **Paper 1 Due** (email to dorst@live.unc.edu by 5pm)
Hume, "An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding"
Sections VI-VII (*PBF* pp. 205-216)
- 7/1: W. C. Salmon, "The Problem of Induction" (*PBF* pp. 216-226)
- 7/2: W. C. Salmon, "The Problem of Induction" (*PBF* pp. 226-238)
- 7/3: Introduction to Part IV: Minds, Bodies, and Persons (*PBF* pp. 239-246)
Bertrand Russell, "The Argument from Analogy for Other Minds"
(*PBF* pp. 247-249)
- 7/7: Gilbert Ryle, "Descartes's Myth" (*PBF* pp. 250-257)
Frank Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know" (*PBF* pp. 281-284)
- 7/8: John Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs" (*PBF* pp. 298-311)
- 7/9: Bernard Williams, "The Self and the Future" (*PBF* pp. 333-343)
- 7/10: Peter van Inwagen, "The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will"
(*PBF* pp. 385-396)
- 7/11: Harry G. Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility"
(*PBF* pp. 407-413)
- 7/14: **Paper 2 Due** (email to dorst@live.unc.edu by 5pm)
John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism* (*PBF* pp. 460-476)
- 7/15: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (*PBF* pp. 504-520)

- 7/16: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (*PBF* pp. 572-585)
- 7/17: Robert Nozick, "Justice and Entitlement" (*PBF* pp. 585-593)
- 7/18: Susan Wolf, "The Meanings of Lives" (*PBF* pp. 782-793)
- 7/21: Paradoxes and Puzzles: The Paradox of the Heap, The Surprise Examination, Goodman's New Riddle of Induction, The Prisoner's Dilemma, Newcomb's Problem (*PBF* pp. 829-832)
- 7/22: Paradoxes and Puzzles: The Paradox of the Liar, Other Versions of the Liar, Russell's Paradox (*PBF* pp. 835-836)
Lewis Carroll, "What the Tortoise Said to Achilles" (Reading posted on Sakai)
(Last day of class)
- 7/24: **Paper 3 Due** (email to dorst@live.unc.edu by 5pm)