

Philosophy 100

Introduction to Philosophy

Instructor: Chris Dorst
cdorst@salemstate.edu

Course Description

A study is made of the role of philosophy in its relation to all areas of human knowledge. The student is introduced to some of the general questions, ideas, theories, and methods of inquiry which have given direction to Western thought. Students are encouraged to clarify and examine their own ideas regarding knowledge, reality, and value. Three lecture hours per week.

Course Goals

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

Class time will be spent summarizing and evaluating the readings as a group. 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 contains some study questions. Thinking about these is a good way to prepare for class.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Distinguish the various subfields of philosophy and their respective subject matters

- 2) Understand and be able to explain various famous philosophical positions and problems, such as Cartesian skepticism, the problem of induction, and the problem of other minds
- 3) Craft and evaluate philosophical arguments
- 4) Appreciate various reasons that people may hold views contrary to their own.

Grading

Reading Quizzes (20%)

The majority of the assignments in the course will be reading assignments. Assessments will be done in the form of short quizzes covering the readings. These are designed solely as a reading check; they will not ask substantive philosophical questions, and they should be easy if you have done the readings. They will occur every day at the beginning of class. If you miss a reading quiz because of an unexcused absence, you will not be able to make it up. The reading quizzes are designed to help facilitate learning objectives 1, 2, and 4.

Papers (25% each)

You will write two papers for this course. For each paper, you will be given the choice of several prompts, of which you must choose one and write a 4-6 page paper in response. The prompts will concern topics we have read about and discussed in class. The papers give you the opportunity to illustrate your understanding of the material, as well as to develop your own views. The papers are designed to help facilitate learning objectives 2, 3, and 4.

Final Exam (30%)

The Final Exam is scheduled for Thursday, May 11 at 8:00am. The exam will consist of a number of questions, and you will have to choose a certain number of them to answer with a short essay. You *will* be able to reference your notes during the final.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. If you have four or fewer unexcused absences over the course of the semester, I will drop

your lowest three reading quiz grades. (Excused absences do not count toward this total. For an absence to be excused, you must provide reasonable documentation.)

Classes will be a mix of lectures and group discussions. If your participation in these discussions is notably strong, this can help boost your final grade. Coming to office hours and asking questions in or out of class can also help your participation.

Course Text

The textbook for this course is *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, 6th Edition, ed. John Perry, Michael Bratman, and John Martin Fischer. The book is available from the bookstore. All of our readings will come from this book.

Additional Resources

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 give feedback on paper *outlines*. Papers will be due on Fridays, so you must discuss your outline with me by the preceding Wednesday if you want my feedback. 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>

Other Important Information

All students are expected to be familiar with the academic regulations, including those regarding Academic Integrity, for Salem State University as published in the university catalog. In addition, each student is responsible for completing all course requirements and for keeping up with all that goes on in the course (whether or not the student is present).

Academic Integrity

Salem State University assumes that all students come to the University with serious educational intent and expects them to be mature, responsible individuals who will exhibit high standards of honesty and personal conduct in their academic life. All members of the Salem State University academic community have a responsibility to insure that scholastic honesty and academic integrity are safeguarded and maintained. Cheating and plagiarism are unfair, demoralizing, and demeaning to all of us. Cheating, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest activities are serious acts which erode the University's educational role and cheapen and diminish the learning experience not only for the perpetrators, but also for the entire community. It is expected that Salem State University students will understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and that they will be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work. Materials (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill academic requirements must represent a student's own efforts.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

The fundamental purpose of this policy is to emphasize that any act of academic dishonesty attempted by any Salem State University student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Charges of academic dishonesty are reviewed through a process that allows for student learning and impartial review. Performing, aiding or inciting any of the actions listed below, in courses or other situations involving academic credit, constitutes an offense subject to disciplinary action.

Cheating

Cheating is the intentional use or attempted use of deceit, trickery, artifice, fraud, and/or violation of rules and/or misrepresentation of one's academic work in any academic exercise, regardless of the delivery method of the course. The methods of cheating are varied and well-known, and include but are not limited to the following:

- Copying from others during an examination.
- Sharing answers for a take-home examination.
- Using notes or other resources not authorized by the instructor.
- Taking an examination for another student.
- Tampering with an examination after it has been corrected, then returning it for more credit than deserved.

- Submitting substantial portions of the same academic work for credit in more than one course, without consulting the second instructor (and the first instructor if the courses are concurrent at Salem State University).
- Allowing others to do the research and writing of an assigned paper (for example, using the services of an online paper service).
- Falsifying data or results from research or fieldwork.
- Obtaining the answers to, or a copy of, an examination prior to its administration.
- Submitting a purchased or downloaded paper or other works written by another person, including those obtained through an online paper service.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is academic theft. It refers to the use of another's ideas or words without proper attribution or credit. An author's work is his/her property and should be respected by documentation. However, academic integrity requires that unsigned material must also be identified (for example, anonymous articles or web pages). Credit must be given in the following situations:

- For every direct quotation of any length.
- When a work is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in your own words.
- For any information which is not common knowledge. ("Common knowledge" is defined as information that appears substantially the same in several general sources such as textbooks or encyclopedias.)
- For any material borrowed from another source, whether in print or electronic form (for instance, graphs, images, videos, diagrams, tables, and datasets).

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

- Copying word for word from a source (printed, electronic, or oral) without properly citing or crediting the source.
- Paraphrasing without proper attribution.
- Failing to properly cite or credit sources, whether the material is a direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary.
- Failing to identify direct quotations through the use of quotation marks.
- Failing to acknowledge and properly cite information obtained through printed, electronic, or oral sources.

- Incorporating into one's own work graphs, tables, drawings, photographs, diagrams, and other non-textual material from other sources without proper attribution.

Fabrication

Fabrication is the intentional and unauthorized falsification and/or invention of any information or citation in any academic exercise. Fabrication includes but is not limited to:

- Falsifying data or results from research or fieldwork.
- Selectively omitting or altering data that do not support one's conclusions.

Collusion

Collusion refers to the agreement or cooperation between students to commit an act of academic dishonesty. Any student who knowingly or intentionally helps another student to perform any act of cheating or plagiarism is subject to discipline for academic dishonesty. There is no distinction between those who cheat and plagiarize and those who willingly allow it to occur. Collusion includes but is not limited to:

- Taking an examination for another person.
- Asking or allowing another person to take an examination for you.
- Allowing another person to copy one's own work or exam.
- Collaborating with another person before a quiz or examination in order to develop methods of exchanging information during the quiz or examination.
- Distributing an examination from an unauthorized source prior to an examination.
- Distributing or selling a paper or other work to other students.

Students with Disabilities

Salem State University is committed to providing equal access to the educational experience for all students in compliance with Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act and The Americans with Disabilities Act and to providing all reasonable academic accommodations, aids and adjustments. Any student who has a documented disability requiring an accommodation, aid or adjustment should speak with the instructor immediately. Students with

Disabilities who have not previously done so should provide documentation to and schedule an appointment with the Office for Students with Disabilities and obtain appropriate services.

University Policy Regarding the Declarations of an Emergency

In the event of a university declared critical emergency, Salem State University reserves the right to alter this course plan. Students should refer to salemstate.edu for further information and updates. The course attendance policy stays in effect until there is a university declared critical emergency. In the event of an emergency, please refer to the alternative educational plans for this course located at/in [faculty member determines this]. Students should review the plans and gather all required materials before an emergency is declared.

Classroom Expectations

Each student is expected to be respectful of others. We will be discussing difficult, controversial, and occasionally emotional issues. A certain amount of disagreement is therefore expected. Disagreement is one thing, however, disrespect is quite another. Please refrain from personal attacks. The trick is to disagree without becoming disagreeable. Disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.

No use of cell phones is permitted during class time.

Please arrive on time and refrain from early preparation for departure. I will make every effort to bring the class to an end on-time.

Changes

Although significant changes in course format, due dates and requirements are rarely made once the class begins, I do reserve the right to do so if it is deemed necessary for the success of the class.

Schedule of Readings

It is somewhat difficult to predict how quickly we will move through the course readings, so the following is a *tentative* reading schedule. The items listed next to a given date are to be read before class on that date. Note: *PBF* stands for Perry, Bratman, and Fischer (course text, see above).

1/18: Course overview; no readings due

1/20: William Paley, “Natural Theology” (*PBF* pp. 47-51) and Blaise Pascal, “The Wager” (*PBF* pp. 52-55)

1/25: Bertrand Russell, “Why I Am Not a Christian” (*PBF* pp. 56-59)

1/27: No class

2/1: Introduction to Part III: Knowledge and Reality (*PBF* pp. 121-125) and Edmund Gettier, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?” (*PBF* pp. 133-135)

2/3: Descartes, Meditations I and II (*PBF* pp. 136-142)

2/8: Descartes, Meditations III and IV (*PBF* pp. 142-151)

2/10: Hume, “An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding” Sections II-V (*PBF* pp. 190-205)

2/15: Hume, “An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding” Sections VI-VII (*PBF* pp. 205-216)

2/17: Paper 1 Due (upload on Canvas by 5pm) and W. C. Salmon, “The Problem of Induction” (*PBF* pp. 216-226)

2/22: W. C. Salmon, “The Problem of Induction” (*PBF* pp. 226-238)

2/24: Introduction to Part IV: Minds, Bodies, and Persons (*PBF* pp. 239-246) and Bertrand Russell, “The Argument from Analogy for Other Minds” (*PBF* pp. 247-249)

3/1: Gilbert Ryle, “Descartes’s Myth” (*PBF* pp. 250-257)

3/3: Frank Jackson, “What Mary Didn’t Know” (*PBF* pp. 281-284)

3/8: John Searle, “Minds, Brains, and Programs” (*PBF* pp. 298-311)

3/10: Bernard Williams, “The Self and the Future” (*PBF* pp. 333-343)

3/13–3/18: Spring Break

3/22: Daniel Dennett, “Where Am I?” (*PBF* pp. 368-376)

3/24: Peter van Inwagen, “The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will” (*PBF* pp. 385-396)

3/29: Harry G. Frankfurt, “Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility” (*PBF* pp. 407-413)

3/31: Paper 2 Due (upload on Canvas by 5pm) and John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism* (*PBF* pp. 460-476)

- 4/5:** Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (PBF pp. 504-520)
- 4/7:** John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (PBF pp. 572-585)
- 4/12:** No class
- 4/14:** Robert Nozick “Justice and Entitlement” (PBF pp. 585-593)
- 4/19:** Susan Wolf, “The Meanings of Lives” (PBF pp. 782-793)
- 4/21:** Paradoxes and Puzzles (reading to be determined)
- 4/26:** Paradoxes and Puzzles (reading to be determined)
- 4/28:** Paradoxes and Puzzles (reading to be determined)
- 5/3:** Makeup day (last day of class)
- 5/11:** Final exam (8:00am)