

Philosophy 6.07: Introduction to Philosophy
Spring 2008
Office: 314 Sequoia Hall

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Office hours: Tu, Th 12:00-1:00, by appt.

Philosophy is to be studied ... for the sake of the questions themselves; because these questions enlarge our conception of what is possible, enrich our intellectual imagination, and diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes the mind against speculation; but above all because, through the greatness of the universe which philosophy contemplates, the mind is also rendered great, and becomes capable of that union with the universe which constitutes the highest good. Bertrand Russell

Catalog Description: A representative selection of philosophical problems will be explored in areas such as knowledge, reality, religion, science, politics, art and morals.

Texts, available at the Hornet Bookstore or on-line:

Philosophy: The Basics, by Nigel Warburton, 4th edition.

Philosophy: Basic Readings, edited by Nigel Warburton, 2nd edition.

Learning objectives: By the end of our term together, I expect everyone to have advanced in the following areas:

- Investigate major philosophical problems by a careful study of some good, representative philosophical texts.
- Encourage you to question and examine your own presuppositions and deep-rooted prejudices.
- To defend your own position on a philosophical issue by careful argument.
- Developing an understanding of and appreciation for the diversity of the human community by an appreciation of our course's contributions and perspectives from women (such as Judith Jarvis Thomson, Rosalind Hursthouse, and Janet Radcliffe Richards); persons from various ethnic, socio-economic, and religious groups (such as Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robin Le Poidevin).

Grading: **Note:** I do not grade on a curve. **Note, too:** Save all of your work until final grades are officially posted.

Mini-tests (6): 20 points each; 120 points total (40% of overall grade)

Homework (4): 15 points each, 60 points total (20% of overall grade)

Papers (2): 45 points first, 75 points second (first paper 15% of overall grade; second paper 25%)

300 points are available total for this class. The cutoff for an 'A' grade is 270 points; for a B, 240 points; for a C, 210 points, and for a D, 180 points.

Mini-tests. Six times this semester I will give you all a multiple-choice/true-false evaluation to encourage you to keep up with the reading, and test your basic comprehension. These mini-tests should take roughly 30 minutes to finish at most; you will note on the schedule the days there are mini-tests, are also days that material is assigned for discussion – this means that mini-test days are not get-out-of-class-early days! These small tests will not cover the new material slated for discussion that same day; rather, the remainder of the class period after the mini-test will be time that I will introduce the new subject into which we will subsequently embark. I will allow make-ups for the mini tests but only if you have a documented, bona fide reason why you were unable to be in class – from your doctor, your employer, an accident report, etc. I will not give a make up test without your first providing me said documentation.

Homework: In the spirit of “pop quizzes,” I will give four “pop homework” assignments. This means, when the time seems ripe, I will announce the homework assignment in class, and it will be due on the following class date. Make a couple of friends in this class, because if you are absent – even if it is an excusable absence – you will need to get the assignment from another student in the class, not me. No

late homework will be accepted. No emailed homework is accepted. You may, however, turn in your homework *early* if you know you will be unable to attend class the day it is due. If you turn your homework in early, either have a classmate turn it in for you, deliver it to me in person during office hours or, submit it to the philosophy department's main office in Mendicino 3032. If the office is closed, place your homework in the box outside the door. If the office is open, then follow the log-in procedure you will find immediately to your left as you enter the door. The philosophy department staff will time-stamp your work and place it in my mailbox; this way I have an official determination of when your work arrived.

Papers: There are 2 papers due for this course. The paper topics, and the specifics for how to execute them, will be posted on-line at least 2 weeks prior to their due dates. Note now, however, that students at the university level are expected to write with proper form. Your overall grade may drop by as much as 1/3 of a letter grade for every 3 grammatical and spelling errors. I will read and comment on the substance of drafts of your paper, but only if I receive your draft at least **72** hours before the paper is due. I will comment on drafts that are either printed (typed) or emailed. If you email me an early draft of your paper, please send it to me as either **.doc** (not **.docx** – my Mac cannot read these files) file, or as a plain-text file (such as **.rtf**).

The papers are due in class on the dates given below on the schedule. If you are unable to attend class that day, you should submit your paper at your earliest convenience to the philosophy department's main office (MND 3032), and follow our log-in procedures there. (see information under "homework" for further details on the log-in policy).

Late papers will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade for every 24 hours it is late, where the clock begins ticking immediately upon the completion of class in which the paper is due. Weekends and holidays are included. I do not accept emailed final papers. Do not slide your paper under my office door, unless you do not mind my counting your paper's turn-in time as the time at which I find it. Papers more than 2 weeks late are not accepted.

For more information, see the department's website for guidelines for writing philosophy papers (<http://www.csus.edu/phil/req/writing.htm>), and <http://www.csus.edu/phil/req/grading.htm> for the department's grading standards, to which I adhere.

Final Exam: I think I'm pelting you with enough assignments this term. No final exam.

Cheating/plagiarism: By 'cheating' is meant the copying of another's work, or the any unauthorized use of sources or notes for tests, papers or homework. Plagiarism, specifically, is the submission of another author's words (even if they're from the internet) without attribution, as though they were your own, or paraphrasing some else's ideas without attribution. Violations can result in a '0' for the assignment, or an 'F' for the course.

Attendance: Regular attendance is expected, and yes, I do take roll. Students absent two of the first four class meetings will be presumed to have dropped. Unexcused absences will be met by a maximum of a 2% reduction in overall grade. It is the students' responsibility to ensure, if there is any doubt (e.g., because of being late) that I have counted him or her as present.

Chronic lateness and/or earliness in departure will also be met with a reduction in overall grade matching that for unexcused absences.

If you have needs that require you, on rare occasion, to leave class early, please alert me ahead of time and situate yourself near the door in order to cause as little disturbance as possible.

General etiquette: Be good. Be respectful. Be polite. Students unable to meet these basic requirements of classroom etiquette will be asked at first to leave for the remainder of that class meeting, and will receive an unexcused absence. Repeat offenders will be asked to leave the class permanently.

If you have a documented disability (visible or invisible) and require accommodation or assistance with assignments, tests, attendance, note taking, etc., please see me by the beginning of the third week of semester so that arrangements can be made.

Schedule (subject to change; check website for updates). “Readings” refers to the text *Basic Readings*, “Basics” refers to *Philosophy: The Basics*.

Week 1

Introductions

Jan. 29

The sun will not rise tomorrow: what is philosophy?

Basics: introduction (pp. 1-9); *Readings*: Nagel, Craig, Blackburn (pp. 1-16).

Jan. 31

Introductory material continued. Mellor, Ayer, Russell (*Readings*, pp. 17-28)

Week 2

God!

Feb. 5

Basics: chapter 1 (pp. 11-35); *Readings*: Gardner (pp. 41-54)

Feb. 7

Readings: Mackie & Swinburne (pp. 58-79)

Week 3

God & Ethics

Feb. 12

Readings: Dawkins & Le Poidevin (pp. 91-117), Clark (pp. 508-511)

Feb. 14

Basics: chapter 2 (pp. 39-59); *Readings*: Singer & Kant (pp. 135-147)

Week 4

Feb. 19

Readings: Nozick & Mill (pp. 148-155)

Feb. 21

Readings: Williams & Glover (pp. 156-173)

Week 5

Feb. 26

Readings: Hursthouse (pp. 174-186)

Feb. 28

Readings: Thomson

Week 6

Political philosophy

Mar. 4

Basics: chapter 3 (pp. 67-91); *Readings*: Wolff & Hobbes (pp. 225-231)

Mini-test 1

Mar. 6

Readings: Berlin & Dworkin (pp. 232-248)

Week 7

Mar. 11

Miller talk on Plato, Aristotle, human rights

Mar. 13

Readings: Wolff & Richards (pp. 249-269)

Week 8

Mar. 18

Readings: Richards, King

Mar. 20

Readings: Singer

Paper 1 due

Week 9

The external world

Mar. 25

Basics: chapter 4 (pp. 92-109); *Readings*: Descartes (pp. 291-297)

Mini-test 2

Mar. 27

Readings: Williams & Magee (pp. 298-314)

Week 10

Spring Break!

Week 11

Apr. 8

Readings: Berkeley & Hume (pp. 315-321)

Apr. 10

Readings: Dreyus (pp. 322-336)

Week 12

Apr. 15

Mind*Basics*: chapter 6 (pp. 127-147); *Readings*: Wittgenstein, Smart (pp. 389-402)**Mini-test 3**

Apr. 17

Readings: Searle, Nagel (pp. 403-433)**Week 13**

Apr. 22

Mind & Science*Readings*: Dennett, Sacks (pp. 434-454)

Apr. 24

Basics: chapter 5 (pp. 110-125); *Readings*: Law, Popper (pp. 337-347, 351-361)**Mini-test 4****Week 14**

Apr. 29

Science*Readings*: Kuhn, Feyerabend, Sokal & Bricmont (pp. 362-381)

May 1

Basics: chapter 7 (pp. 148-164); *Readings*: Burnyeat (pp. 457-474)**Mini-test 5****Week 15**

May 6

Readings: Bell, Wimsatt & Beardsley (pp. 475-492)**Paper 2 due**

May 8

Readings: Hume (pp. 492-507)**Week 16**

May 13

Readings: Scruton, Lessing (pp. 512-549)

May 15

Evals, etc.

Mini-test 6