

26:061:003

Introduction to Philosophy

Fall 2010

Instructor: Samuel A. Taylor, 9:30am–10:20am MWF 102 EPB. Office: 258 EPB. Office hours: 10:30–11:30 MW, 12:00–1:00 R, & by appointment. Phone: (763) 360-5213. Email: Samuel-Taylor-1@uiowa.edu

Course Supervisor: Professor David Stern, 8:30A-9:20A MWF 427 EPB. Office: 276 EPB. Office hours: 10:30-11:30 MWF, & by appointment. Phone: 335-0029. Email: David-Stern@uiowa.edu

DEO: Professor Diane Jeske. Office: 274 EPB. Office Hours: 1:30-3:30 T, 2:00-4:00 R, & by appointment. Phone: 335-0026. Email: Diane-Jeske@uiowa.edu

Course description and objectives: An introduction to philosophy through classical and contemporary readings on topics such as perception, knowledge and skepticism; the relationship between mind and matter; personal identity; ethics; time travel; proofs of God's existence. Related film selections and clips will be used to motivate topics and facilitate discussion.

You will be introduced to methods of philosophical analysis and argumentation, and some of the central problems of philosophy. You will learn how to reconstruct arguments and evaluate them, and how to write philosophy papers.

This course satisfies the the General Education Humanities requirement. Courses in this area focus on the ways individuals and cultures have interpreted and understood themselves, others, and the world. This course explores the nature and meaning of current and historical ideas in philosophy. It covers some of the basic verbal, analytic and imaginative skills that are needed to read and write philosophy. You will learn about specific philosophical concepts and problems in relation to the larger human context in which they become meaningful. You will also become familiar with a number of methods of critical inquiry and analysis, and have an opportunity to practice these methods.

Text (available at the University Book Store, and from online booksellers):

Introducing Philosophy Through Film, ed. Fumerton & Jeske (Wiley-Blackwell 2009).

Other readings will be made available via ICON.

Course requirements Study each day's assigned reading before the class meeting, and bring the reading to class. The list of readings may be altered slightly depending on how class discussion develops. Actively and constructively participate in class discussion. Regular attendance in class is expected, and roll will be taken. There will be several in-class quizzes; dates are indicated on the syllabus. Quizzes will test your knowledge of the reading and the topics covered in class. The quizzes are intended to motivate you to do the reading and keep up with the class. There will also be three short papers; due dates will be announced at a later date.

This course presupposes a willingness to work hard and think critically about some very difficult problems. Students who read reflectively and attend class regularly are more likely to remain interested in (even enjoy!) the material, benefit from the class discussions, and develop the philosophical skills and level of comprehension required to do well on the quizzes and papers. According to the university guidelines, for each semester hour credit in a course students should expect to spend an average of two hours per week preparing for class sessions; so in a three-credit course students should expect to spend an average of six hours per week preparing for class sessions.

Grading & absences

Your final grade will be based primarily on three short papers (60%) and four quizzes (40%). Lack of attendance can greatly affect your grade, both directly (see below) and indirectly (see above).

Participation in class discussion can raise your grade. You will write three 2-3 page papers. Topics, due dates and guidelines will be provided in advance. Papers must be submitted both electronically and on paper; I will use turnitin.com. Quizzes: 40% (10% each; first three quizzes will be on the date shown; last quiz will be during the final exam.) Plus and minus letter grades are used.

If you miss more than two classes in a semester without an excuse allowable under College of Liberal Arts policies, your grade will be reduced by one third of a full letter grade for every missed class. Regardless of this policy, poor attendance is likely to lead to poor grades or failure in the course. Voluntarily undertaken commitments and the desire for personal convenience do not constitute the kind of special circumstances that permit you to be excused from attending class; check with your instructor before buying tickets or making travel plans. If you are absent due to illness or conflicting university obligations **and legitimate documentation is provided**, it will not count against you. For further details, see the section of the Syllabus Addendum on Absences.

- 8.23 Introduction.
- 8.25 Fumerton & Jeske: Introduction (3-10); Rosenberg, ch. 1 (ICON)
- 8.27 Descartes: First Meditation (17-20)
- 8.30 Descartes: 2nd Meditation (133-7); excerpt from 6th Meditation (20)
- 9.1 Rosenberg, chs. 2-3 (ICON)
- 9.3 Rosenberg, chs. 5-6 (ICON)
- 9.6 Labor Day.
- 9.8 Locke: Of Identity and Diversity (192-202)
- 9.10 Perry: A Dialogue on Personal Identity, 1st Night (ICON)
- 9.13 Williams: The Self and the Future (203-213)
- 9.15 Parfit: Personal Identity (ICON)
- 9.17 Perry: A Dialogue on Personal Identity, 2nd Night (220-8) & 3rd Night (ICON)
- 9.20 Rosenberg, ch. 8 (ICON) **Quiz #1**
- 9.22 Berkeley: The First Dialogue (27-45)
- 9.24 Berkeley, continued; Rosenberg, Second Intermission & chs. 9-10 (ICON)
- 9.27 Putnam: Brains in a Vat (98-105)
- 9.29 Nozick: The Experience Machine (121-2); Rosenberg chs 11-12 (ICON)
- 10.1 Ryle: Descartes' Myth (138-145); Rosenberg chs 13-14 (ICON)
- 10.4 Smart: Sensations and Brain Processes (146-154)
- 10.6 Nagel: What Is It Like to Be a Bat? (155-63)
- 10.8 Jackson: What Mary Didn't Know (164-7)
- 10.11 Searle: Minds, Brains, and Programs (168-180)
- 10.13 Searle: Minds, Brains, and Programs (168-180)
- 10.15 Lewis: Mad Pain & Martian Pain (181-6)
- 10.18 Lewis: Mad Pain & Martian Pain (181-6) **Quiz #2**
- 10.20 Smart: An Outline of a System of Utilitarian Ethics, 313-320
- 10.22 Smart: An Outline of a System of Utilitarian Ethics, 320-330
- 10.25 Williams: A Critique of Utilitarianism 297-301
- 10.27 Williams: A Critique of Utilitarianism 302-312
- 10.29 Ross: What Makes Right Acts Right? 281-289
- 11.1 Ross: What Makes Right Acts Right? 289-296
- 11.3 Railton: Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality 405-426
- 11.5 Railton: Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality 405-426
- 11.8 Jeske & Fumerton: Relatives and Relativism 427-434
- 11.10 Jeske: Families, Friends, and Special Obligations 435-451
- 11.12 Jeske: Families, Friends, and Special Obligations 435-451
- 11.15 Anselm: The Ontological Argument (581-2) **Quiz #3**
- 11.17 Pascal: The Wager (577-80)
- 11.19 Rowe: The Traditional Cosmological Argument (583-587)
- 11.22-11.26 Thanksgiving break.
- 11.29 Rowe: The Design Arguments (587-594)
- 12.1 Mackie: Evil and Omnipotence (595-602)
- 12.3 Taylor: Space and Time, part 1 (481-486)
- 12.6 Taylor: Space and Time, part 2 (487-491)
- 12.8 Lewis: The Paradoxes of Time Travel (492-503)
- 12.10 Conclusion

Final exam: 9:45 – 11:45 Thursday, December 16th 2010

Teaching Policies & Procedures

Administrative Home. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues.

Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS [Student Academic Handbook](#).

Electronic Communication. University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences. (*Operations Manual*, III.15.2. Scroll down to k.11.)

Accommodations for Disabilities. A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See www.uiowa.edu/~sds/ for more information.

Academic Fraud. Plagiarism and any other activities when students present work that is not their own are academic fraud. Academic fraud is a serious matter and is reported to the departmental DEO and to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum. Instructors and DEOs decide on appropriate consequences at the departmental level while the Associate Dean enforces additional consequences at the collegiate level. See the CLAS Academic Fraud section of the [Student Academic Handbook](#).

University Examination Policy requires that students be permitted to make up examinations missed because of illness, mandatory religious obligations, certain University activities, or unavoidable circumstances. Excused absence forms are available at www.registrar.uiowa.edu/forms/absence.pdf.

Final Examination Policies. Final exams may be offered only during finals week. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. Students should not ask their instructor to reschedule a final exam since the College does not permit rescheduling of a final exam once the semester has begun. Questions should be addressed to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum.

Conflicts in Final Exams. The final exam 9:45 – 11:45 Wednesday, December 16th 2010. It is your responsibility to notify the registrar if there is a conflict between the final exam for this class and your other final exams. A student who has (a) two examinations scheduled for the same period or (b) more than three examinations scheduled for the same day, should file a request for a change of schedule at the Registration Center, 30 Calvin Hall. Requests for change of schedule must be filed between November 2 & 19. (During fall semester, courses having lower dept. numbers, or lower course numbers when the conflict is within a dept., will take precedence.)

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint. Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor, then the course supervisor, and then the departmental DEO, Professor Diane Jeske. Her office hours are 1:30-3:30 T, 2-4 R, and by appointment, 274 EPB. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. See the CLAS [Student Academic Handbook](#).

Understanding Sexual Harassment. Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI [Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment](#) for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather. In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Public Safety [web site](#).

Student Classroom Behavior. The ability to learn is lessened when students engage in inappropriate classroom behavior, distracting others; such behaviors are a violation of the [Code of Student Life](#). When disruptive activity occurs, a University instructor has the authority to determine classroom seating patterns and to request that a student exit immediately for the remainder of the period. One-day suspensions are reported to appropriate departmental, collegiate, and Student Services personnel (Office of the Vice President for [Student Services](#) and Dean of Students).

Absences. Except in cases of illness or emergency, you should let your instructor know beforehand if you need to be excused from attendance. You can do this either by providing an Explanatory Statement of Absence from Class form (available at <http://www.uiowa.edu/registrar/forms/absence.htm> or from the Registration Center, 30 Calvin Hall) or a statement from a responsible official documenting the times of your participation in an authorized University activity. In the case of emergency or serious illness, please contact your instructor as soon as possible and offer appropriate documentation so that we can discuss your options. If you are absent for more than five days, you may ask the Registration Center to tell each instructor the reason. Instructors may request further documentation of the absence. In addition, you may ask clinicians at Student Health (4189 Westlawn, 5-8392) to discuss your illness and possible accommodations with your instructor if you have health problems.