

026:061:006

## Introduction to Philosophy

Spring 2012

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** An introduction to philosophy through classical and contemporary readings that investigate the following topics: epistemology (the nature of knowledge; skepticism), philosophy of mind, personal identity, and ethics (theory & application). Course objectives include: 1) to introduce you to philosophical analysis, argumentation, and some of the central problems in philosophy; 2) to teach you how to reconstruct arguments and evaluate them, and how to write philosophy papers.

*This Course Satisfies a University General Education Humanities Requirement for students who enrolled before summer 2011 and the Values, Society, and Diversity Requirement for students who enrolled before summer 2011.*

**TEXT:** Introduction to Philosophy 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, edited by Perry, Bratman, and Fischer (Oxford University Press, 2010) ISBN: 0195390369. This can be found at the University Bookstore. Materials not available in the required text will be provided under the CONTENT section of ICON.

**ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING:** I'll be using plus/minus grading. Note: the A+ grade will only be used in extraordinary circumstances. Also, I'll be using the plagiarism detection service turnitin.com via ICON.

**Exams:** 55% of your grade will come from 3 exams (15% for the first and second exams; 20% for the third exam). The Exams will consist of a mixture of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

**Papers:** 40% of your grade will come from two papers (15% for the first paper; 25% for the second paper). Topics, guidelines, and the due date will be provided well in advance. For many of you this will be your 1<sup>st</sup> philosophy paper, and these can be quite difficult since they are often very different than papers you have written for other classes. I'll discuss how to approach writing a philosophy paper in class and your text has a section writing a philosophy paper (pp. 15-17), but another great resource is Jim Pryor's "Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper" which can be found at [www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html](http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html).

**Short Assignments:** 10% of your grade will come from short assignments throughout the semester. These assignments are designed to help you develop the skills discussed necessary for doing philosophy. Assignments may include worksheets, summarizing arguments, reading responses, coming up with questions about the reading or lecture, etc. I'll announce these assignments in class and on ICON.

**Attendance:** Attendance can affect your grade both directly and indirectly. First, this class is very difficult and you will not do well if you do not attend regularly. Moreover, 6 unexcused absences will result in your final grade being dropped 2/3rds of a grade (e.g. from a B to a C+). Missed exams can only be made up if you have an excuse allowable under the College of Liberal Arts policies and you have proper documentation. Participation in class discussion can raise your final grade up to 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of a grade.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism will not be tolerated! Plagiarism will result in receiving an F on an assignment, and will be reported to both the department DEO and the associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum. Trust me... plagiarism is not in your best interest. I will catch you.

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS:** This list is tentative and likely to change. Reading assignments will be given on a day-to-day basis.

### **Weeks 1-2: Introduction**

On the Study of Philosophy (pp. 3-8) & Russell: On the Value of Philosophy (pp. 18-21)

Logical Toolkit (pp. 9-14)

[Optional] Rosenberg: Engaging the Argument (ICON)

### **Weeks 2-5: Knowledge and Skepticism**

Ayer: Knowing as Having the Right to Be Sure (ICON)

Gettier: Is Justified True Belief Knowledge? (pp. 133-135)

Descartes: 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Meditations (pp. 136-141)

Russell: The Existence of Matter (ICON)

Hume: Sceptical Doubts Concerning the Operations of the Understanding (pp. 193-199)

[Exam 1]

### **Weeks 6-9: Mind and Body**

Ryle: Descartes' Myth (pp. 251-258)  
Armstrong: The Nature of Mind (pp. 259-266)  
Searle: *Excerpts* from Mind (ICON)  
Searle: Minds, Brains, and Programs (pp. 298-310)  
Jackson: What Mary Didn't Know (pp. 320-323)

### **Weeks 9-11: Personal Identity**

Perry: A Dialogue on Personal Identity (pp. 326-346)  
Williams: The Self and the Future (pp. 347-356)  
Parfit: Personal Identity (pp. 357-370)

[Exam 2]

### **Weeks 12-15: Ethics**

*Part A: Ethical Theory*

Mill: Utilitarianism (In Perry Anthology but the selections are to be determined)  
Ross: What Makes Rights Acts Right (ICON)

*Part B: Applied Ethics*

Singer: Famine, Affluence, and Morality (pp. 495-503)  
Judith Jarvis Thomson: A Defense of Abortion (ICON)

[Exam 3]

### **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. 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/](http://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](http://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.** CLAS is instituting a new final exam scheduling process and, as such, the final exam time will not be scheduled until the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> week of the semester. 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.

**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. 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.