

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

INSTRUCTOR: SAMUEL A. TAYLOR
E-MAIL: TAYL0496@D.UMN.EDU
PHONE: (319) 333-6378
OFFICE: 253 ABAH
OFFICE HOURS: 9-10 M,W; 11-12 Tu,Th; OR BY APPOINTMENT

COURSE: PHIL 1001-003
SEMESTER: FALL 2014
MEETING TIME: 1-1:50 M,W,F
LOCATION: ABAH 235

COURSE DESCRIPTION: An introduction to philosophy through classical and contemporary readings on topics such as: perception, knowledge, and skepticism; the relationship between mind and matter; free will, foreknowledge, and determinism; proofs of God's existence; and the nature of morality. Related film selections and clips will be used to motivate topics and facilitate discussion. *This course satisfies the Humanities Liberal Education requirement.*

GOALS & OBJECTIVES: By studying these topics students will gain a wide range of knowledge and develop various skills whose value extends beyond the classroom. There are five main goals of the course. The first two are specific to course material; the last three pertain to general skills necessary for success in any field.

- Achieve an understanding of influential views, arguments, and problems in philosophy.
- Develop a critical perspective on those views, arguments, and problems.
- Improve one's ability to interpret texts and reconstruct arguments.
- Improve one's ability to *evaluate* arguments.
- Improve one's ability to carefully and clearly communicate ideas and arguments both verbally and in writing.

OUTCOMES: The American Philosophical Association, in its official statement on outcomes assessment, observes that: "The basic aim of education in philosophy is not and should not be primarily to impart information. Rather it is to help students learn to understand various kinds of deeply difficult intellectual problems, to interpret texts regarding these problems, to analyze and criticize the arguments found in them, and to express themselves in ways that clarify and carry forward reflection upon them." Originally published in *The Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 69:2, pages 94-99.

TEXTS: The only *required* text is: Perry, Bratman, and Fischer's *Introduction to Philosophy* 6th Edition (Oxford University Press, 2013). ISBN: 9780199812998.

RECOMMENDED:

- For general strategies for how to approach the reading see Jim Pryor's "Guidelines on Reading Philosophy" at <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>
- For general strategies for writing your papers see Jim Pryor's "Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper" (the best introduction to writing philosophy papers I have ever come across) at <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

GRADING SCALE:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
100-93	92-90	89-87	86-83	82-80	79-77	76-73	72-70	69-67	66-63	62-60	59-0

GRADING: I'll use plus/minus grading. Your final grade will be calculated on the basis of 1 paper, 3 exams, and a number of short assignments.

PAPER: 20% of your grade comes from a paper – this will be due sometime near Thanksgiving. Detailed instructions, exact due date, and grading criteria will be provided both in class and on Moodle at least one week prior to the due date. *I'll give an option to rewrite the paper in light of my comments. If the rewrite shows either no or only minor improvement then your initial paper grade will remain unaffected. If the rewrite shows noteworthy improvement then your initial paper grade will receive a 1/3rd letter grade boost. If the rewrite shows outstanding improvement then your initial paper grade will receive a 2/3rd letter grade boost.*

EXAMS: 65% of your grade comes from 3 exams (20% from exams 1 & 2; 25% from the final). These exams will consist of true/false, multiple-choice, short-answer, and at least one essay question. The first two exams will be given in-class. The final will be given during the scheduled final exam time.

SHORT ASSIGNMENTS: 15% of your grade comes from various short assignments. These are designed to help you develop the skills necessary for doing philosophy and should help you prepare for the exams and paper. Assignments will include pop quizzes, worksheets, reconstructing arguments, reading responses, etc. *Besides the pop-quizzes*, due dates for short assignments will be announced in class and on Moodle. All short assignments are of equal weight. I'll drop your lowest score for a short assignment.

LATE POLICY: Unexcused late papers and short assignments will receive a 3% grade penalty for *EACH* 24-hour period that they are late. Unexcused missed exams will receive a 3% grade penalty for *EACH* 24-hour period that passes prior to the completion of a make-up exam. I will not allow you to make up missed pop quizzes unless you have an excuse allowed under the university's official policy and you have proper documentation (see link below).

ATTENDANCE: Attendance will not *directly* affect your grade. However, attendance can affect your grade indirectly. First, participation in discussion (in-class and on Moodle forums) can raise your final grade *up to* 1/3rd of a grade, and it's difficult to participate if you don't attend regularly. Second, short assignments and exams can only be made up if you have an excuse allowable under the university's policies (see the link below) and you have proper documentation. Finally, this class is difficult and you will not do well if you don't attend regularly.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: I will use turnitin.com. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Plagiarism and cheating will result in a zero for the assignment and will be reported to the university. I expect that you understand what constitutes plagiarism, but if you are unsure then please see the university's student academic integrity webpage (see link below). *Trust me... Plagiarism is not in your best interest; I will catch you!*

NOTES ABOUT THE SCHEDULE: Readings are to be done *before* the class period for which they are listed. A link to readings with a "*" can be found on Moodle. These readings are tentative and may be altered depending on how class discussion develops.

READINGS

INTRODUCTION	Introduction: On the Study of Philosophy & Logical Toolkit
KNOWLEDGE & SKEPTICISM	Gettier: Is Justified True Belief Knowledge? Descartes: 1 st Meditation Descartes: 2 nd Meditation *Moore: Proof of an External World Hume: Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding Part II and Part IV EXAM 1
PHILOSOPHY OF MIND	*Gertler: In Defense of Mind-Body Dualism *Selections from I.E.P article "Dualism and Mind" *Smart: Sensations and Brain Processes Turing: Computing Machines and Intelligence Searle: Minds, Brains, and Programs Jackson: What Mary Didn't Know EXAM 2
ETHICS & VALUE	Mill: Selections from Utilitarianism The Trolley Problem & Ducking Harm Sacrificing Others *Ross: What Makes Right Acts Right? Taylor: The Meaning of Human Existence Wolf: The Meanings of Lives
PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION	Aquinas: The Existence of God Paley: Natural Theology Perry: Selections from Dialogue on Good, Evil, and the Existence of God *Rowe: Three Varieties of Atheism

FINAL EXAM: 8:00AM, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19TH

Academic Policies

Student Conduct Code: Appropriate classroom conduct promotes an environment of academic achievement and integrity. Disruptive classroom behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach, or student learning, is prohibited. Student are expected adhere to Board of Regents Policy: *Student Conduct Code*. http://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf

Teaching & Learning: Instructor and Student Responsibilities: UMD is committed to providing a positive, safe, and inclusive place for all who study and work here. Instructors and students have mutual responsibility to insure that the environment in all of these settings supports teaching and learning, is respectful of the rights and freedoms of all members, and promotes a civil and open exchange of ideas. To reference the full policy please see: <http://www.d.umn.edu/vcaa/TeachingLearning.html>

Academic Integrity: Academic dishonesty tarnishes UMD's reputation and discredits the accomplishments of students. Academic dishonesty is regarded as a serious offense by all members of the academic community. UMD's Student Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <http://www.d.umn.edu/conduct/academic>

Final Exams: All 1xxx-5xxx courses offered for undergraduate credit should include a final graded component or end of term evaluation that assesses the level of student achievement of one or more course objectives. All final graded components are to be administered or due at the time and place according to the final exam schedule and not during the last week of class. To reference the full policy please see: <http://www.d.umn.edu/vcaa/FinalExams.html>

Excused Absences: Students are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings. It is the responsibility of students to plan their schedules to avoid excessive conflict with course requirements. However, there are legitimate and verifiable circumstances that lead to excused student absence from the classroom. These are subpoenas, jury duty, military duty, religious observances, illness, bereavement for immediate family, and NCAA varsity intercollegiate athletics. For complete information, please see: <http://www.d.umn.edu/vcaa/ExcusedAbsence.html>

Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes and Course Materials: Taking notes is a means of recording information but more importantly of personally absorbing and integrating the educational experience. However, broadly disseminating class notes beyond the classroom community or accepting compensation for taking and distributing classroom notes undermines instructor interests in their intellectual work product while not substantially furthering instructor and student interests in effective learning. For additional information, please see: <http://www.d.umn.edu/vcaa/ClassNotesAppropriateUseof.html>

Students with disabilities: It is the policy and practice of the University of Minnesota Duluth to create inclusive learning environments for all students, including students with disabilities. If there are aspects of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or your ability to meet course requirements such as time limited exams, inaccessible web content, or the use of non-captioned videos, please notify the instructor as soon as possible. You are also encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Resources to discuss and arrange reasonable accommodations. Call 218-726-6130 or visit the DR web site at www.d.umn.edu/access for more information.