

PHIL 100 Introduction to Philosophy/ Section 003

Dr. Uygur Abaci

Winter Terms 1 and 2, 2011-12
Lectures: M&W&F 2 pm – 3 pm
Room: CHEM D300

Office: E-158 Buchanan
Hours: M 3pm-4pm, W 3pm-4 pm
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Course Description:

This course is a year-long survey of major issues in the history of Western philosophy. In the fall semester, we will focus on some of the prominent questions of metaphysics and epistemology. We will ask and try to answer questions such as: What does it mean to exist? Does God exist? How can we know with certainty that external reality exists? What are humans? Minds, bodies, or a compound of both? What constitutes the identity of a person? Is it possible to act freely in a world determined by physical laws?

In the spring, the emphasis of the course will shift to moral and political philosophy. We will first discuss some of the broader questions concerning the objectivity and source of moral values such as: Do moral propositions convey objective facts or are they statements of subjective preferences? How can moral values be grounded independent of cultural contexts? We will also survey some of the important historical answers to the questions of what it is to be good or act well, what justice is maintained in society.

Goals:

This course aims to improve students' ability to critically examine other philosophers' arguments with respect to important problems of philosophy as well as their ability to construct their own arguments with respect to those problems. Through a close reading of selected texts from major historical figures, this course also aims to give students a sound knowledge of the history of philosophy. No previous familiarity with philosophy is required or presupposed.

Texts

Required:

Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings, 5th edition, edited by John Perry, Michael Bratman and John Martin Fisher, Oxford University Press, 2010.

Recommended:

A Rulebook for Arguments, by Anthony Weston, Hackett Publishing Company
(Please also note that this course has a corresponding website on the Blackboard Learning Centre at www.vista.ubc.ca. Check it out regularly for course related materials!)

Course Requirements

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|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) 4 short papers (2 each term) | (5% each, 20% total) |
| (2) 2 longer papers (1 each term) | (15% each, 30% total) |
| (3) Midyear Exam (end of term 1) | 25% |
| (4) Final Exam (end of term 2) | 25% |

Marking Scale

90-100%	A+	85-89%	A	80-84%	A-
76-79%	B+	72-75%	B	68-71%	B-
64-67%	C+	60-63%	C	55-59%	C-
50-54%	D	0-49%	F		

Short Papers

You are required to write 2 short (5 double-spaced pages) papers each term. These papers are due in lecture on Thursday. Late papers are marked down by 5% for each day late. Topics will be given out in class.

Longer Papers

You are required to write 1 longer paper each term. Longer papers are approximately 8 double spaced pages. Topics will be passed out at least 2 or 3 weeks before the longer papers are due.

Midyear Exam

The midyear exam will occur during the term 1 final exam period (date and time will be determined and announced later by UBC). The midyear exam will consist of some multiple-choice, some short answer and some short essay questions.

Final Exam

The final exam will occur during the term 2 final exam period. Like the midyear exam, it will be a combination of multiple-choice, short answer and short essay questions. Although it will primarily focus on the topics and issues from term 2, a small portion of it will also concern issues covered in term 1.

Attendance and Make up Policy

There is no official requirement that you attend lectures. However, it is difficult to do well unless you attend regularly. If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. Please contact another student or myself. You will not be allowed to make up exams without a documented, University-sanctioned excuse.

In general, I expect students to be consistently well prepared for class by having read (and thought about) the material. These readings are not to be passively consumed - I welcome (and expect) questions and challenges in class. I also hope that students will drop by my office frequently to discuss what we're doing or just to say "hello" and let me know how the course is going. If you are unable to come to my office hours, please feel free to set up an appointment. You are also encouraged to discuss any problems you may have with the teaching of the course.

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and to facilitate your educational opportunities.

PLAGIARISM will NOT be tolerated and will result in an automatic rejection of the paper / assignment followed by either a rewrite or failure of the paper, depending on the severity. Please don't let yourself fall into a situation where you are even tempted to plagiarize. Send me early drafts; talk with me, etc... Start as early as possible. Especially, make sure that you understand clearly the grading rubric I will provide. And please take advantage of the Resources listed below. The University's definition of plagiarism, along with excellent resources for avoiding it, can be found at:

<http://www.library.ubc.ca/home/plagiarism/>

Please take advantage of these services. Students can refer to the faculty of arts website for a list of contacts and links for various resources available to students, such as AMS Tutoring, Academic Advising, the Writing Center, etc.

<http://www.arts.ubc.ca/Resources.87.0.html>

Course Schedule for Term 1:

Week	Date	Subject	Readings/Assignments
1	Sept 7-9	Introduction to Philosophy & Logic	Part I: 3-37

Unit I: Philosophy of Religion

2	Sept 12-14-16	The Existence of God, The Ontological Argument and What Existence is	Anselm: 42-43; Descartes: 151-153 (Meditation V); [Objections: Gaunilo, Gassendi, and Kant]*
3	Sept 19-21-23	Other Arguments for God's Existence	Aquinas: 44-46; Paley: 51-55; Hume: 59-79
4	Sept 26-28-30	Pascal's Wager and The Problem of Evil	Pascal: 51-55; Hume: 79-93, Leibniz: 94-95; [Dostoyevski]* Short Paper#1 due

Unit II: Epistemology

5	Oct 3-5-7	What Knowledge is	Plato: 126-133; Gettier: 133-135
6	Oct 12-14	Descartes and Skepticism	Descartes: 116-127; Putnam's <i>Brains in a Vat</i> *
7	Oct 17-19-21	Some responses to Skepticism	Hume: 176-190; Nozick: 168-175
8	Oct 24-26-28	Hume & the Problem of Induction	Hume: 190-216; Salmon: 217-238; Goodman: 816-7 Short Paper #2 due

Unit III: Metaphysics and Philosophy of Mind

9	Oct 31-Nov 2-4	Mind & Body: Dualism	Descartes, again, esp. Med II, V, VI; Ryle: 251-258)
10	Nov 7-9-11	Mind-Brain Identity Theory & Minds as Machines	Armstrong: 259-266; Churchland: 280-284; Turing: 285- 297; Searle: 298-310
11	Nov14-16-18	Consciousness & Personal Identity	Nagel: 311-319; Williams: 347-357 Locke: "Of Identity and Diversity"*; Reid's Objection to Locke*
12	Nov21-23-25	Freedom, Determinism and Responsibility	Chisholm: 392- 399; Inwagen: 400-411; Hume: 412-422
13	Nov 28-30	Freedom continued	Frankfurt: 423-429; Nagel: 440-448
	Dec 2	Review Session	Long Paper due

* Material will be provided by the instructor.