

Syllabus for Philosophy 10101

Instructor: Richard Kim

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Office Hours: (Malloy 111) Tuesdays and Thursdays: 12:30p.m. - 1:30p.m. and by appointment

Class Time: 11:00-12:15 TR

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Course Description

This course will center around three questions: What are we? Where did we come from? Where are we going?

The first question centers on issues about the nature of the human person: Are we immaterial souls, material bodies, or both? Do we have free will? Are we capable of knowledge? The second question centers on issues about the existence of God: Does God exist? What are the arguments for God's existence? What are the arguments against God's existence? The third question centers on ethical issues: What is the best human life? What makes an action right or wrong?

By investigating these issues we will accomplish two objectives: (1) Clarify our understanding of important philosophical issues by examining different contending positions, and (2) Develop critical reasoning skills by learning how to articulate and defend arguments both in writing and in speech.

Texts:

Reason and Responsibility: Readings in Some Basic Problems of Philosophy, 14th edition, Joel Feinberg and Russ Shafer-Landau.

What Does it All Mean? Thomas Nagel.

(All other texts will available on the web.)

Course Requirements:

Two Exams: mid-term (20%), final (20%).

Three Essays: 10%, 10%, 20%.

Participation: 10%

Logic quiz: 5%
Reading quiz: 5%

The first two papers will be 2-3 pages each. In the first paper you will reconstruct and explain an argument of another philosopher. In the second paper you will present and defend an argument of your own. In the third paper (4-6 pages) you will reconstruct and explain an argument of another philosopher and evaluate that argument.

The participation grade will be determined by your attendance and participation in class. Everyone is expected to participate by being attentive to both the lectures and the questions of other students. If you suffer from shyness, you may also help make up for the participation grade by coming to office hours.

5% of your total grade will be determined by reading quizzes. You will receive 10 reading quizzes throughout the semester. Only the 5 highest scores will be graded. There will be no make-up quizzes. Each reading quiz will test your basic knowledge of the reading for that day.

Deadlines: All assignments are due at the beginning of class. The hard copy should have a cover sheet with your name and the title of your paper. Any assignment that is late will be penalized one letter grade for each day that it is late.

Plagiarism and Cheating: Any plagiarism or cheating may be reported to the Honesty Committee and can result in an *F* for the assignment and an *F* for the course. If you find yourself in a hard place, please explain your situation to me. Cheating has resulted in academic ruin for many students at Notre Dame – don't let this happen to you.

Schedule of Meetings and Required Readings

Introduction: What is philosophy? Why should I study it? Why should I care?

Tuesday January 18: Introduction and a puzzle or two. [Nagel (Ch.1) and Lear (Ch.1)]
Thursday January 20: Deductive Logic [Louis Pojman (via e-mail)]

Logic: What is logic? Why is it important?

Tuesday January 25: Deductive Logic Continued...
Thursday January 27: Inductive Logic

Where Did We Come From?: Existence of God

Cosmological Arguments

- Tuesday February 1: Thomas Aquinas, "The Five Ways"; Hume, selections from *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Part IX) [Hume is available at www.earlymoderntexts.com] [**LOGIC QUIZ**]
- Thursday February 3: William Rowe, "The Cosmological Argument"

Teleological Arguments

- Tuesday February 8: William Paley, "The Argument from Design"
- Thursday February 10: David Hume, selections from *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Parts II & V) [Hume is available at www.earlymoderntexts.com]

The Problem of Evil

- Tuesday February 15: J.L. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence"
- Thursday February 17: Marilyn McCord Adams, "Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God" (to be sent via gmail)
(First Paper Due)

- Tuesday February 22: Peter van Inwagen, "Problem of Evil" (via gmail)

What Are We?: What Can We Know?

The Nature of Knowledge

- Thursday February 24: Thomas Nagel, Chapter 2: How Do We Know Anything? (*What Does It All Mean?*);

- Tuesday March 1: John Pollock, "A Brain in a Vat";
Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (First Meditation)

What Are We?: Are we Minds or Bodies?

Mind-Body Problem

- Thursday March 3: Thomas Nagel, Chapter 4: The Mind-Body Problem;
John Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs"

- Tuesday March 8: Peter Carruthers: "The Mind Is the Brain"

- Thursday March 10: Midterm Exam

SPRING BREAK: March 12-20

Freedom of the Will

- Tuesday March 22: Thomas Nagel, Chapter 6: Free Will (*What Does It All Mean?*)

- Thursday March 24: Robert Kane, "Free Will: Ancient Dispute, New Themes"
(Second Paper Due)

Where Are We Going?: In Search of the Good Life

- Tuesday April 5: James Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"

- Thursday April 7: Plato, "The Immoralist's Challenge," excerpts from *The Republic*

- Tuesday April 12: J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism* Ch. 1 and Ch. 2

Thursday April 14: Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"

Tuesday April 19: Immanuel Kant, "The Good Will and the Categorical Imperative," excerpts from *Groundwork on the Metaphysics of Morals*

Thursday April 21: Aristotle, "Virtue and the Good Life," excerpts from *Nicomachean Ethics* (pp. 561-566)

Tuesday April 26: Aristotle, "Virtue and the Good Life," excerpts from *Nicomachean Ethics* (pp. 566-571)

Thursday April 28: G.K. Chesterton, "The Ethics of Elfland" (from *Orthodoxy*)

Tuesday May 3: G.K. Chesterton, "The Ethics of Elfland" continued...

(Third Paper Due)

Final Exam: TBA