

Krisanna M Scheiter
scheiter@sas.upenn.edu

Introduction to Philosophy

Spring 2010, Phil 001-302

Required Text:

Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings, Fifth Edition John Perry, Michael Bratman and John Martin Fischer, 2009.

* Readings which are not in the book will be posted on Blackboard

Course Description: This course is an introduction not only to the subject matter of philosophy, but also to the method of philosophy. To learn about the former we will read and discuss a range of philosophical essays (from ancient to contemporary sources), which address some of the most fundamental and important questions: What is the nature of underlying reality? What are the scopes and limits of human knowledge? Does God exist? What is the ultimate nature of persons? Do we have free will? What moral obligations do we have? What is the meaning of life? Through study, reflection, and responding to a range of answers to these questions, you will gain an appreciation for the method of philosophy; learning how to formulate, analyze, and criticize philosophical arguments, as well as to develop your own answers to these questions.

Assignments

10% Participation

40% Debates (20% for each debate)

50% Papers (25% for each paper)

Topics and Readings

THE STUDY OF PHILOSOPHY

January 14: Introduction, *On the Study of Philosophy*, *Logical Tool Kit*

January 19: Plato, *The Apology*; Bertrand Russell, *The Value of Philosophy*

I. GOD AND EVIL

January 21: Saint Anselm, *The Ontological Argument*; Saint Thomas Aquinas, *The Existence of God*; Recommended, Introduction to *God and Evil*

January 26: William Paley, *Natural Theology*; Blaise Pascal, *The Wager*; Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian*

January 28: Parts of David Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*

February 2: Gottfried Leibniz, *God, Evil and the Best of All Possible Worlds*; John Perry, *A Dialogue on Good, Evil, and the Existence of God*

II. KNOWLEDGE AND REALITY

February 4: Plato, *Thaetetus*; Recommended, Introduction to *Knowledge and Reality*

February 9: **Debates**

#1 Does God exist?

#2 Is evil compatible with the classical conception of God?

Hand out Paper Topics

February 11: Sturgeon, *Knowledge* (on Blackboard), Gettier, *Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?*, Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy: Meditation 1*

February 16: Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy: Meditations 2-6*

February 18: Christopher Grau, *Bad Dreams, Evil Demons, and the Experience Machine: Philosophy and The Matrix*

February 23: Hume, *On Scepticism with Regard to the Senses*, Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (190-199)

February 25: Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (199-216)

March 2: Salmon, *The Problem of Induction*; *Writing Philosophy Papers*

III. MINDS, BODIES, PERSONS

March 4: Gilbert Ryle, *Descartes's Myth*; David M. Armstrong, *The Nature of Mind*, Bertrand Russell, *The Argument from Analogy for Other Minds*; Recommended, Introduction to *Mind and Body*

Spring Break!

March 16: **First Paper Due**

Daniel Dennett, *Intentional Systems*; Paul M. Churchland, *Eliminative Materialism*

March 18: A. M. Turing, *Computing Machinery and Intelligence*

March 23: John R. Searle, *Minds, Brains, and Programs*

- March 25: Thomas Nagel, *What Is It Like to Be a Bat?*; Frank Jackson, *What Mary Didn't Know*, David Lewis, *Knowing What It's Like*
- March 30: John Locke, *Of Identity and Persons* (On Blackboard); Bernard Williams, *The Self and the Future*; Recommended Derek Parfit, *Personal Identity*
- April 1: Roderick Chishom, *Human Freedom and the Self*; Harry Frankfurt, *Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person*; Recommended Baron D'Holbach, *Free Will is a Myth* (On Blackboard)
- April 6: **Debates**
 #1 Is the mind identical with the brain?
 #2 Does Mary know something new?

Hand out Paper Topics

IV. ETHICS

- April 8: Bentham, *The Principle of Utility*; John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*; Recommended Introduction to *Ethics and Society*
- April 13: E. F. Carritt, *Criticisms of Utilitarianism*; J. J. C. Smart, *Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism*; Peter Singer, *Famine, Affluence, and Morality*
- April 15: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*; Recommended but not required, David Velleman, *A Brief Introduction to Kantian Ethics*
- April 20: Onora O'Neill, *Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems*; Thomas Nagel, *War and Massacre*
- April 22: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
- April 27: J. O. Urmson, *Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean* (on Blackboard); Thomas Nagel, *Aristotle on Eudaimonia*
- May 3: **Second Paper Due**