

Philosophy 105, Problems of Philosophy
Tues, Thurs 3:10pm-4:25pm, 4:35pm-5:50pm
Rockefeller Hall 210
Fall 2008 Syllabus and Reading Schedule

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What is philosophy? This course will introduce you to philosophy as the assimilation of human experiences—perceptual, imaginative, moral, and emotional—with the power and limitations of human reason. We will look at how philosophers apply reason and argumentation to perceptual experiences in their search for knowledge and rationality. We will investigate the issues of personal identity and the existence of unperceivable things to see how philosophers use reason to make sense of our imaginative experiences. Finally, we will look at the application of reason to moral and emotional experiences in the search for the right account of moral good, freedom, and moral responsibility. Students will leave the course with an appreciation for the breadth and scope of philosophical thinking.

Texts: *Reason and Responsibility: Readings in Some Basic Problems of Philosophy* ed., Feinberg, J. and Shafer-Landau, R. Wadsworth Publishing 2007. ISBN 0534625584.
Additional Readings on Blackboard

Requirements: Attendance and active participation in class discussions and on Blackboard (10%), a short paper (10%), two 1200-1500 word essays (25% and 30%), and a final exam (25%). Study questions will be made available ahead of the exam date.

Reading Schedule

(Please complete reading before lecture on the dates listed.)

Week 1, Sept. 2nd, 4th: Introduction to the Problems of Philosophy

Sept. 4th: Sextus Empiricus' "Outlines of Skepticism", (on Blackboard), Descartes' "Meditations on First Philosophy", Meditation One. (R&R pp. 166-168).

Week 2, Sept. 9th, 11th: The Road to Recovery?

Sept. 9th: Blumenfeld and Blumenfeld's "Can I Know That I Am Not Dreaming?" (on Blackboard).

Sept. 11th: Chisholm's "The Problem of the Criterion", (R&R pp. 150-156), Moore's "Proof of an External World", (R&R pp. 216-219). First essay topics distributed.

Week 3, Sept. 16th, 18th: Certainty and the Existence of God

Sept. 16th: Descartes' "Meditation Two" and "Meditation Three" (R&R pp. 169-180). Aquinas' "The Five Ways", Clarke's "A Modern Formulation of the Cosmological Argument", (R&R pp. 21-23).

Sept. 18th: William Paley's, "The Argument from Design", (R&R pp. 32-37). First essay due.

Week 4, Sept. 23rd, 25th: The Nonexistence of God

Sept. 23rd: Mackie's "Evil and Omnipotence", (R&R pp.78-85), Schlesinger's "The Problem of Evil and The Problem of Suffering", (R& R pp. 86-89), B.C. Johnson's "God and the Problem of Evil" (R&R pp. 97-101).

Week 5, Sept. 30th, Oct 2nd: The Rationality of Belief in God

Sept. 30th: Clifford's "The Ethics of Belief", (R&R pp. 101-105), Clark's "Without Evidence or Argument", (R&R pp. 114-119) Pascal's "The Wager" (R&R pp. 119-122).

Oct. 2nd: James' "The Will to Believe", (R&R pp. 106-114). Blackburn's "Miracles and Testimony", (R&R pp. 122-128). Second essay topics distributed.

Week 6, Oct 7th, 9th: Personal Identity

Oct. 7th: Perry's "Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality," (R&R pp. 387-406). Locke's "The Prince and the Cobbler", 'Of Mr. Locke's Account of our Personal Identity", (R&R pp. 365-373).

Oct. 9th: Parfit's 'Divided Minds and the Nature of Persons" (R&R pp. 373-378) and Section I of "Personal Identity" (on Blackboard).

Week 7 Oct. 14th, 16th: Personal Identity

Oct. 14th: Williams' "The Self and the Future," (on Blackboard).

Oct. 16th: Reid's "Of Identity" (on Blackboard). Swinburne's "Personal Identity: The

Dualist View” (on Blackboard). Second essay due.

Week 8 Oct. 28th, Oct 30th: Free Will and Determinism

Oct. 28th: Holbach’s “The Illusion of Free Will,” , Pereboom’s “Why we Have No Free Will”, (R&R pp. 458-477).

Oct. 30th: Chisholm’s “Human Freedom and the Self”, (R&R pp. 438-445). Libet’s “Do We Have Free Will?” (on Blackboard).

Week 9, Nov. 4th, 6th. Free Will and Moral Responsibility

Nov. 4th: Frankfurt’s “Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility”, (R&R pp. 486-492). Frankfurt’s “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person”, (on Blackboard).

Week 10, Nov. 11th, 13th Consequentialism and Trolley Problems

Nov. 11th: *excerpts* from Mill’s “Utilitarianism” (R&R pp. 640-648). Thompson’s “Trolley Problems” (on Blackboard). Third essay topic distributed

Nov. 13th: Harris’ “The Survival Lottery” (R&R pp. 692-696).

Week 11, Nov. 18th, 20th: Kantianism

Nov. 18th: Kant’s “The Good Will and the Categorical Imperative” (R&R pp. 625-640).

Nov. 20th: Nagel’s “Moral Luck”, (R&R pp. 493-500).

Week 12, Nov. 25th Applying Philosophical Ethics

Nov. 25th: Singer’s “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”, (R&R pp. 678-685.) Third essay due.

Week 13, Dec. 2nd, 4th Applying Philosophical Ethics

Dec. 2nd: Thompson’s “A Defense of Abortion”, (on Blackboard).

Dec. 4th: Marquis’ “Why Abortion is Immoral” (on Blackboard).

Final Meeting, Dec. 9th What is Philosophy?

Dec. 9th: No Reading: Final Examination study guide distributed.

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities who are registered with the Office of Disability and Support Services. Students in need of disability accommodations should schedule an appointment with me early in the semester to discuss any accommodations for this course which have been approved by the Office of Disability and Support Services, as indicated in your DSS accommodation letter.