

Philosophy 1010: Introduction to Philosophy
REVISED 7/19/2022

Summer 2022
Second 6-Week Session
June 27-August 5

COURSE SYLLABUS

1. Instructor Information

Tyson Cain
caint@bgsu.edu
715-302-8408 (cell)
Office Hours (Zoom): TUES 9-10:30 AM
WEDS 12-1:30 PM
Other Times By Appointment (by telephone or via Zoom)

2. Office Hours

Office hours are opportunities for you to visit with me in real time about the course content, requirements, and anything else that may be on your mind. They are also good opportunities to engage with me philosophically. Please take advantage of them!

Because of the instruction mode, I will hold my office hours virtually on Zoom, creating and sharing links to each session throughout the term. I am also happy to talk by telephone if this is your preference. Appointments are unnecessary unless you want to meet with me outside of my regular hours.

3. Course Description

What is philosophy, and why is it important? How do philosophers think? What are their so-called “tools of the trade?” What do they discuss? In this course, we will explore answers to these questions and take a hands-on approach to the practice of philosophy by engaging with a few of its best texts. We will learn how to construct and evaluate arguments and visit perennial topics such as free will, the problem of suffering, and the reliability of our perceptions.

4. Course Goals & Learning Outcomes

- To help you develop a basic understanding of what philosophy is – its analytical techniques and favored topics
- To practice applying philosophy’s analytical techniques to ordinary discourse
- To improve your ability to read texts closely and describe their main arguments in your own words
- To enhance your ability to think conceptually and independently by critically evaluating arguments

- To achieve a deeper appreciation for the complexity and diversity of philosophical issues, techniques, and beliefs

These goals and outcomes parallel those described by the Bowling Green Perspective (BGP) Humanities and Arts requirement, which this course fulfills:

BGP Learning Outcomes: Humanities & The Arts		Course Learning Outcomes	
Apply humanistic modes of inquiry and interpretation in the illustration of the discipline's connection to human values.		• Developing your understanding of the philosophical issues related to the environment by reading about, writing on, discussing them within the social and cultural contexts in which they arise in the United States. • Improving your ability to think critically by analyzing and evaluating philosophical arguments explored. • Improving your ability to think creatively by developing and defending your views on the philosophical issues discussed. • Improving your ability to think conceptually by inquiring into philosophical issues related to the environment, within the social and cultural contexts in which they arise in the United States.	
Demonstrate a fundamental critical understanding of the role of arts, language, and/or media in culture and society.		• Developing your understanding of the philosophical issues related to the environment by reading about, writing on, discussing them within the social and cultural contexts in which they arise in the United States. • Improving your ability to think critically by analyzing and evaluating philosophical arguments pertaining to environmental issues.	
Examine how the social and cultural contexts of creative endeavors arise over a variety of historical periods.		• Improving your ability to think conceptually by inquiring into philosophical issues related to the environment, within the social and cultural contexts in which they arise in the United States.	
Illustrate the development of verbal and non-verbal communication in the humanities and/or the arts.		• Improving your ability to think creatively by developing and defending your views on the philosophical issues discussed.	
BGP Learning Outcomes: Cultural Diversity in the U.S.		Course Learning Outcomes	
Recognize the ways in which diverse cultures or subcultures have shaped and continue to shape American life		• Improving your understanding of the ways in which cultural diversity in the U.S. leads to different perspectives about the importance of the environment. • Improving your understanding of the ways in which U.S. cultural diversity leads to conflict regarding environmental issues.	
Explain ways in which diverse cultures or subcultures have shaped and continue to shape American life		• Improving your understanding of the ways in which cultural diversity in the U.S. leads to different perspectives about the importance of the environment.	

	- Improving your understanding of the ways in which U.S. cultural diversity leads to conflict regarding environmental issues. - Improving your understanding of the ways in which your own cultural and sub-cultural identity has shaped your perspective on environmental issues
Examine issues and challenges in cultural diversity from the perspectives of diverse cultures	Improving your understanding of the ways in which U.S. cultural diversity leads to conflict regarding environmental issues.
Compare values of their own subculture(s) with those of others	- Improving your understanding of the ways in which cultural diversity in the U.S. leads to different perspectives about the importance of the environment. - Improving your understanding of the ways in which your own cultural and sub-cultural identity has shaped your perspective on environmental issues

5. Required Texts

There is nothing you need to purchase. I will post all required reading to Canvas as Adobe Acro-bate files (PDFs) or links to blogs, videos, or other websites.

6. Instruction Mode & Delivery

This is an online, asynchronous course. As described by BGSU, courses delivered in this mode “do not meet on specific days and times. Students . . . will be able to complete coursework on their own time, as long as deadlines are met. Students will also be asked to engage in substantive interactions throughout the semester.”

See <https://www.bgsu.edu/registration-records/class-search-help.html> for details and to compare how this delivery mode compares to the others.

I will upload PowerPoint presentations to Canvas that incorporate supplementary, audible explanations of the material. I may also occasionally post video recordings. Together these will constitute the course lectures. You will complete or upload your quizzes, exams, and written homework in the designated Canvas module.

In addition to a stable Internet connection, you must be able to open PowerPoint files and Adobe Acrobat documents, stream YouTube content and other videos, and use the tools found in Canvas. We will also utilize Zoom to interact during my regular office hours and for other real-time conferences, if any.

7. Course Design

This course is designed around a selection of valuable philosophical texts concerning topics of perennial interest and central importance. I will assign reading from these texts and regularly quiz you about them. These quizzes will be predominantly multiple-choice.

Each week you also will need to provide a short response (100 words minimum) to one of two questions pertaining to that week's reading and PowerPoint slides. I will occasionally substitute this requirement with a request that you reply a question about your previous post.

You will write a term paper of approximately 1,000 words from a list of topics I will provide. The purpose is to allow you to practice writing an extended philosophical argument using the knowledge you acquire from the readings. No additional research will be necessary. This paper will be due at the end of Week 6.

Finally, you will take a comprehensive final exam, due at the end of Week 6, consisting of multiple-choice, short answer, and short essay questions, worth 35% of your final course grade. The exam will allow you to improve the answers you provided throughout the course in the quizzes, discussion posts, and post replies, and to show me how much you know and how well you can argue. The exam will consist of multiple-choice, short-answer responses (2-3 sentences each), and an essay answer of 200-400 words. Information about the due date of the final exam is listed on Page 10.

I will post to Canvas all reading, guides, instructions, questions, quizzes, videos, exams, and other course content. Each of the six weekly modules will contain the material you need for the week in question. Please familiarize yourself with our Canvas page and return to it frequently for announcements and new content.

8. Assessment & Grading

Reading Quizzes 480 pts (30%)

Discussion Posts & Replies 240 pts (15%)

Final Exam 560 pts (35%)

Term Paper 320 pts (20%)

TOTAL POINTS AVAILABLE: 1,600

FINAL GRADE	POINT EQUIVALENT
A	1440-1600
B	1280-1439
C	1120-1279
D	960-1119
F	< 960

Late Assignment Policy:

- Except as noted below, I will impose the following penalty for all written assignments and exams turned in late:
 - 2% of the total possible points per each day late, counted in whole days
 - For example, an assignment worth 320 points earning a score of 269 but 3 days late would have 18 points deducted ($3 \times .02(320)$),

and the assignment's final score would be 250, or 78.1%, down from 84.1%.

- I will round to the nearest 24-hour period. For instance, an assignment or exam turned in 1-12 hours late will count as on time. Assignments turned in 13-36 hours late will be counted as 1 day late, 37-60 hours beyond time as 2 days late, and so on.
- Except as required by BGSU policy, I will not accept late discussion posts, replies, or quizzes for credit, although I will still evaluate late submissions for the sake of your learning. In exchange, I will give each student full credit for the two lowest scores among the student's posts, post replies, and quizzes. For example, if your two lowest scores are 20/40 on a quiz and 0/30 on a discussion post, then I will adjust these scores to 40/40 and 30/30, respectively, for the purpose of calculating your final grade.
- If you have trouble completing an assignment, quiz, or exam because (1) you do not understand the course material or (2) you find my instructions confusing or unclear, please visit me during my office hours (or another time by appointment) to gain the understanding you need to complete and submit your work. And please do this well *before* the assignment is due.
- If you cannot complete work because of a personal health issue or some other unforeseen situation, please tell me as soon as practicable so that we can make appropriate arrangements for the completion of your work. With timely notice (where timely notice is possible), I will extend deadlines as necessary and warranted by the circumstances and work with you to secure the resources and accommodations you need.

Supporting Your Success:

I want you to be successful – in this course, in your other courses, and in all your sincerely pursued endeavors. Although success is primarily your responsibility, everyone needs help now and then. If you find yourself in need of assistance, here are a few options:

- Meet with me during my office hours or at another time you schedule with me in advance (see Page 1). One-on-one conversation can be surprisingly effective at helping you comprehend the material and get back on track.
- If you have persistent learning trouble that may warrant attention by BGSU's Accessibility Services, please let me know right away so that I can accommodate you. Please also contact the Office of Accessibility Services at 419-372-8495 or visit its office during regular business hours, or as advised at

<https://www.bgsu.edu/accessibility-services.html>.

- Seek help from the Learning Commons in Jerome Library. Tutoring and other services are available at no additional charge. Information about the Learning Commons and other student resources is available here:

<https://www.bgsu.edu/accessibility-services/students.html>.

9. Technology Help

Information Technology Services (ITS) offers students technical support. Please contact them if you experience difficulties related to Internet connectivity, website or account access, or the hardware or software that you are using or need to use. Visit their service desk at 110 Hayes Hall or chat with them online or by calling 419-372-0999. Self-help guides and other information may be viewed at <https://www.bgsu.edu/its.html>.

10. Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty refers typically to *plagiarism*, which means presenting other people's work as your own or, in some cases, recycling your own work without permission. Plagiarism often occurs when a student copies other writers' texts word-for-word or paraphrases other texts without assigning credit to the source. Plagiarism also can mean helping someone else submit copied or paraphrased text without providing due credit.

Plagiarism is a grave matter, so grave that I must report all reasonable suspicions of it to the student's academic dean, with escalating academic consequences for the student in question. Additionally, I will penalize all verified instances of plagiarism by withholding credit for the post, quiz, paper, or exam that contains plagiarized text, assigning to all such work a score I deem appropriate under the circumstances. If the plagiarism is sufficiently egregious, the work that contains it will receive a score of 0 points.

You are fully responsible for knowing what BGSU counts as plagiarism and for making sure that neither I nor your academic dean have any reason to believe you have plagiarized. For details about this topic, and for information about how to ensure your work is properly and fully referenced, see the BGSU's official policy at:

<https://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/catalog/academic-honesty/official-policy.pdf>

11. Respectful Discourse

As is common in the study of philosophy, discussing some topics may evoke strong feelings in and between interlocutors. Examples include discussions about abortion, euthanasia, religious practices, and the death penalty. Since these responses are common and perfectly normal, we all have the responsibility to recognize them and take care to treat each other respectfully, encouraging others to do the same. Philosophy is about honest, constructive, and disciplined dialogue about the most fundamental questions we can think to ask about human existence. As such, policy debates can often be left to one side. In any case, however, there is no place

for accusations, personal attacks, and demeaning conduct by or between students. I will not tolerate this from anyone for any reason.

12. Ownership of Instructor-Designed Materials

The content of my PowerPoint slides and accompanying lectures, together with all tests, exams, quizzes, outlines, videos, and other instructor-designed materials (“Materials”) is protected by U.S. copyright law and by BGSU’s policies. I am the exclusive owner of the copyright in these Materials. Any BGSU student enrolled in this course (“Student”) may download, open, print, and otherwise access and use these Materials to review, study, learn and take notes from in order to successfully fulfill the requirements of this course. A Student may also share these Materials with another Student, tutor, instructor, or other person who in good faith and at the Student’s request wishes to advance the Student’s comprehension and learning of the course content.

All other reproduction, distribution, or display of the Materials, whether or not for a fee, is expressly prohibited without my prior and express written consent. You may also not allow another Student to do so, per the BGSU Code of Student Conduct, the terms of which apply to every Student.

Similarly, a Student owns the copyright of all the Student’s original work. I will always obtain your express written consent before using any such work for any purpose other than originally intended by the Student (evaluation, grading, and other related activities).

13. Additional Information

BGSU is a veteran-friendly university. If you are a veteran or on active duty and face special challenges because of this, please notify me so that we can arrange for reasonable accommodations.

BGSU desires to make every reasonable effort to allow students to observe their religious holidays without academic penalty. Since this course is being delivered asynchronously, students wishing to observe a religious holiday will not need to miss class time. If a religious holiday observance will conflict with any other responsibility the student has because of enrollment in this course, please inform me as soon as practicable so that we can arrange for reasonable accommodations.

14. Right to Modify and Amend Course Syllabus

I reserve the right to modify and amend this syllabus at any time or times. If I do this, I will take all necessary measures to ensure all changes are announced, helpful, and evenhanded.

15. Schedule

WEEK 1 (June 27-1) PHILOSOPHY AND ITS METHOD

1. **Plato**, “Euthyphro”
2. Nigel **Warburton**, “Introduction” in *Philosophy: The Basics*, pp. 1-6
3. Monroe C. **Beardsley**, et al., “What is Philosophy?”
4. **Kant**, “What is Enlightenment?”
5. Karl **Jaspers**, “Introduction” in *Philosophy of Existence*, pp. 3-14



Quizzes 1, 2 (both due 11:59 PM on Friday, 7/1)



Discussion Post 1 (due 11:59 PM on Sunday, 7/3)

WEEK 2 (July 5-8) KNOWLEDGE AND KNOWING

1. René **Descartes**, “Meditations on First Philosophy,” *Meditations* 1-2
2. A. J. **Ayer**, “What is Knowledge?” (selections)
3. Edmund **Gettier**, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?” (selections)
4. Hans-Georg **Gadamer**, *Truth and Method* trans. Joel Weinsheimer, pp. 278-96 (selections)



Quizzes 3, 4 (both due 11:59 PM on Friday, 7/8)



Discussion Post 2 (due 11:59 PM on Sunday, 7/10)

WEEK 3 (July 11-15) REASONING & POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

1. Steven M. **Cahn**, et al., “The Elements of Argument” (pp. 50-53 optional)
2. Stephen F. **Barker**, “Improving Your Thinking”
3. John Stuart **Mill**, “On Liberty”, Chapters 1-2
4. Jean-Jacques **Rousseau**, “On the Social Contract” in Book 1
5. Virginia **Held**, “Non-Contractual Society: A Feminist View” (selections)



Quizzes 5, 6, 7 (all due 11:59 PM on Friday, 7/15)



Discussion Post 3 (due 11:59 PM on Sunday, 7/17)



Reply to Discussion Post 2 (due 11:59 PM on Sunday, 7/17)

WEEK 4 (July 18-22) FREE WILL & INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

1. Thomas **Pink**, “Free Will: A Very Short Introduction”, Chapter 1
2. Galen **Strawson**, “Your Move: The Maze of Free Will”
3. Baron Paul Henri **d’Holbach**, “A Defense of Determinism”
4. W. T. **Stace** on compatibilism, or soft determinism, from *Religion and the Modern Mind*
5. Mark **Timmons**, “An Introduction to Moral Theory” (selections)



Quizzes 8, 9 (both due 11:59 PM on Friday, 7/22)



Discussion Post 4 (due 11:59 PM on Sunday, 7/24)



Reply to Question About Discussion Post 3 (due 11:59 PM on Sunday, 7/24)

WEEK 5 (July 25-29) ETHICS (MORAL PHILOSOPHY)

1. Mark **Timmons**, “Does Morality Depend on God’s Commands?”
2. James **Rachels**, et al., “Kant and Respect for Persons” (selection)
3. Onora **O’Neill**, “Kant’s Ethics”
4. J. S. **Mill**, *Utilitarianism* (selection)
5. James **Rachels**, et al., “Subjectivism in Ethics” (selection)



Quizzes 10, 11, 12 (all due 11:59 PM on Friday, 7/29)



Discussion Post 5 (due 11:59 PM on Sunday, 7/31)

WEEK 6 (August 1-5) **PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY'S VALUE**

1. Richard Swinburne, "Why God Allows Evil"
2. Simon Blackburn, "Pascal's Wager"
3. Bertrand Russell, "The Value of Philosophy"
4. Thomas V. Morris, "The Folly of Indifference" (Chapter 2) in *Making Sense of It All* (OPTIONAL)

⊕ **Reply to Question About Discussion Post 5** (due 11:59 PM on **FRIDAY**, 8/5)

Final Exam

- **Posted** Thursday, July 28 @ 5:00 PM
- **Due** Thursday, August 4 @ 11:59 PM

This is an open-note, open-book, timed exam. You will have 3 hours to finish after you begin, with no ability exit and return at a later time. You should need only about 2 hours to finish it, however.

Final Paper

Due Friday, August 5 @ 11:59 PM