

PHIL101

Introduction to Philosophy

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Office Hours: MW 12:45–1:45 pm

Waggener 405

Aims of the Course

In this course, you'll learn how to think critically about abstract topics like the nature of God, morality, personal identity, and existence. In particular, you'll evaluate arguments that attempt to answer the following questions:

1. Does God exist?
2. What should I do, ethically speaking?
3. What kind of thing am I?
4. What exists, in the most general sense?

Unlike your grades in other courses, your grade in this course will not depend on whether you can provide the correct answers to these questions. Your grade will depend instead on (i) your understanding of competing answers to these questions and (ii) your ability to justify these answers with arguments. This doesn't automatically mean that there are no correct answers to philosophical questions, more generally. I'll try to convince you throughout the course that, on the contrary, the correct answers to these questions are difficult to find, and both disagreements and uncertainty are natural consequences of this.

The first goal of this course is to introduce you to, and to hopefully incite your lifelong interest in, the practice of philosophy. The second goal of this course is to make certain intellectual tools available to you; these tools will help you to think more critically, independently, and fairly. The ultimate goal of this course is not, therefore, for you to learn a collection of facts; it's for you to learn how to think with more clarity and confidence about any topic you might encounter whatsoever.

Readings

All readings will be made available online.

Grading

There are 1000 points possible in this course. Here's how that breaks down:

200pts Quizzes (4 x 50 pts each): 10 multiple choice questions for each section in syllabus.

350pts Course Paper: 1500 word essay presenting an argument from class in premise-conclusion form and responding to it. Writing workshop will be mandatory.

350pts Final Exam: Cumulative, short answers. Study guide will be made available.

100pts Attendance & Participation

970-1000	A+	870-900	B+	770-800	C+	670-700	D+	below 610	F
940-970	A	840-870	B	740-770	C	640-670	D		
910-930	A-	810-830	B-	710-730	C-	610-630	D-		

Attendance & Participation

Learning philosophy requires doing philosophy. Attendance will be taken each day, and after the second absence, 20 points will be deducted for every subsequent absence from the Attendance & Participation grade. Do contact me, however, in extenuating circumstances.

In this course, it's perfectly normal – and encouraged – to do the following:

- Ask questions in the middle of lecture when you are confused.
- Be dissatisfied with an explanation and ask for another.
- Disagree with something and present a problem or worry for it.
- Agree with something and present further justification for it.
- Be unconfident about a point you'd like to make, but try to make it anyway, even if you abandon the attempt halfway through.
- e-mail me, talk with me before and after class, or visit my office hours with questions, thoughts, comments, and concerns you have about the course material.

Late Work & Quiz Make-ups

Late work will receive a 10% overall deduction for each 24 hour period of lateness. Quizzes can be made-up during my office hours; if you miss a quiz, email me for more details.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
1/11	Introduction to PHIL101	
1/13	Tools for Philosophy: Validity, Soundness, Necessary and Sufficient Conditions	- Edward Craig, <i>Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction</i> (excerpt)
1/18	No Class – MLK Holiday	
Section 1: Does God Exist? <i>Philosophy of Religion</i>		
1/20	PRACTICE QUIZ ON VALIDITY & SOUNDNESS The Problem of Evil: “No!”	- Mackie, “Evil and Omnipotence”

1/25	The Free Will Response: “Yes!”	- van Inwagen, “The Problem of Evil”
1/27	A Priori Arguments for God’s Existence: “Yes!”	- Aquinas’ 2nd Way - Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> (excerpt)
2/1	A Posteriori Arguments for God’s Existence: “Yes!”	- Aquinas’ 5th Way - Paley, <i>Natural Theology</i> (excerpt)
2/3	Euthyphro’s Dilemma: <i>Segue into Morality</i>	- Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> (excerpt)
Section 2: What Should I Do? <i>Ethics / Morality</i>		
2/8	QUIZ #1 ON SECTION 1 Utilitarianism: “Maximize pleasure!”	- Mill, <i>Utilitarianism II</i> (excerpt) - Thomson, “Killing, letting die, and the trolley problem”
2/10	Deontology: “Follow the rules!”	- Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> (selections)
2/15	Moral Relativism: “Depends who’s asking!”	- Benedict, “Anthropology and the Abnormal” (excerpt) - MacIntyre, “Moral Pluralism without Moral Relativism”
2/17	Moral Luck: “Get lucky!”	- Nagel, “Moral Luck”
2/22	Free Will & Determinism: “Does it even matter?”	- van Inwagen, “The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will”
2/24	QUIZ #2 ON SECTION 2 Course Paper Workshop	

Section 3: What Kind of Thing Am I?

Philosophy of Mind / Personal Identity

3/7	Dualism: “An immaterial thing!”	- Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> (excerpt) - Correspondence between Elisabeth and Descartes
3/9	Materialism: “A material thing!”	- van Inwagen, “Dualism and Personal Identity” (excerpt) - Jackson, “What Mary Didn’t Know”
3/14 - 3/16	<i>No Class – Spring Break</i>	
3/21	Realizability & Functionalism: “A glorified calculator!”	- Anderson, “Introduction to Functionalism” - Cole, “The Chinese Room Argument” (excerpt)
3/23	Psychologism: “A bunch of memories!”	- Locke, “Of Identity and Diversity” (excerpt) - Reid, “Of Mr. Locke’s account of our personal identity” - Williams, “The Self and the Future” (excerpt)
3/28	Eliminativism: “Nothing!”	Parfit, “Divided Minds and the Nature of Persons”
Section 4: What Exists? <i>Metaphysics</i>		
3/30	QUIZ #3 ON SECTION 3 Composition: “Parts and (w)holes!”	- van Inwagen, <i>Material Beings</i> (excerpts) - Lewis, “Holes”
4/4	Constitution: “Lumps and statues!”	- Sider, “Constitution”

4/6	Vagueness: “Fuzzy stuff!”	- Galen, “On Medical Experience”
4/11	Physics: “Particles, waves & space-time!”	- Huggett, “Zeno’s Paradoxes” (excerpts)
4/13	Similarity: “Substances & properties!”	- van Inwagen, “A Theory of Properties” (excerpts)
4/20	QUIZ #4 ON SECTION 4 Flex Day	TBD
4/25	COURSE PAPER DUE In-class Review of Sections 1 & 2	
4/27	In-class Review of Sections 3 & 4	
TBD	FINAL EXAM	

Other Important Dates

February 15: Check 'Grades' on Canvas to see if I have any concerns about your performance in the course. This is a good time to come talk to me about how you are doing in the course so far.

March 15: Make an appointment with your advisor to plan for upcoming semester(s).

March 22: Last day to withdraw with an automatic W. After this date, students can only withdraw under exceptional circumstances and need permission from the Dean's Office and the instructor.

April 1: Continuing student enrollment for Summer and Fall '23 starts. Check your student portal for the exact date and time.

Zero Tolerance of Cheating & Plagiarism

Plagiarism means using words, ideas, or arguments from another person or source without citation. Cite all sources consulted to any extent (including material from the internet), whether or not assigned and whether or not quoted directly. For quotations, four or more words used in sequence must be set off in quotation marks, with the source identified. Any form of cheating will immediately earn you a failing grade for *the entire course*. By remaining enrolled, you consent to this policy.

Accommodations for Disabilities

If you have a disability or need assistance, special arrangements can be made. Contact the Director of Disabled Student Services (Administration Building, Room 149, telephone number ###-####), as soon as possible to work out the details. Once the Director has provided you with a letter attesting to your needs for modification, bring the letter to me. For more information, please visit the web site for Office of Disabled Student Services www.website.com).

Policy on Sexual Misconduct

UT Austin does not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment and all forms of sexual violence. If you have experienced sexual misconduct, or know someone who has, the University can help. It is important to know that federal regulations and University policy require faculty to promptly report complaints of potential sexual misconduct known to them to the Deputy Title IX Coordinator(s) on campus to ensure that appropriate measures are taken and resources are made available. The University will work with you to protect your privacy by sharing information with only those that need to know to ensure the University can respond and assist. If you are seeking help and would like to speak to someone confidentially, you can make an appointment with a Mental Health Counselor on campus (contact information available at www.website.com).