

Philosophy 1000: Introduction to Philosophy
TR 11:00
Peabody 115
Discussions F/M
TA: Greg Moss

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Description

An introduction to some central philosophical questions and approaches to them. We will discuss the existence of god, the relation of faith and reason, the nature of political authority and justice, the relation between mind and body, the soul, and the meaning of life. We all have views about these topics, and they are important to how we live our lives, but our understanding of them is often vague or incomplete. One of the main goals of the course is to work toward more developed, articulate, and reasoned views on these topics. After taking this course you should have a better understanding of different views on these topics *and* be more skilled in evaluating these views and the reasons for them. As a consequence, you should have a better understanding of your own views and, thereby, yourself.

Conduct of the Course

Our Tuesday-Thursday meetings will be more lecture-oriented and aimed at presenting the ideas of the readings in such a way that you can check your understanding of them and relate them to other ideas. We will occasionally augment lectures by in-class reflection, writing, and group work. The discussion sections will focus on addressing student questions and serve as a forum for exploring the ideas in the readings and lectures. I don't expect everyone to be ready to speak up in a large lecture hall, but you will be expected to speak up in the discussion sections. In this course you will be evaluated on an individual basis, but I encourage you to work together with other students in preparing for class or exams, or in writing your paper – subject, of course, to the principles of academic honesty (see below). Philosophy at its best is conversation, and there is no reason to restrict it to our class meetings.

Texts

W. Lawhead, *Philosophical Questions*, 2003, McGraw-Hill
Other items on web or reserve.

Requirements

General: You are responsible for the content of both the readings and the in-class discussions. You should complete the reading before the session in which it is discussed and come prepared to talk or write about it. The main things we are looking for is understanding of the arguments and positions, and skill in assessing them. That means you can do more than just explain what a certain view is, you can also explain the reasoning behind that view and address the validity and soundness of that reasoning.

Participation: Your participation grade will be based on a combination of your contributions to lectures and discussion sections and your performance on assorted quizzes throughout the semester. I will regularly (but not necessarily always) give you questions to think about before we discuss them. This will account for 10% of your final grade.

Exams: There will be three exams. The first two will be on the section of the course just covered, while the final exam will be comprehensive. For the first two you should expect to write three

essays on questions related to the topics we've discussed. The final will be longer, and may involve some short-answer questions. Each of the first two will count for 20% of your final grade; the final will count for 25%

Paper: A short (4-5 page) paper on a topic drawn from the readings, due toward the end of the semester. This will count for 25% of your final grade.

Grading Criteria

- A Thorough understanding and evidence of original thinking. You can explain clearly the reasoning behind the arguments, explain objections and replies, assess them, show implications for other issues or examples, suggest other approaches or considerations.
- B Solid understanding of arguments and positions. You can give a generally accurate and clear explanation of the positions, arguments, objections, and replies. But you need to work on your assessment of them, or on showing you understand implications or alternatives.
- C Partial understanding of arguments and positions. You show a general grasp of what the arguments and positions are, but it is unclear whether you really understand the reasoning behind them or the sorts of objections they are susceptible to and why.
- D Seriously incomplete understanding. You do show that you really understand the positions and arguments.
- F

Policies

Late work and make-ups: Late papers will be penalized one-third of a grade for each day the paper is late. I will not give a make-up exam, quiz, or in-class assignment without either an excuse I have approved in advance or concrete evidence of an emergency which kept you from attending.

Grade complaints: Greg and I will discuss your grade in the course at any time. If you want a grade *changed*, you must provide us with a detailed written argument for why the change is justified.

Academic honesty: You are responsible for knowing UGA's policies on academic honesty (see http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/culture_honesty.htm). Talk to me or Greg if you have any questions or concerns. Be especially aware of plagiarism, which consists in passing off someone else's work as your own, with or without that person's consent. I will push for the strongest available punishment if you are found guilty of such an offense.

Resources

Greg and I are available to talk with you about specific issues relating to this class. The University has a Learning Center that provides help with writing assignments, time management issues, reading and studying strategies, and general academic counseling (<http://www.uga.edu/dac>). (There is no shame in feeling not fully prepared to handle the various challenges of University life, since it is a notorious feature of our educational system that many students do not get the preparation they should.) If you have a disability requiring special accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center (<http://www.drc.uga.edu/>).

Schedule

This schedule is tentative and subject to change. I will notify you of changes in class and by email.

Aug. 16	Introduction
Aug. 21	Plato: The Activity of Philosophy (<i>Euthyphro</i> , p. 8-18)
Aug. 23	Frankfurt: "On Bullshit" (WebCT)
Aug. 28	Plato: Philosophy on Trial (<i>Apology</i> , p. 18-32)
Aug. 30	Questions about Philosophy: Evaluating Arguments (p. 32-43)
Sep. 4	The Existence of God/Aquinas (p. 44-47, 53-58)
Sep. 6	Principle of Sufficient Reason/Taylor and Rowe (p. 58-75)
Sep. 11	The Design Argument/Paley and Hume (p. 75-88)
Sep. 13	Movie: <i>The Seventh Seal</i>
Sep. 18	Evil/Camus, Johnson, Hick (p. 97-116)
Sep. 20	Faith and Reason/Flew, Hare, and Mitchell (p. 137-144)
Sep. 25	The Hiddenness of God/McKim (WebCT)
Sep. 27	Science and Religion/Dawkins (p. 144-150)
Oct. 2	Exam
Oct. 4	Politics/Taylor (p. 500-508), Hobbes (reserve)
Oct. 9	Social Contract/Hobbes and Locke (p. 517-525)
Oct. 11	Social Contract/Locke, continued.
Oct. 16	Liberty/Mill (p. 525-532)
Oct. 18	Communism/Marx (p. 532-542)
Oct. 23	Libertarianism/Hospers (p. 549-556)
Oct. 25	Fall Break
Oct. 30	Social Contract/Rawls (p. 543-549)
Nov. 1	Exam
Nov. 6	The Self/Dennett (p. 270-284)
Nov. 8	The Self/Dennett (on web)
Nov. 13	Movie: <i>The Three Faces of Eve</i>
Nov. 15	Immortality/Badham (p. 324-341)
Nov. 20	The Good and The Moral Life/Aristotle (p. 434-438)
Nov. 22	Thanksgiving/No class

- Nov. 27 Death and What is Up to Us/Epictetus (p. 586-594)
Nov. 29 Life is Meaningless without God and Immortality/Tolstoy (p. 594-602)
- Dec. 6 God and Immortality are Irrelevant/Sartre (p. 609-617)
- Dec. 11 Final Exam, 12-3pm