Introduction to Philosophy
21:730:103:01
Fall 2010

Class location: Hill Hall 115
Meeting time: Mo-Wd 10:00-11:20am
Instructor: Professor Katalin Balog
Office: Philosophy Department, Conklin Hall, Room 410
Office phone: 973-353-1397
Office hours: Mondays 12-1 and by appointment.
email: kbalog@andromeda.rutgers.edu

Blackboard: once you registered for the class you can go to Blackboard and select the course “Introduction to Philosophy, 730:103.” The page will contain course-related information, viz., syllabus, powerpoint slides, announcements, and the readings which are not included in the books assigned for the course. You need to have access to Blackboard to participate in the course.

Course description:

Philosophy is the replacement of habitual thinking with critical inquiry. Doing philosophy doesn’t so much involve the knowledge of some special class of facts, it is more a specific skill, namely, the skill to think critically, carefully and deeply about issues that science, religion or literature alone is unable to settle but that nevertheless relates to what it is to be a human being in the world. This course is a general and non-technical introduction to the main traditional problems of metaphysics, ethics, and philosophy of mind through readings of historical figures and contemporary authors. Among our questions will be: How can we be free in a world governed by laws? What does it mean to be a person? Does morality transcend social norms? Is the mind related to the body in a way that makes it possible to survive our death or is “mind” and “brain” is just two ways to refer to the same thing? In this course you will get a sense of the boundaries of the subject and acquire the foundations for possible further study.

Prerequisites: None.

Required text:

T. Gendler, S. Siegel, S. Cahn (eds.), The Elements of Philosophy

It is available in the campus bookstore as of now.
Additional articles are posted on Blackboard.

Some helpful philosophy links to find out more about terms and topics discussed in class:

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy
What you can expect from the course: This class aims to give you a sense of the philosophical problems that have dominated the history of philosophy for the last 2500 years. However, because one of the most important features distinguishing philosophy from other academic disciplines is that it is a *skill* and not just a body of knowledge, we have another, more general goal in this class: to build up your ability to think critically and deeply, and to internalize this skill so that you can apply it to any subject matter whatsoever. One of the reasons that philosophy majors do considerably better on the LSAT’s than all other majors except physics is that they are taught to think constructively and critically irrespective of the subject matter. Doing philosophy is a skill that transfers well to other disciplines, and one of our aims is to help you to cultivate it. You will also get a rudimentary training in contemplative studies in this class; that is, what it means to study your own mind with patience and skill.

Tentative schedule of readings (Please notice that this schedule is *tentative* and so subject to change as the semester unfolds. *Coming to class and checking Blackboard on a regular basis will keep you informed of the changes*):

**Week 1** Sept. 1 Introduction (Look over syllabus; get acquainted)

*Religion and belief:*

**Week 2: Arguments for the existence of God**

*Sept 8* (Wednesday will count as Monday)

*William Paley: The Argument from Design* p. 31

**Week 3: Arguments for and against the existence of God**

*Sept 13:*

*William Paley continued,*

*Richard Taylor: The Cosmological Argument* p. 25

*Sept 15:*

*Adams, “Must God create the best?” (BB)

**Week 4: Belief and Faith**

*Sept. 20th*: first in-class quiz

*Sept 20:*

*Sept 22:*

*Pascal, *The Wager* p. 48

*William James, *The Will to Believe* p. 54

*Robert McKim, *The Hiddenness of God* p. 62

**Moral Philosophy:**

**Week 5: Utilitarianism**

*Sept 27:*

*J S Mill, *Utilitarianism*, p. 77

*Sept 29:*

*J S Mill, *Utilitarianism*, p. 77 continued

**Week 6: Utilitarianism vs. Deontology**

*Oct 4: Critiques of utilitarianism*

*Williams, *Utilitarianism, Integrity and Responsibility* p. 96

*Oct 6: Deontology*

*Immanuel Kant, Selections from *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*  p. 105

**Week 7 Some applications:**

*Oct 11:*

Review for the quiz
Oct. 13: second in-class quiz

Oct 13:
Preparation for paper writing

*Philosophy of Mind*

Week 8 Ethics continued and dualism

Oct 18:
*Judith Jarvis Thomson, The Trolley Problem* p. 195

Oct 20:
*Rene Descartes, Six Mediation* p. 553

Week 9 Physicalism and dualism

Oct 25:
*Gilbert Ryle, Descartes’ Myth* p. 571

**Short paper due Oct 27**

Oct 27:
*Daniel Stoljar, Physicalis* p. 578

Week 10: Consciousness

Nov 1:
*Frank Jackson, The Knowledge Argument* p. 611

Nov 3:
*Daniel Dennett, Quining Qualia* 629

Week 11 Consciousness continued

Nov 8:
*Ned Block, Concepts of Consciousness* p. 651
Nov. 10\textsuperscript{th}: third in-class quiz

Nov 10: quiz and Block continued

\textit{Free Will:}

Week 12: Incompatibilism

Nov. 15

*van Inwagen \textit{The Mystery of Metaphysical Freedom}

Nov. 17

*Roderick Chisholm, \textit{Human Freedom and the Self} p. 480

Week 13 Compatibilism


\textit{Personal identity and the self:}

Week 14: Process views

Nov. 29:

*John Locke, “Of Identity and Diversity” from \textit{An Essay Concerning Human Understanding} p. 512

Dec. 1:

*Derek Parfit, “Personal Identity” p. 532

Week 15: Anti-reductionism

Dec. 6:


December 8\textsuperscript{th}: fourth in-class quiz

Dec 8: quiz and Nida-Rümelin continued
Week 16

Dec 13:

Review for final exam

Revised paper due: Dec. 20th

FINAL EXAM: Dec. 22nd, Hill Hall 115 11:45 - 2:45 PM.

Weekly powerpoint lecture notes and study questions will be placed on BB shortly after each class designed to help you understand and think about the course material you are reading.

Preparing for class: Expect to do on average about ten pages of reading for each class. Be forewarned that reading philosophy, even when the reading assignment is short, is difficult and takes longer than reading many other kinds of texts. Often the author assigned will be developing a sophisticated and subtle line of reasoning that you will miss unless you give it your full attention. Therefore it is a good idea to read each article or chapter at least twice, and to write down your questions for discussion while reading the assignments, during lecture, or an office hour. You should spend a minimum of 4 hours preparing for the course every week. You should be prepared in each class to raise questions about the readings assigned for the day. I will call on people occasionally to help facilitate a discussion about the readings but also to make sure you have done the readings ahead of time.

Some Ground Rules for the Course:

1) Please come to each lecture and discussion section with the reading assigned for that date already completed. Be prepared to ask questions about the material. I will take attendance in each class. Unexcused absence from more than 3 classes will result in having the grade lowered by a half grade.

2) Do not read newspapers, magazines, books, etc., either in hard copy or in wireless form, in class.

3) No food or drink (unless you do it so unobtrusively that I don’t notice).

4) Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during class.

5) Your oral participation is strongly encouraged. You will likely disagree with a variety of views and concerns expressed in the class; please be respectful. Class discussion will be more fun and also more instructional if everybody feels safe to present their points of view.

Required course-work:

1) 4 in-class quizzes. The questions will be selected from the set of study questions posted on Blackboard.
2) short paper (2-3 page, on a topic distributed ahead of time) due W, October 27; revised version due by Dec 20th.
3) a final examination (Date TBA).
4) class attendance.

**In-Class Quizzes:** No Make-up Quizzes are given. The only accepted reasons for missing a quiz are: (1) illness documented by a doctor’s note; (2) a university sponsored activity taking place at the time the assignment is due; (3) family crisis with proper documentation provided.

**Grading:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>20% (5% each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
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Your quizzes, paper and exam will be assigned points out of 50, which will translate into letter grades as follows:

50-46 = A (50 is a full A; 46 is a A-/B+)
45-40 = B (45 is a B+ and 40 is a B-/C+)
39-34 = C (39 is a C+ and 34 is a C-/D+)
33-28 = D (33 is a D+ and 28 is a D-)
27 or below= F

*Class participation* will also affect your final grade: if you are on the borderline, your grade will be pushed up by good class participation and pushed down by poor class participation.

**Here are two highly recommended links to consult repeatedly during the semester that**

a) help you with your class preparation:
[Jim Pryor’s guide to reading philosophy](#)
b) guide you in the process of writing a philosophy paper:
[Jim Pryor’s guide to writing philosophy](#)

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:**

The Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as the representation of the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic work. Intentionally committing plagiarism is a serious offense with severe consequences. Instructors are required to report students who intentionally violate this policy to the department chairperson and to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. The most common forms of plagiarism are:

- Quoting directly or paraphrasing without acknowledging the source (this includes
copying or paraphrasing material from a web site without providing a proper citation for the site)
- Presenting the work of another as one’s own
- Plagiarizing major portions of a written assignment
- Submitting purchased materials such as term papers

The Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy establishes levels of violations and recommends sanctions. Depending upon the severity of the case and the level of the violation, the sanctions for these violations include: a failing grade for the assignment, failure in the course, mandatory participation in a series of noncredit academic integrity workshops, academic probation, and/or suspension.

(If you are in doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism or are concerned that you are misappropriating someones words or ideas, speak immediately with your instructor. For more information, you can also consult the University Code of Student Conduct or the Student Judicial Affairs website http://judicialaffairs.rutgers.edu.)

Special situations:

If you have a special situation concerning learning needs that either requires accommodation, or that you would simply like me to know about, please contact me as soon as possible. I will make every effort to aid you.

Rutgers abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments (ADAA) of 2008, and Sections 504 and 508 which mandate reasonable accommodations be provided for qualified students with disabilities and the accessibility of online information. If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodation, please contact me early in the semester so that I can provide or facilitate in providing accommodations you may need. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the Office of Disability Services, the designated office on campus to provide services and administer exams with accommodations for students with disabilities. The Office of Disability Services is located in the Robeson Student Center. I look forward to talking with you soon to learn how I may be helpful in supporting your academic success in this course.

For more information on disability services at Rutgers, go to http://disabilityservices-uw.rutgers.edu/.