

AS 150.130.11: Introduction to Philosophy

T, Th, F 1:00-3:15

Instructor:

Stephen Ogden

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(I will respond to email within 24 hrs. If not, kindly email again.)

Office Hours: T 3:15-4:15, F 3:15-4:15, and by appointment

Course Description:

This course is a topics-based introduction to the history and methods of philosophical reflection. We will consider several of the most important perennial questions of philosophy and various ways of addressing them, primarily from some of the most significant philosophers in the history of Western philosophy (with the addition of non-Western and contemporary authors). The course emphasizes learning the skills of reading and analyzing philosophical texts, reasoning logically, discussing themes and arguments, and writing clearly, both in reconstructing the thoughts of others and in producing one's own arguments.

The course is broken up into five units. The first unit will address the questions, "What is philosophy and why should we care about it?" We will also explore how philosophy is different from other types of inquiry. That will launch us into the second unit, on the existence of God (metaphysics/philosophy of religion). The third unit will examine questions of how we should fix our beliefs and the challenge of skepticism (epistemology). These issues of epistemology, in turn, will lead into the fourth unit, in which we will consider different conceptions of human nature (metaphysics/philosophy of mind), including dualism, materialism, and alternatives (e.g., hylomorphism). The fifth unit will ask how we should live and conduct ourselves in the world (ethics). We will touch on major ethical theories and take up a final consideration of the value of morality in the face of challenges to it.

Assignments and Grading:

- 1) Attendance AND participation—20%
- 2) Argument reconstruction (1-2 pages)—10%
- 3) Paper #1 (3-4 pages)—20%
- 4) Paper #2 (4-5 pages)—25%
- 5) Final exam (cumulative)—25%

Notes:

You must complete ALL requirements 1)–5) above in order to pass the course.

Regarding 1), I am weighing not just your showing up but also your active participation relatively heavily in this course. We have a lot of classroom time together each week, and you should maximize this aspect of the learning process. Thus, you must come to class having carefully read the material, ready to engage with it and your colleagues. You should have

questions and comments, and should be ready to take part in all discussions, in-class debates, and group work.

2) is due on Tues., 6/6, beginning of class (1:00 pm)

3) is due *any time before* Thurs., 6/15, beginning of class (1:00 pm)

4) is due *any time before* **Wed., 6/28, 1:00 pm**

I want to emphasize that the papers 3) and 4) can and should be done at your own pace and turned in any time before the listed latest deadlines. Because of our compacted schedule, I encourage you to stay active in preparing and executing these papers, to talk with me about them (before and after grading), and to avoid procrastination. I will give you some suggested topics and other information on writing the papers as we go along, but you should really work on what interests you, and you can do that work at any time, so long as you hit the latest deadline marks.

All unexcused late assignments will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade for each day overdue.

***** Academic Integrity:**

You must document ALL of your primary and secondary source material for writing in this (and any) class. This includes making clear all direct quotations of sentences (and even some phrases) with quotation marks, properly citing the quoted source, as well as citing *ANY IDEA* or other material (even if rephrased) which is not your own. If you have questions about how to properly acknowledge sources, please ask me! Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses, and *my default penalty for either violation will be (at minimum) an F on the assignment or failure in the course.* See the university's statement below, which I endorse:

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Report any violations you witness to the instructor. See the guide on "Academic Ethics for Undergraduates" and the Ethics Board Web site (<http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/undergrad-students/student-life-policies/#UAEB>) for more information.

You might also consult www.Plagiarism.org.

Accommodations

Any student with a disability who may need accommodations in this class must obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu.

Required Course Text:

L. Pojman and J. Fieser. *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*. 4th edition. Oxford, 2008. ISBN: 9780195311617. **Abbreviated as "IP" below.**

Reading Assignments:

N.B. Most of the selections are in the Pojman and Fieser (IP) course text; however, some of the readings are not and some from the textbook will be supplemented. All readings not in the textbook will be made available on the Blackboard site through E-Reserves (abbreviated as “BB” below) or by link to an online library/other source. We will occasionally read from other selections in class; sometimes these may come from readings labeled “Suggested” below.

UNIT I: WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

- Read IP 1-10

1. (T 5/30)

- Plato, *Apology* (IP 11-19)
- Plato, *Republic* VII, 514a—517c (Loeb Classical Library [107-117](#))

2. (Th 6/1)

- Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I.1-2 ([Past Masters](#) 1552-1555)
- Bertrand Russell, “The Value of Philosophy” (IP 25-29)
- Frodeman and Briggie, “When Philosophy Lost Its Way” ([New York Times 1/11/16](#))
- Scott Soames, “Philosophy’s True Home” ([New York Times 3/7/16](#))

UNIT II: THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

- Read IP 175-176

3. (F 6/2)

- Anselm, *Proslogion*, “The Ontological Argument” ([ch. 1](#) and IP 205-207)
- Gaunilo, “On Behalf of the Fool” (IP 207-208)
- Anselm, *Replies* (IP 208-209)

4. (T 6/6)

*** **Argument reconstruction DUE**

- Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q.2, a.3, “The Five Ways” (IP 183-185)
- Avicenna, *The Salvation* *Metaphysics* II.12 (BB McGinnis & Reisman 214-215)
 - Suggested: II.1-3, esp. II.1-2 (ibid., 211-213)
- Clarke, “The Causal Argument”/“Argument from Contingency” (IP 185-186)
- Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, from part IX (IP 186-188)
- Paley, *Natural Theology*, chs. 1 and 2 (IP 196-198)
- Hume, *Dialogues...*, from parts II and V (IP 199-205)

5. (Th 6/8)

- Hume, *Dialogues...*, part X ([Past Masters](#))
- Dostoevsky, “Grand Inquisitor” (IP 226-229)
 - Probably in class.
- Richard Swinburne, “A Theistic Response to the Problem of Evil” (IP 236-247)
- Marilyn Adams, “Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God” (BB Rea & Pojman 351-358)

UNIT III: EPISTEMOLOGY

- Read IP 31-32
- 6. (F 6/9)
 - W.K. Clifford, “The Ethics of Belief” (IP 259-263)
 - William James, “The Will to Believe” (IP 264-269)
 - Alvin Plantinga, from “Is Belief in God Properly Basic” (IP 270-280)
- 7. (T 6/13)
 - Plato, *Theaetetus*, 197d—e, 199b—201d, 208c—e (Loeb [207-209](#), [213-223](#), [249-251](#))
 - Edmund Gettier, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?” [Analysis 23 \(1963\): 121-123](#)
 - Descartes, *Meditations*, from Meditations I-III (IP 49-57)
- Suggested: Plato, *Meno* selections (IP 36-41); Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* I.1 and II.1 (IP 81-84); Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* XII.1 ([Past Masters](#) 151-153)

UNIT IV: HUMAN NATURE

- Read IP 281-286
- 8. (Th 6/15)
 - *** **Paper #1 DUE**
 - Avicenna, *The Healing*, Psychology, short selections from I.1 and V.7, including the “Flying Man” (BB McGinnis & Reisman 178-179, par. 7; and 205-209)
 - Descartes, *Meditations*, Meditations II (review) and VI (IP 52-56, 72, 74b-79)
 - Descartes, *Discourse on Method* and *Passions of the Soul* (IP 286-290)
- 9. (F 6/16)
 - Suggested: Stoic selections on body/soul (BB Long and Sedley §45A-D); Hobbes, *Elements of Philosophy* I. ch. 3.4 ([Past Masters](#)); Spinoza, [Ethics I](#), esp. Def. 3 and 6, Ax. 4-5, Prop. 3 and 15, par. 1-2
 - Margaret Cavendish, *Philosophical Letters*, Letter I.35 (BB Atherton 33-35)
 - Margaret Cavendish, *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy* II.15 (BB O’Neill 221-224)
 - Anne Conway, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, from chs. 8-9 (IP 291-293)
 - Paul Churchland, “Functionalism and Materialism” (IP 315-328)
- 10. (T 6/20)
 - Aristotle, *On the Soul*, I.1, II.1, III.4 (BB Barnes Revised Oxford Transl. 641-643, 656-657, 682-683)
 - I.1, read only 402a23-402b12 and 403a3-end
 - Suggested: II.2 (ibid., 657-659) and III.5 (684)
 - Thomas Nagel, “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?” (IP 329-335)
 - David Chalmers, “Can Consciousness Be Reductively Explained” (IP 336-348)

UNIT V: ETHICS

- Read 499-505, 591

11. (Th 6/22)

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, from books I, II, and X (IP 592-599; II.7 in [Past Masters](#) 1748-1750; IP 599-601; X.6-8 in [Past Masters](#) 1859-1864)

12. (F 6/23)

- Hobbes, *Leviathan*, from chs. 13—15, and 17 (IP 602-611)
- J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, from chs. 2 and 4 (IP 611-617)

13. (T 6/27)

- Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, from sections 1 and 2 (IP 617-628)
- Ruth Benedict, “Defense of Moral Relativism” (IP 514-519)
- Louis Pojman, “Ethical Relativism Versus Ethical Objectivism” (IP 519-528)

(W 6/28)

*** **Paper #2 DUE**

14. (Th 6/29)

- Plato, *The Republic* II, 357a—362c, and IX, 588b—591c (IP 545-550)
 - Suggested: Christine Korsgaard, *Self-Constitution: Agency, Identity, and Integrity*, [xi-xiii](#)
- Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* and other selections (IP 641-648)
 - Suggested: Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (BB 6-12 and esp., 19-22, 113-114, 117-118)
- Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, from ch. 3

15. (F 6/30)

*** **Final Exam**