

Introduction to Philosophy
21:730:103:03

Spring 2018
Monday-Wednesday 10:00am-11:20am
Bradley Hall 313

Course Instructor: Prof. Raffaella De Rosa
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Blackboard (BB) System: once you registered for the class you can go to Blackboard and select the course “Introduction to Philosophy” The page will contain course-related information, viz., syllabus, study questions, class notes, announcements, reminders, and the readings that are not included in *Philosophy for the 21st Century*. So, it is necessary that you have access to BB.

Course description: philosophy is a critical inquiry rather than a body of knowledge and, so, students will learn skills of argumentation and critical thinking and will be invited to join in the discussion of questions that have interested thinkers for millennia. We will discuss the following topics: (1) What is knowledge and how do we acquire it? (2) What is consciousness and how does it relate to the body? (3) What is personal identity? (4) How do our minds work? (5) Can we rationally argue for the existence of God?

Course objectives: The aim is to introduce students to a sample of engaging metaphysical, epistemological and psychological issues discussed by both classical and contemporary philosophers and to provide students with a background for further study of philosophy. Students will learn how to analyze and explain the arguments contained in the various readings and will be invited to reflect critically on them. In sum, students will learn how to think critically by understanding classical philosophical arguments and engaging with them.

Required course-work: (1) 4 in-class quizzes (**Feb 5; Feb 26; April 9 and April 25**). The questions will be selected from the set of study questions posted on Blackboard; (2) a midterm examination (**March 21**); and (3) a final examination (**May 7**). Students will be required to attend classes and contribute to class discussion.

The class is an excellent forum for the critical evaluation of the various arguments being discussed in the course.

The in-class quizzes, midterm and final examinations will be comprised of a series of different questions that will test the comprehension of the positions and arguments provided by various philosophers; the ability to compare different positions on the same issues and the capacity to see the force and flaws of some of the arguments being discussed.

Required texts:

- Steven Cahn (ed.), *Philosophy for the 21st Century. A Comprehensive Reader*. Oxford University Press, 2003. ISBN: 9780195147928
- Additional articles and excerpts from articles/books will be posted on Blackboard as PDF or WORD files.

Tentative Schedule (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 on the changes)

Additional or alternate readings may be announced during the course of the class, so stay tuned!

Date	Topic	Assignment
W Jan 17	Administrative Matters <i>Introduction: What is Philosophy? What are our topics?</i>	
M Jan 22	<i>Tools for Philosophers: Reason and Arguments. 2. Introduction to Knowledge and Reality</i>	Descartes' Meditation One, pp.101-104.
W Jan 24	<i>Knowledge and Reality</i>	Descartes' Meditations One and Two, pp.101-108.
M Jan 29	<i>Knowledge and Reality.</i>	Descartes' Meditation Three (in PDF file on BB in "assignments")
W Jan 31	<i>Knowledge and Reality: the circularity Problem in Descartes' Meditations</i>	Descartes' Meditation Three and Six (pp.432-438)
M Feb 5	<i>Knowledge and Reality.</i> First in-Class Quiz	Descartes' Meditation Three and Six (Cont.)
W Feb 7	Knowledge and Reality: Empiricism vs Rationalism	Hume's Inquiry, Hume's Inquiry, section 2 (pp. 7-10); and possibly: section 4 (pp.10-17) and section 5, part I (pp.17-20). Hume's <i>Inquiry</i> is in PDF file on BB in the folder "assignments".
M Feb 12	Knowledge and Reality: Empiricism vs Rationalism	Hume's Inquiry (Cont.) Locke's Critique of

		nativism (PDF file on BB)
W Feb 14	<i>Consciousness and the Mind-Body Problem.</i>	Smart's "Sensations and Brain Processes", pp.443-450.
M Feb 19	<i>Consciousness and the Mind-Body Problem</i>	Smart (Cont.); Nagel's "What is like to be a Bat" (PDF file on BB in the folder "assignments"); and Jackson's "Epiphenomenal Qualia," pp.490-494.
W Feb 21	<i>Consciousness and the Mind-Body Problem.</i>	Nagel's "What is like to be a Bat" and Jackson's "Epiphenomenal Qualia" (Cont.)
M Feb 26	<i>Consciousness and the Mind-Body Problem.</i> Second in-Class Quiz	Churchland "Reduction, Qualia, and the Direct Introspection of Brain States." (In PDF file on BB in "assignments.") Read pp.17-28 only.
W Feb 28	<i>Minds and Machines</i>	Turing's "Computing Machinery and Intelligence", pp.460-475; Searle's "Can Computers Think?", pp.475-481.
M Mar 5	<i>Minds and Machines</i>	Turing and Searle (Cont.)
W Mar 7	<i>Personal Identity</i>	Locke on Personal Identity: "Of Identity..", pp.330-337
M Mar 12	Spring Recess	
W Mar 14	Spring Recess	
M Mar 19	<i>Personal Identity</i>	Locke "Of Identity and Diversity" (Cont.)—discussion of the argument
W Mar 21	Midterm	
M Mar 26	Personal Identity	Hume, Treatise I.IV.6 (in PDF file on BB, pp.123-129).
W Mar 28	Personal Identity	Shoemaker "Personal Identity and Memory", pp.337-345; Dennett, "Where Am I?, in Word file on BB.Shoemaker and Dennett (Cont.)
M Apr 2	<i>Can We Rationally Prove the Existence of God?</i>	Saint Anselm, The Ontological Argument, pp.24-26; Gaunilo, "In

		Behalf of the Fool” pp. 26-27.
W Apr 4	<i>Can We Rationally Prove the Existence of God?</i>	Saint Anselm, The Ontological Argument, pp.24-26; Gaunilo, “In Behalf of the Fool” pp. 26-27.
M Apr 9	<i>Can We Rationally Prove the Existence of God? Third In-Class Quiz</i>	Kant, Critique of the Ontological Argument” pp.27-28. Anselm’s Ontological Arguments and criticisms (Cont.)
W Apr 11	<i>Can We Rationally Prove the Existence of God?</i>	Kant, Critique of the Ontological Argument” pp.27-28. Anselm’s Ontological Arguments and criticisms (Cont.)
M Apr 16	<i>Can We Rationally Prove the Existence of God?</i>	Saint Thomas, Five Ways to prove God’s existence, pp.35-37. Martin “The Cosmological Argument”, pp.37-39.
W Apr 18	<i>Can We Rationally Prove the Existence of God?</i>	Saint Thomas, Five Ways to prove God’s existence, pp.35-37. Martin “The Cosmological Argument”, pp.37-39.
M Apr 23	<i>Can We Rationally Prove the Existence of God?</i>	Hume, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, pp.39-72.
W Apr 25	<i>Can We Rationally Prove the Existence of God? Fourth In-Class Quiz</i>	Hume, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, pp.39-72.
M Apr 30	Review for Final Exam	
M May 7	Final exam: 8:30 am – 11:30 am (SEE FINAL EXAM SCHEDULE)	<u>Notice that students may bring final exams conflicts to the attention of the Dean of Students at least two weeks before the first final exam day.</u>

Weekly lecture notes will be placed on Blackboard shortly only *after* each class together with sets of study questions designed to help you understand and think about the course material you are reading.

Websites (on-line dictionary of philosophical terms and on-line encyclopedia of philosophy):

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/>)

Meta-Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://www.ditext.com/encyc/frame.html>)

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>)

Class Policies:

Class attendance: I will take attendance in each class. Unexcused absence from more than 10 percent of the scheduled class sessions will result in having the grade lowered by a half grade.

Class participation: class participation is strongly encouraged since (a) it makes the course more instructive and enjoyable and (b) gives me a sense of whether you are doing the readings and have a good grasp of the material. In class, I will ask you either to outline some of the assigned reading material or to express your thoughts on the arguments presented in the assigned readings. Notice that good class participation will 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. For example, if your grade is between a B+ and an A and you have very often contributed to class discussion in one way or another (i.e., by raising interesting points, by answering one of the questions I ask the class, by elaborating on a point made by me or one of your classmates, etc.) your grade will be pushed up to an A. Otherwise, it will be pushed down to a B+.

Midterm Exam: *No Make-up Midterm is given.* The only accepted reasons for missing the midterm exam are: (1) illness documented by a doctor's note; (2) a university sponsored activity taking place at the time the assignment is due; (3) death or family crisis with proper documentation provided.

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) death or family crisis with proper documentation provided.

Extra Credit and Re-Dos: There will be *no* extra credit assignments and *no* opportunities to re-take exams if you do poorly on them.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: It is the responsibility of every student at Rutgers University to adhere to the policy on 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 someone's words or ideas, speak immediately with me. For more information, please consult the University Code of Student Conduct or the Student Judicial Affairs website <http://judicialaffairs.rutgers.edu>

Course Assessment:

<u>Quizzes</u>	<u>40% (10% each)</u>
<u>Midterm</u>	<u>30%</u>
<u>Comprehensive Final Exam</u>	<u>30%</u>

Grading:

Your quizzes and midterm 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

Your final exams will be assigned points out of 100 which will translate into letter grades as follows:

100-91 = (100 is a full A; 91 is A-/B+)
90-80 = B (90 is a B+ and 80 is a B-/C+)
79-68 = C (79 is a C+ and 68 is a C-/D+)
67-56 = D (67 is a D+ and 57 is a D-)
55 or below = F

After grading individual assignments using a percentage, I will average the percentages at the end of classes, taking into account the weight of each grade, by using Microsoft Excel. The percentage-to-letter grade conversion for the final (total) grade for the course is:

100-91 = (100 is a full A; 91 is A-/B+)
90-80 = B (90 is a B+ and 80 is a B-/C+)
79-68 = C (79 is a C+ and 68 is a C-/D+)
67-56 = D (67 is a D+ and 57 is a D-)
55 or below = F

Disability Accommodations

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/>

By remaining in this class after the first class meeting, you acknowledge that you have read and understood all of the above, and you agree to abide by the rules listed above.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: The last day to drop a class without a “W” grade is January 23. The last day to withdraw from a class with a “W” grade is March 26. The last day to withdraw from College with a “W” grade is May 16.

