

PHIL 101-921 Introduction to Philosophy Syllabus Summer 1 2014
Mondays and Wednesdays: 10 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. in Buchanan A202

Professor: Chris Stephens

Office: Buchanan E356 Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1-2 p.m. or by appt.
Phone: (604) 822-6393 Email: chris.stephens@ubc.ca
Connect course site: <http://elearning.ubc.ca/connect/>

Teaching Assistant: TBA

Course Description

In this course we will examine some of the major problems of philosophy and try to figure out what their solutions are. These will include: Does God exist? Are humans wholly material, or do we have a material part (a body) and a nonphysical part (a soul)? What does it mean for a belief to be rational? Do human beings ever, or could they ever, act freely? This course will help you critically examine other philosophers' answers to these questions, as well as help you better formulate your own answers. Although we will read essays by a number of historically important philosophers, the primary focus of this course will be on assessing philosophical arguments and theories for their correctness. This course does not presuppose any previous familiarity with philosophy.

Course Goals

By the end of the course:

(1) You should be able to explain and critically engage with the main arguments for and against

- The existence of God
- Philosophical Skepticism
- Mind-Brain dualism and Mind-Brain identity theory
- The existence of Free will
- The possibility of life after death

(2) You should have a deeper appreciation of the nature of philosophy and its methods.

(3) Your critical thinking and writing skills should be improved.

Besides being a subject, philosophy is also a way of thinking, of asking questions and evaluating the answers to them. Because reasons (arguments) are offered for positions in nearly every subject, the rewards that you may reap from cultivating critical thinking and writing skills extend far beyond the scope of this course.

Texts (both available in the UBC Bookstore)

A Rulebook for Arguments, by Anthony Weston, Hackett Publishing Company

Philosophical Inquiry: Classic and Contemporary Readings, edited by Adler and Elgin

Course Requirements

- (1) 10 Group Exercises (1% each; 10% total)
- (2) Papers (25% each)
- (3) Final Exam (40%)

Marking Scale

90-100% A+	85-89% A	80-84% A-
76-79% B+	72-75% B	68-71% B-
64-67% C+	60-63% C	55-59% C-
50-54% D	0-49% F	

Group Exercises

Throughout the term I will divide you up into groups of 3 or 4 students and each group will complete an exercise. Each member of a given group (who is present) will receive the same mark on the assignment. The group exercises are typically open note and open book. You are also free (and encouraged) to ask the Teaching Assistant questions and me questions during your group exercises. On the final exam you will have the opportunity to evaluate your other group members; your final group exercise mark may be affected by the performance evaluations of the other members of your group.

Papers

You are required to write two papers, each of which should be approximately 1,500 words (about 4-5 double-spaced pages). A rough draft of the first paper is due in class on **May 28th**. You should bring *two* copies of your draft. The papers will be peer reviewed as part of your group exercise that day. A revised version of your first paper is due in class along with the drafts (with comments) on **June 2nd**. Drafts of the second paper are due in class on **June 11th**, with final versions due **June 16th**. Late papers will be marked down 5% per day late. Failure to write a draft will also lower the final mark on your paper by 5%. The topics for the first paper are on the last page of the syllabus. Information about how to write a good philosophy paper is also on the last page of the syllabus, as well as the Weston book. We will also discuss how to write a good paper in class.

Final Exam

The final exam will be between June 24th and June 28th. Please do not take this course if your summer travel plans will not permit you to be around during this week. The final exam will consist of several short answer questions and a couple of longer essay questions. I will pass out a review sheet at least a week before the final exam. Part of the last class day (June XXth) will be set aside for review. Please come with questions.

Attendance and Make up Policy

There is no official requirement that you attend class. However, it is difficult to do well unless you attend regularly. Keep in mind that since it is a summer course, we proceed twice as quickly – missing a day of class is like missing a week during the normal winter term. If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. Please contact another student, myself or the Teaching Assistant. Remember that the group exercises are not generally announced ahead of time, so if you miss class you run the risk of missing an exercise. If you miss a group exercises and you do not have a University-sanctioned excuse, you will receive a "0" for that assignment.

In general, I expect students to be consistently well prepared for class by having read (and thought about) the material. These readings are not to be passively consumed - I welcome (and expect) questions and challenges in class. I also hope that students will drop by my office frequently to discuss what we're doing or just to say "hello" and let me know how the course is going. If you are unable to come to my office hours, please feel free to set up an appointment. You are also encouraged to discuss any problems you may have with the teaching of the course.

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and to facilitate your educational opportunities.

Finally, please note that cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses. You should read the UBC policy on Academic Misconduct in the Calendar and available on line at

<http://students.ubc.ca/calendar/index.cfm?tree=3,0,0,0>

We will discuss some of these issues when I talk about how to write a good philosophy paper before the first paper is due. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, please check with me.

RA *A Rulebook for Arguments*, by Anthony Weston
PI *Philosophical Inquiry*, edited by Adler and Elgin
Connect – Available on line at CONNECT course site

Schedule of Topics and Readings (like many things in the Universe, subject to possible change)

Date	Subject & Assignments	Readings
May 12	Intro to Phil; Intro to Logic	RA , ch. 1-4; ch. 6 (especially)
May 14	Phil Religion – Cosmological Argument; Design Argument	PI Aquinas’ “Five Ways”, p. 711-12 PI Rowe “The Cosmological Argument” p. 713-719. Connect Paley’s <i>Natural Theology</i> (excerpts)
May 19	Victoria Day – University Closed	
May 21	Design Argument, continued Evolution and Design	PI Hume’s Dialogues, Parts II to IX p. 719-734. Connect Gould “The Panda’s Thumb”
May 26	Ontological Argument; Pascal’s Wager	PI Anselm “The Ontological Argument” p. 709-710. PI Pascal “The Wager” p. 784-786 (Optional) Connect Lycan and Schlesinger
May 28	Problem of Evil; Atheism <i>Draft of Paper #1 Due</i>	PI Mackie “Evil and Omnipotence” p. 757-763 PI Van Inwagen “The Magnitude, Duration and Distribution of Evil” p. 764-771.
June 2	Epistemology <i>Final Version of Paper #1 Due</i> Knowledge	PI Plato, <i>Meno</i> , p. 7-23 PI Plato, “The Myth of the Cave” p. 23-26. PI Gettier “Is JTB Knowledge?” p. 43-44. PI Nozick “An analysis of Knowledge” p. 44-49.
June 4	Foundationalism & Skepticism	PI Descartes <i>Meditations</i> 1-3 p. 50-63. PI Chishom “The Problem of the Criterion” p. 77-84. PI Nozick “Skepticism” p. 108-114
June 9	Problem of Induction	PI Hume “An Enquiry..” (sections II – V) p. 175-189 PI Russell “On Induction” p. 216-219.
June 11	Mind-Body Problem Dualism & Identity Theory <i>Draft of Paper #2 Due</i>	PI Descartes’ <i>Meditations</i> II (again) PI Smart “Sensations and Brain Processes” p. 384-90. PI Putnam “The Nature of Mental States” p. 391-97. PI Jackson “Epiphenomenal Qualia” p. 427-433.
June 16	Free Will <i>Final version of Paper #2 Due</i>	PI van Inwagen “The Incompatibility..” p. 346-353. PI Chisholm “Human Freedom and the Self” p. 353-9. PI Frankfurt “Freedom of the Will...” p. 360-368.
June 18	Personal Identity	PI Perry “A Dialogue on Personal Identity” p. 321-34. PI Parfit “Personal Identity” p. 334 – 345.
June 23-27 inclusive (date TBA)		Final Exam – PLEASE DO NOT TAKE THIS COURSE IF YOU ARE PLANNING ON LEAVING TOWN PRIOR TO JUNE 28TH.

First Paper Assignment (Philosophy of Religion)

Two copies of a draft of your first paper are due in class on **Wednesday, May 28th**. The final version is due in class on **Monday, June 2nd**. Please submit your drafts with your final copy. The paper should be about 1,400 – 1,500 words and must be on one of the following topics:

1. In their essay “You bet your life: Pascal’s wager defended,” Lycan and Schlesinger (**Connect**) defend Pascal’s wager against a number of objections. Critically evaluate one or more of their arguments. Are they ultimately successful in defending Pascal’s wager? Why or why not?
2. Write an essay critically examining J. L. Mackie’s essay “Evil and Omnipotence”. How might a defender of a theodicy attempt to respond to one or more of Mackie’s arguments? Are there any solutions to the problem of evil that Mackie does not consider? And if you think so, how would Mackie respond to your suggestions?
3. In his essay “The Magnitude, Duration and Distribution of Evil: A Theodicy”, van Inwagen defends the possibility that an all-powerful, knowing and good God exists against the problem of evil. Write an essay critically examining some particular argument(s). Does he successfully demonstrate how evil could co-exist with an all PKG God? Are there kinds of evil that van Inwagen does not consider that create problems for his thesis?

Helpful tips for writing a better paper:

The paper topics (1)-(3) suggest issues to consider and questions to ponder. But the task of deciding what you want to argue remains. You should develop a specific *thesis* and defend your thesis with *arguments*. This paper is not like an examination answer. No good essay merely summarizes what you have read and then offers points of comparison – every acceptable essay integrates its remarks into an argument of its own. Exposition of the views of others should always be part of *your* argument for *your* thesis.

Marking will be based on how well the thesis is defended and on how well the paper is written. A good paper should show intellectual integrity and struggle. It must also take seriously objections to the thesis. The objections must be developed as arguments. If there are relevant passages from the assigned readings that are relevant, these should be cited and discussed. In general, it should be intelligent, logical and careful. The paper should also be well organized and grammatically competent.

To help you in organizing your thinking and writing, you should be able to answer the following questions about your paper after you have completed your rough draft:

1. What is it that you are trying to maintain or prove in your paper?
2. What is the main *argument* for your thesis?
3. What is the most important objection to your thesis that you should consider? Formulate the objection or criticism as an *argument*.

What is your argument in response to the objection mentioned in question 3?

You should also read the relevant chapters (1, 2, 7 and 8) of Weston’s book *A Rulebook for Arguments*.

I will discuss more about how to write a paper in class and we will devote at least one other group exercise (besides the peer review of rough drafts) to issues about how to write a good philosophy paper. Finally, please feel free to stop by and see me if you want help.