

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

World, Mind, and Action
Fall 2008

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Office Hours: M, T, Th 2.45-3.45 & by appointment

T & Th 11:20am-12:35pm

Room: Papazian 319

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will serve as an introduction to central problems in philosophy as well as to contemporary methods of philosophical analysis. We will consider some of the following questions: How can we know there is an external world? What is the relationship that our minds bear to our bodies? What is the self? What makes our actions our own? Particular attention will be paid to the methods of contemporary philosophical analysis, which aim for clarity and rigor, writing, as well as argumentative strategies.

READING: The only required text for this class will be Lewis Vaughn's Writing Philosophy: A Student's Guide to Writing Philosophy Essays (Oxford University Press, 2006). The primary reading for the course will be posted online on Blackboard.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Every week, generally at the start of class on Thursday, you will turn in an assignment for this course. Most weeks you will be completing short writing assignments (1 page or less) with the aim of helping you understand the methods of philosophical analysis by carefully reconstructing central arguments from the reading. These 'reading outlines' will count for a quarter of your course grade. In addition, you will be writing three papers of increasing length, as well as a draft of the final paper, to allow you to develop your own arguments. You will also be responsible for an in-class midterm exam. Finally, I hope you will actively participate in class by being ready to ask and answer questions.

Reading Outlines	25%
Paper 1 (2-3 pages)	10%
In-Class Midterm Exam	15%
Paper 2 (5-6 pages)	15%
Paper 3 (8-9 pages)	25%
Participation	10%

LATE POLICY: The purpose of the reading outline is to help you prepare to **participate** in class. A late reading outline will not serve that goal and, therefore, will **not** be accepted after it is due. If due to some unfortunate circumstance you must turn in a paper late, you must discuss your reasons for doing so and set a suitable new timeline with me a full 24 hours in advance.

SCHEDULE			
	DAY	READING ASSIGNMENT	WRITING ASSIGNMENT
09/02	T	Introduction	WP* Ch. 1
KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXTERNAL WORLD			
09/04	Th	Descartes Meditation I & II	Reading Outline
09/09	T	Moore, Proof of an External World	WP Ch. 2
		Movie Night: The Matrix	
09/11	Th	Unger, A Defense of Skepticism	Reading Outline
09/16	T	Plato, Theaetetus (Selections)	WP Ch. 3
09/18	Th	Gettier, Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?	Reading Outline
09/23	T	Goldman, A Causal Theory Of Knowing	
THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM			
09/25	Th	Descartes, Meditations II (reread), VI & Selected Excerpts, Discourse 4	Paper #1 Due
09/30	T	Ryle, Descartes' Myth	WP Ch. 4
10/02	Th	Smart, Sensations and Brain Processes	Reading Outline
10/07	T	Putnam, The Nature of Mental States	WP Ch. 5
10/09	Th	Block, Troubles for Functionalism	Reading Outline
Fall Break			
10/21	T	Jackson, What Mary Didn't Know	WP Ch. 6/Paper #1 Rewrite Due
10/23	Th	In-Class Midterm	
PERSONAL IDENTITY			
10/28	T	Locke, Of Identity and Diversity	
		Movie Night: Memento	
10/30	Th	Reid, Of Identity & Of Mr. Locke's Account	Reading Outline
11/04	T	Hume, Our Idea of Identity	
11/06	Th	Williams, The Self and the Future	Reading Outline
11/11	T	Nagel, Brain Bisection and the Unity of Consciousness	
11/13	Th	Dennett, Where Am I?	Paper #2 Due
AGENCY			
11/18	T	Ayer, Freedom and Necessity	
11/20	Th	Van Inwagen, The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism	Reading Outline
		TV Night: House M.D. No More Mister Nice Guy	
11/25	T	Strawson, Freedom and Resentment	
Thanksgiving			
12/02	T	Frankfurt, Freedom of the Will & The Concept of a Person	Paper #3 Draft
12/04	Th	Watson, Free Agency	Reading Outline
12/09	T	Taylor, Responsibility for Self	
Paper #3 Due on December 16 th , 2008			

*WP refers to recommended chapters from Lewis Vaughn's Writing Philosophy: A Student's Guide to Writing Philosophy Essays.