

# INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

World, Mind, and Action  
Fall 2009

Jennifer M. Morton

E-mail: [jmorton1@swarthmore.edu](mailto:jmorton1@swarthmore.edu)

Office: 215 Phone: 8-8428

Office Hours: M & W 12.30pm-1.30pm

M, W, & F 10:30-11:20am

Room: Trotter 301

**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.

**REQUIREMENTS:** You are only allowed to take **one** introductory level philosophy course, so please be aware that you cannot take this course if you have already taken a philosophy intro or a first-year philosophy seminar.

**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.

**WRITING:** This course will involve a significant amount of writing, revising, editing, and peer-editing. The principal writing goals for this course are: writing a clear, well-organized, and well-argued philosophy paper; understanding the distinct stages of the writing process including outlining, drafting, rewriting, and editing; and constructively using feedback from peers, the instructor, and writing assistant.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Every week, generally at the start of class on Friday, 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 responses' 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 Responses	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 response is to help you prepare to **participate** in class. A late reading response 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.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE				
	DAY	READING ASSIGNMENT	WRITING ASSIGNMENT	
KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD	08/31	M	Introduction	
	09/02	W	Descartes Meditation I & II	
	09/04	F	Movie: The Matrix/WP Ch. 1*	Reading Response
	09/07	M	Moore, Proof of an External World	
	09/09	W	Unger, A Defense of Skepticism	
	09/11	F	WP Ch. 2	Reading Response
	09/14	M	Russell, Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description	
	09/16	W	Plato, Thaetetus (Selections)	
	09/18	F	WP Ch. 3 [Class might need to be rescheduled.]	Reading Response
	09/21	M	Gettier, Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?	
	09/23	W	Goldman, A Causal Theory Of Knowing	
MIND-BODY PROBLEM	09/25	F	In Class Exam	
	09/28	M	Descartes, Meditations II (reread), VI, & Selected Excerpts	
	09/30	W	Ryle, Descartes' Myth	
	10/02	F	Paper #1 Topics, Paper Writing Workshop	Reading Response
	10/05	M	Smart, Sensations and Brain Processes	
	10/07	W	Putnam, The Nature of Mental States	
	10/09	F	WP Ch. 4/Paper Writing Workshop/WA Visit	Paper #1 Due
	Fall Break (10/10-10/18)			
	10/19	M	Block, Troubles for Functionalism	
	10/21	W	Jackson, What Mary Didn't Know	
	10/23	F	WP Ch. 5/Paper Writing Workshop	Reading Response
PERSONAL IDENTITY	10/26	M	Locke, Of Identity and Diversity	Paper #1 Rewrite Due
	10/28	W	Reid, Of Identity & Of Mr. Locke's Account	
	10/30	F	Paper #2 Topics/Writing Workshop	Reading Response
	11/02	M	Hume, Our Idea of Identity	
	11/04	W	Williams, The Self and the Future	
	11/06	F	Excerpts from <u>On Writing Well</u>	Reading Response
	11/09	M	Parfit, Personal Identity	Paper #2 Draft Due
AGENCY	11/11	W	Ayer, Freedom and Necessity	
	11/13	F	TV: House M.D. No More Mister Nice Guy	Reading Response
	11/16	M	Van Inwagen, The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism	
	11/17	W	Kane, Responsibility, Luck, and Chance	Paper #2 Due
	11/19	F	Strawson, Freedom and Resentment	Reading Response
	11/22	M	Frankfurt, Freedom of the Will & The Concept of a Person	
	11/24	W	Paper Topics #3, Paper Writing Workshop	
	Thanksgiving Break (11/25-11/29)			
	11/30	M	Watson, Free Agency	
	12/02	W	Taylor, Responsibility for Self	
	12/04	F	Paper Writing Workshop	Paper #3 Draft Due
12/07	M	Wrap-Up	Reading Response	
Paper #3 Due on December 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2009				

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