

PHIL 102: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

Fall 2012

W 6:30pm-9:00pm/ NAC 7-306

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Office Hours: W 5:30-6:30pm, Via Skype (professormorton) by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The general aim of this course is to serve as an introduction to central philosophical problems and methods of philosophical argumentation and analysis. We will consider some of the following questions: How can we know there is an external world? Can we be free if the world is determined by physical laws? Are our minds just physical entities? What makes an action right and/or good?

READING: Think by Simon Blackburn (Oxford University Press, , ISBN#) is **required**. Additional primary reading for this course will be posted on Blackboard.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

5 Reading Responses (1-2 pages)	40%	In-Class Quizzes/Assignments	5%
Exam #1	20%	Participation & Attendance	10%
Paper #1(3-4 pages)	20%	Paper #1 Draft	5%

READING RESPONSES: Questions for reading responses will be posted by Friday of the week before they are due. 10 questions will be posted in total, you only need to complete 5 during the term. Reading responses that are turned in **on time**, show that you have read the material, and demonstrate an honest attempt at answering the question posed will be given full credit. Reading responses that are late, that demonstrated have not read the material carefully, or that do not answer the question will receive **no** credit.

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY: **NO LATE Reading responses** will be accepted (no exceptions!). Late papers will only be accepted in cases of emergency AND arrangements must be made with me at least **48 hours in advance**. No exams will be issued after the exam date, except for in extreme medical circumstances with a doctor's note.

ATTENDANCE: **Regular attendance is required.** You will be granted up to **3 excused absences** (medical, family emergencies, etc) throughout the term, any absences above that number will affect your grade significantly. If you arrive **late to class**, you must contribute to the class discussion in order to count as having attended the class. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late, you will be marked as absent.

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will be subject to penalties in conformity with the College's policy on Academic Integrity. (http://www1.ccny.cuny.edu/facultystaff/provost/policies_integrity.cfm)

LEARNING COURSE OBJECTIVES: By the end of this course you should: (1) Be able to read philosophy; that is, to identify the thesis of a piece of philosophical writing and the arguments or evidence adduced in support of that thesis. (2) Be able to write philosophy; that is, to present a claim in clear terms and to defend it in a logically coherent manner. (3) Be able to reconstruct and debate some foundational issues in the Western philosophical tradition.

As part of the College's General Education Curriculum, this course is designed to satisfy the requirements for a *Logical-Philosophical Perspective* course. Students successfully completing this course will develop the following proficiencies: will have had multiple experiences in communicating ideas in writing and speaking by completing assignments totaling at least 3500 words of writing, will have had experiences that emphasize analytic and/or philosophical reasoning to critically examine fundamental questions of ethics, justice and epistemology, and will have had multiple experiences in finding information and evaluating the reliability of this information.

Date	Topics	Reading	Assignment
W 2/01	What is Philosophy? Structure of Argument: Premises/Conclusion	Introduction, <u>Think</u> Descartes, Meditation One (BB*)	
W 2/08	Theories of Knowledge: Rational Foundationalism, Natural Foundationalism, Coherentism, Skepticism Validity/Soundness Suppressed Premises Epistemic Injustice	Chapter 1, <u>Think</u> Descartes, Meditation One & Two (BB*) Fricker, On Epistemic Injustice (Podcast at BB*)	RR (Reading Response) #1 Due
W 2/22	Theories of Mind: Dualism, Behaviorism, Psycho-physical Identity, Functionalism Mind-Body Problem Philosophical Analysis	Chapter 2, <u>Think</u> Nagel, "What is it like to be a Bat?" (BB*)	RR #2 Due
W 3/1	Freedom & Determinism: Hard Determinism, Incompatibilism, Compatibilism Oppression	Chapter 3, <u>Think</u> Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment" (BB*) Frye, "Oppression" (BB*)	RR #3 Due Paper Topics Distributed
W 3/8	Theories of Identity of the Self: Same 'soul', same consciousness, same body, psychological continuity, Bundle Theory Gender	Chapter 4, <u>Think</u> Hume, Selections (BB*) Beauvoir, from <u>The Second Sex</u> (BB*)	Paper Draft Due
W 3/15	God: Arguments for and against: First Cause Argument, Argument from Design, Problem of Evil, Pascal's Wager Sense & Reference Reduction Ad Absurdum Argument By analogy	Chapter 5, <u>Think</u> Pascal, Pascal's Wager from Pensee (BB*)	Paper Due
W 3/22	Reasoning: Logic and Inference, Probabilities, Induction	Chapter 6, <u>Think</u> Carroll, "What the Tortoise said to Achilles" (BB*)	RR #4 Due
W 3/29	Metaphysics: Idealism, Realism Theories of Universals: Platonism, Conceptualism, Nominalism Race, Social Construction	Chapter 7, <u>Think</u> Plato, Selection from <u>The Republic</u> (BB*) Root, How We Divide The World	RR #5 Due
W 4/5	Ethics: Cognitivism vs. Non-Cognitivism, Psychological Egoism Descriptive vs. Normative Reasons, Relativism	Chapter 8, <u>Think</u> Mill, Chapters 2 and 4 of <u>Utilitarianism</u> (BB*)	RR #6 Due
W 4/19	IN-CLASS EXAM		
W 4/26	Theories of Mind: Behaviorism & Consciousness	Ryle, <u>Descartes' Myth</u> (BB*)	RR #7 Due
W 5/3	Theories of Mind: Behaviorism & Consciousness	Armstrong, <u>The Nature of the Mind</u> (BB*)	RR #8 Due
W 5/10	Difficulties with Consciousness	Chalmers, <u>Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness</u> (BB*) (Optional Scientific American Article: Chalmers, <u>The Puzzle of Conscious Experience</u> (BB*))	RR #9 Due
W 5/17	Thinking and Consciousness	Searle, <u>Minds, Brains and Programs</u> (BB*)	RR #10 Due

* **BB** denotes available on Blackboard.