

PHIL 102: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY  
Spring 2018  
MW 12:30pm-1:45pm/ Location NAC 1/203  
Professor Jennifer M. Morton

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Office Hours: MW 9:30am-10:30am, 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? What makes an action right and/or good? Does lying undermine consent? Do we need friends? What is racism? Is pornography speech?

**READING:** All primary readings will be available through the course Blackboard Page.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

5 Reading Responses [RR] (1-2 pages)	10 pts each = 50 pts
Paper (3-4 pages)	15 pts
Exam	15 pts
5 Quizzes	3 pts each = 15 pts
Attendance	5 pts

**GRADES:**

A+	98-100 points	C+	77-79 points
A	94-97 points	C	74-76 points
A-	90-93 points	C-	70-73 points
B+	87-89 points	D	60-69 points
B	84-86 points	F	0-59 points
B-	80-83 points		

**READING RESPONSES:** Questions for reading responses will be posted by Friday of the week before they are due. 11 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 (10 points). Reading responses that are late, that demonstrated have not read the material carefully, or that do not answer the question will receive **no** credit (0 points). You will need to turn in reading responses via Blackboard **and** via paper copy by the **beginning of class**.

**QUIZZES:** Several surprise quizzes will be given throughout the term. If you are not in class when a quiz is given or you are late, you will not receive credit for the quiz. However, only your **top 5 quiz grades** will count towards your final grade.

**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:** Students who are persistently absent are more likely to do poorly in class and drop-out. **I strongly recommend that you make attending class a priority.** However, I understand that life happens, so you will be granted up to **3 absences** throughout the term. Any absences above that number will result in **you losing all 5** attendance points. 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.

**PROFESSOR AVAILABILITY:** I will be available at my office during office hours (MW 9:30am-10.30am) and via e-mail during regular business hours (M-F 9am-5pm). If you e-mail me outside of those hours, you will not receive a response until the following business day. If you cannot attend my office hours, please make an arrangement with me via e-mail to chat on the phone or via skype.

**COMMUNICATION:** It is extremely important to your success in this course that you communicate with me whenever you are confused, need help, or have questions. Please be **professional** and courteous in your communications with me. I will do the same in my communications with you. E-mails should start out with "Dear Professor Morton..." and be sent during regular office hours.

**ELECTRONICS:** Research shows that the use of electronics decreases your capacity to understand, remember, and learn. Consequently, the use of electronics will be no be allowed until the last 5 minutes of class when you will be allowed to take out your computer (if you need to do so) to write review notes. Cellphone use during class is not allowed at any time and your cellphone will be confiscated until the end of

class if I see you using it.

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will be subject to penalties in conformity with the College's policy on Academic Integrity. I am obligated under the college's policy to report any and all cases of plagiarism **no exceptions**.  
([http://www1.cuny.cuny.edu/facultystaff/provost/policies\\_integrity.cfm](http://www1.cuny.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.

Skills	Date	Topics	Reading	Assignment	
Reading Philosophy Critically	M	1/29	What is philosophy? What's the point?	Jennifer Morton, "An Antidote to Injustice"	
	W	1/31	What is required for knowledge?	Rene Descartes, Selections from <u>Meditations on First Philosophy</u>	
	M	2/5	Descartes Continued	Rene Descartes, Selections from <u>Meditations on First Philosophy</u>	
	W	2/7	Is skepticism self-defeating?	G.E. Moore, Excerpt from "Proof of the External World" (Read only pp. 145-150)	RR #1
	M	2/12	NO CLASS—Lincoln's Birthday		
	W	2/14	Who gets to be a knower?	Miranda Fricker, Philosophy Bites Podcast on <u>Epistemic Injustice</u>	RR #2
	M	2/19	NO CLASS—President's Day		
	T	2/20	What is bullshit?	Harry Frankfurt, "On Bullshit"	
	W	2/21	Is morality relative?	James Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"	RR #3
	M	2/26	What is wrong with lying?	Immanuel Kant, Selections from the <u>Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals</u>	
	W	2/28	Kant Continued	Immanuel Kant, Selections from the <u>Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals</u>	RR #4
	M	3/5	Does lying undermine consent?	Tom Dougherty, "Sex, Lies, and Consent"	
	W	3/7	What does the good consist in?	John Stuart Mill, Chapters 1 and 2, <u>Utilitarianism</u>	RR #5
	M	3/12	Utilitarianism continued	John Stuart Mill, Chapters 4, <u>Utilitarianism</u>	
Defending an Argument	W	3/14	How much ought we give?	Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"	RR #6
	M	3/19	Is it morally acceptable to be partial to those you love?	Peter Railton, "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality"	
	W	3/21	Do we need friends?	Aristotle, Book VIII of the <u>Nicomachean Ethics</u>	RR #7
	M	3/26	What should we believe about our friends?	Sarah Stroud, "Epistemic Partiality and Friendship"	
	W	3/28	What makes you the same person over time?	John Locke, Selections from <u>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</u>	RR #8
		4/2-4/5	NO CLASS-Spring Break		
	M	4/9	No class—Online Paper Writing Workshop—Watch Video On Blackboard—Work through Rubrics		
	W	4/11	What is essential to personhood?	Harry Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person"	<b>Paper Due</b>
Developing and Responding to Objections	M	4/16	What is Race? What is Gender?	Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) are they? (What) do we want them to be?"	
	W	4/18	What is Racism?	Jorge Garcia., "The heart of racism"	RR #9
	M	4/23	Is Racism in the heart?	Charles Mills, "'Heart' Attack: A Critique of Jorge Garcia's Volitional Conception of Racism."	
	W	4/25	Freedom of Speech and Action	John Stuart Mill, <u>On Liberty</u>	RR #10
	M	4/30	Mill Continued	John Stuart Mill, <u>On Liberty</u>	
	W	5/2	Pornography	Rae Langton and Caroline West, "Scorekeeping in a Pornographic Language Game"	RR #11
	M	5/7	Homelessness and Freedom	Jeremy Waldron, "Homelessness and the Issue of Freedom"	
	W	5/9	Exam Review		
	M	5/14	<b>Exam</b>		
	W	5/16	Wrap-Up Discussion with Snacks		

\* **BB** denotes available on Blackboard.