

PHIL 3000: THE RATIONAL ANIMAL

Spring 2011

M & W 12:30-1:45pm

Instructor: Jennifer M. Morton
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Office: NAC 5/136C Phone: x7637
Office Hours: M 2-3pm, W 11-12pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The general aim of this course is to introduce students to central philosophical problems as well as the methods of philosophical argumentation and 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? If our minds are entirely physical, can we be free? Are the consequences of our actions what determine their moral worth? 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: All of the primary reading for this course will be posted on the course website

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: The requirements for this course will consist of two in-class exams, a 3-4 page paper, class participation, and EITHER a final paper or a final exam. You will have to choose and let me know which option you want by May 4th. We will also occasionally have in-class quizzes or assignments. Regular attendance is required. You will be granted up to 3 excused (medical, family emergencies, etc) absences throughout the term, any absences above that number will affect your grade significantly.

Exam #1	15%
Exam #2	20%
Paper #1	20%
Exam #3 or Paper #2	25%
In-Class Quizzes/Assignments	10%
Participation	10%

LATE POLICY: 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.

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will be subject to penalties in conformity with the College's policy on Academic Integrity.

LEARNING COURSE OBJECTIVES: By the end of this course you should be able to (1) Read philosophical texts (both historical and contemporary) in order to understand the central question addressed and summarize the central philosophical position developed. (2) Learn about different philosophical methods of argumentation and be able to recognize them (3) Be able to succinctly and logically explain a philosophical argument. (4) Develop the ability to summarize, analyze, and evaluate different philosophical positions through shorter and longer written assignments.

	DAY	READING ASSIGNMENT
1/31	M	Introduction/Jim Pryor's "Guidelines on Reading Philosophy" Philosophy Bites "What is Philosophy?"
KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXTERNAL WORLD		
2/2	W	Descartes, Meditations I & II
2/7	M	<u>Writing Philosophy</u> Chapter 1
2/9	W	Moore, Proof of an External World (esp. pp 145-150)
2/14	M	<u>Writing Philosophy</u> Chapter 2
2/16	W	Unger, A Defense of Skepticism
2/21 NO CLASS (PRESIDENT'S DAY)		
2/23	W	Exam #1
PERSONAL IDENTITY		
2/28	M	Locke, Of Identity and Diversity
3/2	W	Reid, Of Identity & Mr. Locke's Account / <u>Writing Philosophy</u> Chapter 3
3/7	M	Hume, Our Idea of Identity
3/9	W	Paper Writing Workshop/ <u>Writing Philosophy</u> Chapter 4
3/14	M	Parfit, Personal Identity
3/16	W	Movie: Memento (Part I)
3/21	M	Movie: Memento (Part II)
3/23	W	Exam #2
FREEDOM & DETERMINISM		
3/28	M	Ayer, Freedom and Necessity
3/30	W	Van Inwagen, The Incompatibility of Free Will & Determinism/Paper Topics Distributed
4/4	M	Kane, Responsibility, Luck, and Chance
4/6	W	Strawson, Freedom and Resentment
4/11	M	Catch-Up
PRACTICAL ETHICS		
4/13	W	Paper Draft Due/ Paper Writing Workshop/ Perry, Bratman & Fischer, Ethics & Society from an <u>Introduction to Philosophy</u>
4/17-4/46 NO CLASSES Spring Break		
4/27	W	Paper #1 Due / Nagel, War and Massacre
5/2	M	Singer, All Animals Are Equal /Paper Topics Distributed for Paper Writing Option
5/4	W	Thompson, A Defense of Abortion/Must Decide Between Paper Writing or Exam Option
5/9	M	Singer, Famine, Affluence, and Morality/Paper Proposal Due for Paper Writing Option
5/11	W	Wolf, Moral Saints
5/16	M	Exam Review
5/18	W	Exam #3 or Paper Draft for Paper Writing Workshop
5/20	F	Paper #2 Due via electronic submission to jmorton@ccny.cuny.edu