



PHIL 1101 Spring 2018

Problems of Philosophy

Mondays, 3:35-6:05 PM WTBY 333

Instructor: Jenelle Salisbury

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Include **“S18 PHIL 1101”** in subject line of emails to instructor.

Office Hours: **Monday 12:00-3:00 PM** WTBY 329

Course Website: [Husky CT](#) and Google Classroom

Course Description: What does it mean to have knowledge? Can we trust our senses to provide us with knowledge? Why? What is the difference between good reasoning and bad reasoning? Do we have free will? What makes me the same person I was when I was a child? What does it *mean* to be a person? What does it mean to be conscious? Can consciousness be explained by neuroscience and physics alone? Could a machine be conscious? Does life have meaning? How should we live our lives?

This course aims to help students think carefully and clearly about these sorts of questions, and develop, support and defend coherent, plausible answers to them. These abilities will be developed via careful, generous but critical readings of essays, followed by informed and thoughtful discussion and debate.

We aim to get clear on the sources of some of our convictions and assumptions, and to establish better foundations for our own beliefs and practices. This course is not intended to persuade you to adopt the instructors personal positions on philosophical issues. These are presumably as controversial and fallible as those of the philosophers we will read. Rather, each student is encouraged to develop good clear habits of thought, the better to develop and defend his or her beliefs while subjecting them to critical and even-handed evaluation. However, the point of this course is not only to enable you to express your own beliefs clearly and with good reasoning, but to allow you to have a better appreciation for the importance of *understanding* the perspectives of others which lead them to have beliefs that are different from your own. I encourage you to keep an open mind when reading philosophical texts and engaging in dialogue about them.

Text(s): *Writing Philosophy: A Student’s Guide to Writing Philosophy Essays*

Author(s): Lewis Vaughn

Additional Readings will be provided via e-mail and/or the course website.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this semester, students should come to appreciate the complexity of careful, nuanced reasoning. It is hoped that students will also be better equipped for engaging in rational and civil discourse regarding difficult and sometimes controversial topics. Students will improve their written communication skills by writing discussion posts and papers.

Grade Distribution:

Assignments and Discussion Board	30%
Paper 1	15%
Exam 1	15%
Paper 2	20%
Exam 2	20%
Final Exam (Optional)	Replaces Lowest Paper Score

Letter Grade Distribution:

≥ 93.00	A	73.00 - 76.99	C
90.00 - 92.99	A-	70.00 - 72.99	C-
87.00 - 89.99	B+	67.00 - 69.99	D+
83.00 - 86.99	B	63.00 - 66.99	D
80.00 - 82.99	B-	60.00 - 62.99	D-
77.00 - 79.99	C+	≤ 59.99	F

Important Dates:

Paper 1 Due	2/19
Exam 1 Due	3/19
Paper 2 Due	4/9
Exam 2	4/23
Discussion Board Posts	Due each week
Final Exam	4/30

Course Schedule			
Unit	Date	Topic	Readings
Introduction	1/22	What is Philosophy?	None
		Biography Slides	
Introduction	1/29	Logic and	<i>Writing Philosophy</i> Ch 1-2
		Argumentation	<i>The Apology</i> and <i>The Absurd</i>
			<i>Appiah Ch. 9</i> pages 339-360
			Sober <i>Deductive Arguments</i> and <i>Inductive and Abductive Arguments</i> ²
Epistemology	2/5	Knowledge	<i>Writing Philosophy</i> Ch 3-4
			Plato, <i>Theaetetus</i>
			Gettier, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?”
		Philosophy of Science	Appiah Ch 4 “Science” ²
Epistemology	2/12	Skepticism	Hume, <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , p. 11-18
			Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> 1 and 2
			Appiah Ch. 2 “Knowledge”
			Sextus, “The Five Modes” ²
			Hempel, “Studies in the Logic of Confirmation” ²
Free Will and Personal Identity	2/19	Free Will	Frankfurt, “Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility” and “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person”
			Nahmias, “Intuitions About Free Will, Determinism, and Bypassing”
			Inwagen, “The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will”

Course Schedule			
Unit	Date	Topic	Readings
Personhood	2/26	Personal Identity	Perry, "A Dialogue on Personal Identity"
			Dennett, "Where am I?"
			McLeod excerpt, "The Role of Wisdom and the Insubstantiality of the Self"
Minds, Persons, and Consciousness	3/5	Mind-Body Problem	Descartes, Meditations 2 and 6
			Ryle, "Descartes Myth"
			Appiah, Ch. 1, "Mind"
Spring Break			
Minds, Persons, Consciousness	3/19	Consciousness	Chalmers, "Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness"
			Jackson, "The Qualia Problem" and "What Mary Didn't Know"
			Nagel, "What is it Like to be a Bat?"
Minds, Persons, Consciousness	3/26	The Unity of Consciousness	Parfit, "Divided Minds and the nature of persons"
			Nagel, "Brain Bisection and the Unity of Consciousness"
			Bayne, Ch. 9
Minds, Persons, Consciousness	4/2	Machines and Consciousness	Schneider, "How Philosophy of Mind can Shape the Future"
			Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs"
			Matthews, "Consciousness and Life"
			Schneider, "Future Minds: Transhumanism, Cognitive Enhancement, and the Nature of Humans"

Course Schedule			
Unit	Date	Topic	Readings
The Good Life	4/9	Ancient Chinese Philosophy	McLeod, <i>Understanding Asian Philosophy</i> Ch's 1-2
The Good Life	4/16	Happiness	Aristotles Nicomachean Ethics Books 1-2
			Annas "Making sense of my life as a whole"
			Nozick "On Happiness"
The Good Life	4/23	Existentialism	Sartre, "Existentialism is a Humanism"
			Nietzsche, selection from <i>The Gay Science</i>
Finals - see exam schedule			

Course Policies:

- **General**

- Computers may only be used at my discretion - If I get the sense they are distracting, I reserve the right to tell you to put them away. Research shows you learn better by writing handwritten notes, anyway.
- You are expected to keep up with the readings and weekly discussion board postings.
- **Late Policy:** For each day a paper is late, there will be one letter grade deduction.

- **Grades**

- Grades in the **C** range represent performance that **meets expectations**; Grades in the **B** range represent performance that is **substantially better** than the expectations; Grades in the **A** range represent work that is **excellent**.
- Grades will be maintained in the LMS course shell. Students are responsible for tracking their progress by referring to the online gradebook.

- **Tips and Expectations**

- Students are expected to work independently on writing their papers. **Offering** and **accepting** solutions from others is an act of **plagiarism**, which is a serious offense and **all involved parties will be penalized according to the Academic Honesty Policy**. Discussion amongst students is encouraged, however, and we may have peer review workshops for some papers.
- Be respectful to your peers. Disagreement is okay and expected as we discuss potentially controversial issues, and part of the goal of this course is to learn how to handle that disagreement in a productive and thoughtful manner.

²Reading Optional, no discussion post required

- Students are responsible for all missed work, regardless of the reason for absence. Attendance is not mandatory, but **strongly** recommended. It is also the absentee’s responsibility to get all missing notes or materials.

Academic Honesty Policy Summary:

Introduction

In addition to skills and knowledge, the University of Connecticut aims to teach students appropriate Ethical and Professional Standards of Conduct. The Academic Honesty Policy exists to inform students and Faculty of their obligations in upholding the highest standards of professional and ethical integrity. All student work is subject to the Academic Honesty Policy. Professional and Academic practice provides guidance about how to properly cite, reference, and attribute the intellectual property of others. Any attempt to deceive a faculty member or to help another student to do so will be considered a violation of this standard.

Instructor’s Intended Purpose

The student’s work must match the instructor’s intended purpose for an assignment. While the instructor will establish the intent of an assignment, each student must clarify outstanding questions of that intent for a given assignment.

Unauthorized/Excessive Assistance

The student may not give or get any unauthorized or excessive assistance in the preparation of any work.

Authorship

The student must clearly establish authorship of a work. Referenced work must be clearly documented, cited, and attributed, regardless of media or distribution. Even in the case of work licensed as public domain or Copyleft, (See: <http://creativecommons.org/>) the student must provide attribution of that work in order to uphold the standards of intent and authorship.

Declaration

Online submission of, or placing one’s name on an exam, assignment, or any course document is a statement of academic honor that the student has not received or given inappropriate assistance in completing it and that the student has complied with the Academic Honesty Policy in that work.

Consequences

An instructor may impose a sanction on the student that varies depending upon the instructor’s evaluation of the nature and gravity of the offense. Possible sanctions include but are not limited to, the following: (1) Require the student to redo the assignment; (2) Require the student to complete another assignment; (3) Assign a grade of zero to the assignment; (4) Assign a final grade of “F” for the course. A student may appeal these decisions according to the Academic Grievance Procedure. (See the relevant section in the Student Handbook.) Multiple violations of this policy will result in a referral to the Conduct Review Board for possible additional sanctions.

The full text of the Academic Honesty Policy is in the *Student Handbook*.