

Philosophy 1: Introduction to Philosophy

Fall Quarter, 2010

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Course details: 212 Center Hall 12:00-12:50 MWF

Office hours: W/F 1:30-2:30, or by appointment (8037 HSS)

Course website: <http://sdcc3.ucsd.edu/~mtiboris/courses/philosophy1>

Google group for scribe notes: http://groups.google.com/group/ucsdphil1_fa10

Teaching Assistant: Eric Campbell

1. Introduction

Philosophy is the study of fundamental questions about the world and our place in it. The content of these questions is wide ranging, including (among other things) investigations into what the nature of “knowledge” is, what we know or can know, what it means to be conscious, whether we have free will, how we ought to treat one another, and the nature of moral concepts like “goodness,” “equality,” and “justice.” Though philosophy’s topics are wide ranging, it approaches inquiry with a more or less unified methodology: an unflinching examination of what we think we know, and why we think we know it, through the use of critical examination and argument. This practice is personally enriching and cathartic. It’s also empowering and productive. Human inquiry in all disciplines returns to philosophical questions at some point, which can only be answered by careful analysis of what we know and what we mean. In this course, we’re going to look at a few of the big questions in philosophy. They’re the kind of things which occupied human beings, ancient and modern, who wonder about the nature of knowledge and our apparently limited access to it. We’ll read some historical and modern philosophical texts on a range of issues of perennial concern. An earnest effort at understanding these texts will, I promise you, be both unsettling and vastly rewarding. Let’s begin.

2. What’s Expected of You

- I expect you to put a serious amount of effort into understanding the readings. This means more than simply reading them all the way through. You must do your best to understand them, engage them, and challenge them. Read slowly, with a pen in your hand to make notes as you go. Be sure to have read the assigned readings before you come to class. I’ll try to keep them short, with the expectation that you will read, and re-read, them carefully.
- I expect you to write your papers thoughtfully and come to exams and office hours well prepared. The best way to do this is to start early and talk things through with small groups of your fellow students outside of class. That said, I expect that all the work you turn in will be your own, i.e. not actually *written* collaboratively.
- I expect you to participate. “Participating” includes asking questions in class when you have them, volunteering for scribe duty, coming to see me during office hours, or asking questions over email.

3. Text

Introduction to Philosophy. 5th edition. John Perry, Michael Bratman, John Martin Fischer (eds.) Available at the UCSD Bookstore.

4. Grades¹

There will be four graded tasks over the course of the quarter, which will be explained below. Here is how they factor into your overall grade:

(1) Argument reconstruction	15%
(2) Tutorial (Written Portion)	30%
(3) Tutorial (Oral Portion)	30%
(4) In class final examination	25%

5. Assignments Explained

- (1) **Argument reconstruction.** For this first assignment, I will ask you to write a short paper of **no more than 600 words** which explains the argument of a particular text. The purpose of this assignment is to give you practice and feedback on writings about arguments and picking out the most relevant bits.
- (2) **Tutorial (Written portion).** The tutorial is the main way in which courses are conducted in the UK. It's an ideal model for philosophy, since it integrates clarity of writing and discussion. In the written portion, I will give you a series of questions to answer in a paper of **no more than 1500 words**. The questions will be difficult and will require you to spend time thinking hard, re-reading parts of the text, and conferring with other students.
- (3) **Tutorial (Oral portion).** After you hand in your paper, I or the TA will meet with each of you in small groups. We will discuss your papers in detail over about 45 minutes. This is an opportunity to elaborate and defend the things you say in the paper. Your performance in the tutorial will be graded independently of the quality of the paper.
- (4) **In class final examination.** This will be a fairly standard non-cumulative in class exam.

(Optional) Scribe Reporting. Each class I will ask for two volunteers to take notes for the whole class. Before the next class meeting, these two students will get together to share notes and produce a single document, written in full sentences, which summarizes what was said in the previous class. At the beginning of the next class meeting, they will read (**in no more than 5 minutes**) their recap of the previous class. After class, you will post the prose version of your notes to the class Google Group (website noted above) so that anyone who wants to review them may do so. You are under no obligation to do a scribe report. But if you volunteer to be a scribe, I will calculate your course grade in two ways-- the way detailed above and in the following way.

(1) Argument reconstruction	10%
(2) Tutorial (written portion)	30%
(3) Tutorial (oral portion)	30%
(4) In class final examination	20%
(5) Scribe Report	10%

Whichever score comes out higher I'll give you as your class grade. Being a scribe can only help you, but it is extra work, and how much it benefits you depends on how good a job you (and your partners) do. More information on scribe reporting is available on the course website.

¹ This is the standard grade distribution if you do not participate as a "scribe." There is a slight modification if you do so participate.

****Please read the items on this list before class on the corresponding dates.****

F, 9/24: Introduction

What Can We Know About the World? (Epistemology)

M, 9/27: Plato, *Theaetetus* (esp. 201d-202d8; 206c-210d)

W, 9/29: Edmund L. Gettier, *Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?*

F, 10/1: René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (I and II)

M, 10/4: David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Sec. II, III, IV)

W, 10/6: David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Sec. V, VI, VII)

F, 10/8: W.C. Salmon, *The Problem of Induction*; **Argument Summary Due at Beginning of Class**

Who Are We? (The Metaphysics of Personal Identity)

M, 10/11: Bernard Williams, *The Self and the Future*

W, 10/13: Derek Parfit, *Personal Identity* (Sec. I-IV)

F, 10/15: Derek Parfit, *Personal Identity* (Sec. V-VI)

M, 10/18: David Velleman, *So It Goes*

W, 10/20: Daniel Dennett, *Where Am I?*

F, 10/22: Thomas Nagel, *Death*

Do We Have Free Will? (The Metaphysics of Free Will)

M, 10/25: Peter van Inwagen, *The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will*

W, 10/27: David Hume, *Of Liberty and Necessity*

F, 10/29: Harry G. Frankfurt, *Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility*

M, 11/1: Harry G. Frankfurt, *Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person*; **Tutorial Paper Due at Beginning of Class**

W, 11/3: Harry G. Frankfurt, *Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person*

F, 11/5: Thomas Nagel, *Moral Luck*

M, 11/8: No Class, Tutorials

W, 11/10: No Class, Tutorials

F, 11/12: No Class, Tutorials



REMEMBER: It is your responsibility to show up to the tutorial well prepared to discuss your own work. Note the time of your appointment and be sure to be there on time.

How Should We Live? (Ethical Theory and Applied Ethics)

M, 11/15: Jeremy Bentham, *The Principal of Utility*; John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*

W, 11/17: Peter Singer, *Famine, Affluence, and Morality*

F, 11/19: Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism and Integrity*

M, 11/22: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Selections from Ch. 1, p. 504-506); David Velleman, *A Brief Introduction to Kantian Ethics*

W, 11/24: Onora O'Neill, *Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems*

F, 11/26: No Class (Thanksgiving Holiday)

M, 11/29: Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*

W, 12/1: G.A. Cohen, *Where the Action Is: On the Site of Distributive Justice*

What's Next... (Continuing your philosophical education)

F, 12/3: Review and Conclusion

Final Exam: 12/9 11:30-2:30, Location TBA.

The Fine Print:

1. Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty. Using another person's ideas in your own writing without citing them is plagiarism. For example, if you copy text from an internet site, even if you change the wording, and do not cite the source, you are plagiarizing. Failing to cite others when you use their ideas, even though you've put it in your own words, is like presenting them as your own. If you have any questions about what counts as fair use, please ask me or your TA. Academic dishonesty is turning in work that is not entirely your own. This may include plagiarizing, but it also includes letting others write parts of your papers for you or simply mooching off of the group you're working with. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty are morally wrong, illegal, and against the school's honor code. When in doubt: cite it.

2. Computers in the Classroom. Some of you use computers to take notes. Some of you use your computers in class to look at Facebook, etc. Some of you do both. It's super-distracting for people behind you if you are messing around on the internet while they're trying to pay attention. So here are the rules for computers in the classroom: (1) Only use them for taking notes in a word-processing type program. (2) Sit in the back so that no one has to be behind you. This is a fail-safe. If you're such a hopeless wanton wreck that you can't go 50 minutes without the internet, at least sit against the wall so that other people don't have to be distracted by your lack of self-control.

3. Late Papers. Don't turn in your papers late. It's unfair to you and the instructors. It's unfair to you because, chances are that working past the deadline will cut into other tasks you need to do and won't really improve the assignment that much. It's unfair to the instructors because it doesn't give them as much time to respond to your work. If you are really in a bind, **please let us know BEFORE the due date**. Otherwise I will not accept it and you will receive no credit for the assignment.

4. Disabilities. Please let me know of any disabilities as soon as possible so that I can make whatever accommodations I need to.