

University of California, San Diego  
**Philosophy 1 Introduction to Philosophy**  
**Fall 2014**

Professor Don Rutherford  
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Class website: <http://ted.ucsd.edu>

Class: MWF 12-12:50 pm  
Pepper Canyon Hall 122

**Teaching Assistants:**

Travis Chamberlain ([imadynamic@gmail.com](mailto:imadynamic@gmail.com)); office hour: F 1-2 pm (H&SS 8089)  
Constance Sutter ([csutter@ucsd.edu](mailto:csutter@ucsd.edu)); office hour: M 11 am-12 pm (H&SS 8029)

**Description**

This course introduces some of the central problems of philosophy and the methods used to investigate them. Our journey begins with Socrates, who directed his fellow Athenians to three fundamental questions that concern any reflective human being: What can we know? What are we? How should we live?

The first question addresses the authority of those who claim to have knowledge that others are required to accept. How can we identify those who have such knowledge? What distinguishes knowledge from belief or faith? What are the limits of human knowledge and how do we go about recognizing them?

The second question addresses our understanding of our own existence: the distinctive characteristics, if any, that make us human. Often these are linked to our capacity for thought, reason or moral responsibility and freedom of the will. Are these essential properties of human beings and, if so, how do they make us different from other forms of life?

The third question addresses issues of ethics or morality: Is there a right or best way of living for a human being? What are our duties to other human beings (or other non-human beings), and how do we go about recognizing those duties?

Each of these questions generates a complicated series of debates that take us far beyond the limits of an introductory class. My goal is that you come away from the class with a solid understanding of the scope of philosophical inquiry and a good grasp of how philosophers make an argument on behalf of their claims. You will find that philosophy has a lot in common with modern science, but that it addresses a broader set of questions that reflect our efforts to understand the shape of our own lives—questions framed from a first-person point of view. Among these is the question of how scientific knowledge should inform our understanding of ourselves. Are we just as science tells us we are, or is it up to us to integrate that knowledge with an independently formed conception of ourselves?

In pursuit of answers to these questions we will be guided by a collection of historical and contemporary readings (all available online via the class TED site). The readings will form the basis of class discussion and your writing assignments. The aim of the class is not simply that you be able to regurgitate this material. Rather, it is that you be able to engage critically with it through your thinking and writing on the topics and that you begin to develop your own views on the questions that philosophy addresses.

**Writing Assignments and Grading**

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|--|-----|-------------------------------|
| • Short writing assignment on Plato (max. 250 words) | 5%  | due Monday, Oct. 13 (W2)      |
| • Argument analysis (max. 800 words)                 | 20% | due Monday, Oct. 27 (W4)      |
| • Weighing opposing arguments (max. 1200 words)      | 30% | due Monday, Nov. 17 (W7)      |
| • Thanksgiving meditation (max. 250 words)           | 5%  | due Monday, Dec. 1 (W9)       |
| • Thesis-argument paper (max. 1500 words)            | 40% | due Thursday, Dec. 18 (final) |

With the exception of the first assignment, prompts for the writing assignments will be distributed at least one week in advance of the due date. For the first assignment, the prompt will be handed out on Wednesday, October 8.

**Note:** Assistance at any stage of the writing process -- from brainstorming for ideas to polishing a final draft -- is available from the peer writing mentors at the UCSD Writing Center, located in 127 Mandeville. Visit the Writing Center website for more information: [writingcenter.ucsd.edu](http://writingcenter.ucsd.edu). The TAs and I will also be available in office hours to discuss your ideas and give guidance on the writing process.

### **Other Important Information**

- Regular attendance and completion of the required reading ahead of lectures are critical. Engagement with the course presupposes that you have done the assigned reading and are prepared to discuss it in class.
- Use of computers and other electronic devices is not allowed in class, except with written permission from the Office for Students with Disabilities. When I use slides, I will make them available before class, so that they can be printed out to facilitate note taking. In general, you should remain as focused on the content of the lecture as possible.
- If accommodations are needed for a disability or for religious reasons, please discuss the matter with me as soon as possible.
- Paper extensions will only be given to those who present evidence of a valid excuse in a timely manner. Note that computer or printer failure does **not** usually constitute a valid excuse, so be sure to take all necessary precautions to safeguard your work (backup, backup, backup!). If at any time you believe you have a legitimate claim to an extension, bring it to my attention as soon as possible (e.g., if you are going to be out of town for a legitimate purpose, such as a university-sponsored concert performance, athletic event, conference, or the equivalent). Unexcused late papers will be penalized one +/- letter grade per day.
- Students should familiarize themselves with the UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship: <http://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/policy.html>. There is a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism in this class. If you are pressed for time or blocked, it is **always** better to talk with me and to take the late penalty if necessary, than to submit work that is not your own. All written work will be submitted to turnitin.com, so there is a very high probability that plagiarism will be detected. Anyone who is found to plagiarize work will receive an automatic F for the course. Additional disciplinary penalties may be assigned by the UCSD administration. Receipt of this syllabus constitutes an acknowledgement that you are responsible for understanding and acting in accordance with UCSD guidelines on academic integrity.

### **Schedule**

Week 0 Friday, 10/3/14 Syllabus and course information  
Slide presentation (on Ted): "What is Philosophy?"

#### **I. What Can We Know?**

Week 1 Monday, 10/6 Philosophy versus Rhetoric  
Plato, *Gorgias*, 447a-466a  
Wednesday, 10/8 Thinking like a Philosopher  
Plato, *Protagoras*, 309a-335d  
Friday, 10/10 Thinking like a Philosopher  
Plato, *Protagoras*, 347c-362a

Week 2 Monday, 10/13 The Foundations of Knowledge  
René Descartes, *Meditations* (1641), I

Wednesday, 10/15	Defining Knowledge Michael Huemer, "Foundations and Coherence" (2010)
Friday, 10/17	The Incoherence of Solipsism? Hilary Putnam, "Brains in a Vat" (1981)
Week 3 Monday, 10/20	Induction and Belief David Hume, <i>Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> (1748), chs. 4-5
Wednesday, 10/22	Epistemic Responsibility William Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief" (1876)
Friday, 10/24	Epistemology and Science W.V.O. Quine, "Epistemology Naturalized" (1969)

## II. What Are We?

	Minds and Consciousness
Week 4 Monday, 10/27	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> , II Paul Churchland, <i>Matter and Consciousness</i> (1988), ch. 2 (excerpt)
Wednesday, 10/29	David Chalmers, "Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness" (1996) David Chalmers, "How Do We Explain Consciousness" (TED talk, 2014)
Friday, 10/31	Frank Jackson, "Epiphenomenal Qualia" (1982) (optional) Patricia Churchland, "The Hornswoggle Problem" (1996) Daniel Dennett, "Are Qualia What Make Life Worth Living?" (2006) (optional)
	Personal Identity
Week 5 Monday, 11/3	John Locke, "Of Identity and Diversity" (1690) Joseph Butler, "Of Personal Identity" (1736)
Wednesday, 11/5	Derek Parfit, "Personal identity" (1971)
Friday, 11/7	Daniel Dennett, "The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity" (1986) Daniel Dennett, "Where Am I?" (1978) (optional)
	Responsibility and Freedom
Week 6 Monday, 11/10	Peter van Inwagen, "Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism" (1975)
Wednesday, 11/12	Peter Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment" (1962)
Friday, 11/14	Harry Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person" (1971)

## III. What Ought We To Do?

Week 7 Monday, 11/17	Moral Imperatives Martin Luther King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (1963) Immanuel Kant, <i>Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> (1785) (excerpt)
Wednesday, 11/19	Morality and Evolution Sharon Street, "Does Anything Really Matter or Did We Just Evolve to Think So?" (2014)
Friday, 11/21	Morality and Self-Interest Plato, <i>Republic</i> , I-II (excerpt)

Week 8 Monday, 11/24	A Well-Live Life Aristotle, <i>Eudemian Ethics</i> , I
Wednesday, 11/26	The Psychology of Well-Being Valerie Tiberius, "Well-Being: Psychological Research for Philosophers" (2006) (optional)
Friday, 11/28	Thanksgiving holiday—no class
Week 9 Monday, 12/1	The Greatest Good for the Greatest Number J. S. Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> (1861), chs. 1-2
Wednesday, 12/3	Duties to Others Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" (1972)
Friday, 12/5	Tyranny of the Majority Ursula Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas" (1974)
Week 10 Monday, 12/8	Morality and Love Susan Wolf, "Morality and Partiality" (1992)
Wednesday, 12/10	The Badness of Death Shelly Kagan, <i>Death</i> (2012), ch. 10
Friday, 12/12	A Philosopher Faces Death Plato <i>Gorgias</i> , 521a-527e Plato, <i>Apology</i>
Thursday, 12/18	Final paper due