

AS/AK PHIL 1000 A (6.0) Y 2008-2009

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

Course Director: A. MacLachlan

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Office Hours: M 1.00-3.00 or by appointment

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Lecture Location: CSE C

Lecture Times: M, W 11.30-12.30

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a full year introduction to philosophy. We will explore some of the central questions of philosophical thinking, including the following: What is the nature of reality, and how can we know it? How do we determine the right or wrong thing to do? Is there a God? What is the nature of the good life? We will examine these questions through a careful study of selected writings by philosophers such as Plato, Descartes and Hume, as well as contemporary thinkers. The goal of this course is to acquaint students with the fundamental questions and arguments that have shaped the Western philosophical tradition. By the end of the course, students will be familiar with the views and arguments of major philosophical figures, and will be able to raise, defend and critique philosophical arguments of their own.

REQUIRED READINGS

Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings, 4th Edition. Ed. John Perry, Michael Bratman and John Fischer. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
Writing Philosophy: A Student's Guide to Writing Philosophy Essays. Lewis Vaughn. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Copies are available at the campus bookstore and on 2-hour reserve at the Scott Library.

Several of your assigned readings are posted as PDF files on the course website.

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MATERIAL IN ALL ASSIGNED READINGS. Please make sure you have access to them, in electronic or hard form.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In-Class Tests	2 x 15%	October 22, Feb. 9
Take-home Essays	2 x 15%	December 1, Mar. 18
Final Exam	1 x 30%	TBA (Apr.8-29)
Tutorial Participation	10%	

NOTE: Do not book a trip for any time during the exam period, April 8-29.

Last date to enroll without permission of the course director: Sept. 18

Last date to enroll with permission of the course director: Oct. 17

Last date to drop course without receiving a grade: Feb. 6

Important information for students regarding the Ethics Review process, Access/Disability, Academic Honesty and Integrity, Student Conduct and Religious Observance Days:

www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate_cte_main_pages/ccas.htm

COURSE ASSESSMENT

1. *Two In-Class Tests:* (15% each)

There are two parts to each test: (I) Definitions and (II) Short Essays.

In the first part, you will define 4 terms, taken from a longer list. In the second, you will answer two short-essay questions, also chosen from a longer list. Both lists will be given to you in advance. All parts of the test are mandatory.

You will be assessed on your knowledge of course material, your comprehension of the questions, your understanding of the philosophical texts, the strength of your reasoning and your writing skills.

2. *Two Take-home Essays:* (15% each)

a) A list of assigned questions will be posted on the course website. These questions will be reviewed in class and in your tutorials. You will be assessed on your comprehension of the question, your understanding of the philosophical text, the strength of your argument and your writing skills.

b) You must submit two copies of your essays: an electronic copy to turnitin.com, and a hard copy to your TA. Please staple the receipt from turnitin.com to the hard copy you submit.

To submit your paper at turnitin.com, you must first enroll as a student user.

Turnitin.com class ID: 2353807

Turnitin.com password: plato

c) You must login and complete York's Online Academic Integrity Tutorial before submitting your first essay: http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/

Print your results page and staple it to the hard copy of your paper.

3. *Final Exam:* (30%)

The format for the final exam will be announced in class at least 3 weeks prior to the beginning of the winter term exam period. NOTE: the final exam is cumulative: i.e., it will cover material from lectures and readings for the entire year.

4. *Tutorial Participation:* (10%)

Attendance is necessary, but not sufficient for tutorial participation. You will be graded on the quality of your contributions to tutorial discussion, as well as your attendance. Your participation in online discussion forums (on Moodle) also counts toward this grade.

LATE PENALTIES AND MISSED TESTS:

Late essays will only be accepted without penalty in the event of a documented emergency. All other work will be penalized at a rate of 3% per day. After 5 days it will not be accepted.

A make-up test or examination will be granted only in the event of prior approval from the course director, or in the event of a documented emergency.

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

York students are required to maintain high standards of academic integrity and are subject to the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty:

<http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/legislation/senate/acadhone.htm>

Students are also expected to review the materials on the Academic Integrity website.

(<http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity>).

FALL TERM 2008: SCHEDULE OF CLASS READINGS

WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY? AN INTRODUCTION

- Sept. 3 *No Reading*
- Sept. 8 Ch 1: “How to Read Philosophy” (Vaughn, pp. 3-20)
 “Introduction: On the Study of Philosophy” (Perry/Bratman, pp. 1-7)
- Sept. 10 Bertrand Russell, “The Value of Philosophy” (Perry/Bratman pp. 9-12)
 “Finding Equality through Logic” (posted on Moodle)
- Sept. 15 Plato, *Apology* (Perry/Bratman, pp. 28-43)
- Sept. 17 Plato, *Apology* continued.
- Sept. 22 Ch 2: “How to Read an Argument” (Vaughn, pp. 21-42)
- Sept. 24 Ch 5, “Avoiding Fallacious Reasoning” (Vaughn, pp. 85-95)
- Sept. 29 Vaughn Chapters 2 and 5, continued.
- Oct. 1 NO CLASS (ROSH HASHANAH)
 TEST QUESTIONS POSTED ON MOODLE

KNOWLEDGE, REALITY AND SKEPTICISM

- Oct. 6 Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditation I (Perry/Bratman, pp. 171-173)
- Oct. 8 Grau, “Bad Dreams, Evil Demons and the Experience Machine: Philosophy and the *Matrix*” (Perry/Bratman, pp. 195-202)
- Oct. 13 NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)
- Oct. 15 Descartes, Meditation II (Perry/Bratman, pp. 173-176)
- Oct. 20 Descartes, Meditation III (Perry/Bratman, pp. 176-182)
- Oct. 22 1st IN-CLASS TEST
- Oct. 27 Descartes, Meditation IV (Perry/Bratman, pp. 182-185)
- Oct. 29 Descartes, Meditation V and VI (Perry/Bratman, pp. 186-194)
- Nov. 3 Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Perry/Bratman, pp. 225-234)
- Nov. 5 Hume, *Enquiry* (Perry/Bratman, pp. 234-240)
- Nov. 10 Ch 3: “Rules of Style and Content for Philosophical Writing” (Vaughn, pp. 43-54)
 Ch 4: “Defending a Thesis in an Argumentative Essay” (Vaughn, pp. 55-67)
 ESSAY QUESTIONS POSTED ON MOODLE

FAITH, GOD AND REASON

- Nov. 12 Anselm, “The Ontological Argument” (Perry/Bratman, pp. 78-80)
 Aquinas, “The Existence of God” (Perry/Bratman, pp. 80-82)
- Nov. 17 Russell, “Why I am not a Theist” (Perry/Bratman, pp. 86-90)
- Nov. 19 Pascal, “The Wager” (Perry/Bratman, pp. 82-86)
- Nov. 24 Al-Ghazali, “The Rescuer from Error” (PDF on Moodle)
- Nov. 26 Plato, *Euthyphro* pp. 1-10 (PDF on Moodle)
- Dec. 1 Plato, *Euthyphro* pp. 11-20 (PDF on Moodle)
 1st TAKE-HOME ESSAY DUE

WINTER TERM 2009: SCHEDULE OF CLASS READINGS

PERSONAL IDENTITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

- Jan. 5 Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II. Chapter XXVII, “Of Identity and Diversity” (Part I posted on Moodle)
- Jan. 7 Locke, *An Essay*, Book II, Chapter XXVII (Part II posted on Moodle)
- Jan. 12 Dennett, “Where am I?” (Perry/Bratman, pp. 412-420)
- Jan. 14 Brison, “Outliving Oneself” (posted on Moodle)

ETHICS AND MORALITY

- Jan. 19 Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principle of Morals*, Sections I, II, III and Appendix II (Perry/Bratman, pp. 711-718 and 731-734)
- Jan. 21 Bentham, “The Principle of Utility” (Perry/Bratman, pp. 489-492)
- Jan. 26 Mill, *Utilitarianism* (Perry/Bratman, pp.492-501)
- Jan. 28 Mill, *Utilitarianism* (Perry/Bratman, pp. 501-508)
- Feb. 2 Singer, “Famine, Affluence and Morality” (Perry/Bratman, pp. 527-535)
- Feb. 4 Williams, “Utilitarianism and Integrity” (Perry/Bratman, pp. 519-527) and Foot, “The Trolley Problem” (Perry/Bratman, pp. 793-794)
- Feb. 9 2nd IN-CLASS TEST
- Feb. 11 Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Perry/Bratman pp. 536-538)
- FEB 16, 18 NO CLASSES (READING WEEK)
- Feb. 23 Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Perry/Bratman pp. 539-544)
- Feb. 25 Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Perry/Bratman pp. 545-552)
- Mar. 2 O’Neill, “Kantian Approaches to some Famine Problems” (Perry/Bratman pp. 553-559)
- Mar. 4 Nagel, “War and Massacre” (Perry/Bratman pp. 559-569)

JUSTICE AND SOCIETY

- Mar. 9 Plato, *The Republic*, Book I, Ch 3 and 4 (Perry/Bratman, pp. 679-688)
- Mar. 11 Plato, *The Republic*, Book II, Ch 5 and 6 (Perry/Bratman, pp. 689-696)
- Mar. 16 Plato, *The Republic*, Book IV, Ch 12, 14, 14 (Perry/Bratman, pp. 700-710)
- Mar. 18 Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, (Perry/Bratman pp. 607-620)
- 2nd TAKE-HOME ESSAY DUE
- Mar. 23 Nozick, “Justice and Entitlement” (Perry/Bratman, pp. 620-628)
- Mar. 25 Appiah, “Racisms” (Perry/Bratman, pp. 663-673)
- Mar. 30 Okin, “Justice, Gender and the Family” (posted on Moodle)
- hooks, “Feminist Politics: Where We Stand” (posted on Moodle)
- Apr. 1 EXAM REVIEW