

Introduction to Philosophy(Phil 100)

University of Maryland - Fall 2014

Lectures: Mondays & Wednesdays, 9am – 9:50am in BPS 1250 (plus Friday discussions)

Instructor: Michael Zenz

Email: zenz@umd.edu

Office: Skinner 1120B

Office hours: M 10am-noon (& by appointment)

Teaching assistant: Heather Adair

Email: hadair@umd.edu

Office: Skinner 1118D

Office hours: T 1pm-3pm (& by appointment)

Course Description

This is an introduction to philosophical thought. We will discuss a number of major philosophical questions, including: Is our experience of the world just an illusion? Is our mind something over and above our brain? Are all of our actions determined by the physical laws described by science? Is there a God? Are we morally obligated to help the poor? In discussing these questions, we will also examine what makes for good arguments.

Students are expected to complete all reading assignments by the day for which they are assigned, and to come to lectures and discussion sections. Other course requirements, and their relative weights in the final grade, are listed below:

Requirements

25% - Biweekly Discussion Writing Approximately 200 word **typed** responses to biweekly discussion questions posted on ELMS. Responses must be handed in during discussion sections (no exceptions). The lowest 2 scores will be dropped.

10% - Attendance and Participation For both lecture and discussion sections.

20% - Midterm Exam Taken in class on *October 29th*.

20% - Paper Topics and detailed instructions will be distributed in October. *Due November 26th*.

25% - Final Exam *December 18th*, 8 - 10am. Cumulative. Format will be similar to the midterm.

Required Text

We will be using the following text available at the University Book Store; all other readings will be posted on ELMS:

Simon Blackburn. *Think*. Oxford University Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-0192854254.

Late Work

All late work will be marked down a full letter grade, and then a $\frac{1}{3}$ letter grade for each additional day late.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities should inform the instructor of their needs as soon as possible so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

Absences

Students are expected to inform the instructor in advance of medically necessary absences, and present a self-signed note documenting the date of the missed class(es) and testifying to the need for the absence. **Prolonged absence or illness** preventing attendance from class requires written documentation from the Health Center and/or health care provider verifying dates of treatment when student was unable to meet academic responsibilities. **Absence due to religious observance** will not be penalized, however, it is the students responsibility to notify the instructor within the first 3 weeks of class regarding any religious observance absence(s) for the entire semester. University policies on medical and other absences can be found at: <http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1584/s/1540>

Academic Integrity

I take incidents of academic dishonesty very seriously. I will forward to The Office of Student Misconduct any possible cases of it that come to my attention. Please consult the Student Honor Council Website at www.shc.umd.edu. If you would like any further clarification, e.g., on what constitutes plagiarism, please speak with me.

Tentative Schedule

Unit	Class Date	Topic	Reading – ‘M’ due on Monday, ‘W’ on Wednesday
	9/3	What is Philosophy?	W: <i>Think</i> (1-13)
Knowledge	9/8-10	Hyperbolic Doubt	M: <i>Think</i> (15-37) M: Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> 1 & 2
	9/15-17	Rationalism & Empiricism	M: <i>Think</i> (37-48) W: Hume, ... <i>Human Understanding</i> ; sec. IV part 1
Mind	9/22-24	Dualism & Physicalism	M: <i>Think</i> (49-72)
	9/29 - 10/1	Intelligence	M: Turing, “Computing Machinery and Intelligence” W: Searle, “Minds, Brains and Programs”
	10/6-8	Consciousness	W: <i>Think</i> (72-80) W: Jackson, “What Mary Didn’t Know” W: Dennett, “Where am I?”
Free Will	10/13-15	Determinism & Freedom	W: <i>Think</i> (81-91) W: Chisholm, “Human Freedom and Self”
	10/20-22	Compatibilism	M: <i>Think</i> (91-119)
	10/27	Review	
	10/29	Midterm Exam	
The Self	11/3-5	Personal Identity	M: <i>Think</i> (120-148)
	11/10-12	Identity & The Self	M: Parfit, “Why Our Identity is Not What Matters” W: Skim Wilson & Dunn, “Self-knowledge”
	11/17-19	The Self	
God	11/24-26	God’s Existence	M: <i>Think</i> (149-168) W: <i>Think</i> (168-192)
	11/26	Paper Due	
Values	12/1-3	Faith and Morality	M: James, “Will to Believe” W: Singer, “Famine, Affluence, & Morality” W: Skim Rachels, “Ethical Egoism” W: Wolf, “Moral Saints”
	12/8-10	Life’s Meaning and Death	M: Camus, “Myth of Sisyphus” Use link for Taylor. M: Taylor, “The Meaning of Human Existence” W: Nagel, “Death”
	12/18	Final Exam	8am - 10am, in normal classroom