

## PHI 101: Introduction to Philosophy

Course Description. Here is a typical philosophical question: am I identical to my body, or am I something else that might survive the death of my body? One aim of this course is to introduce you to this and other philosophical questions about mind, knowledge, God, persons, and freedom. A second aim of this course is to acquaint you with some of the work that philosophers have done toward addressing these questions. We will read both classics, such as Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*, and contemporary works such as Nagel's "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" The third and most important aim of this course is to give you practice in *doing philosophy*—i.e. engaging in the sort of analysis and argumentation that philosophers engage in when they address philosophical questions. So the emphasis of the course will be: analyzing problems, assessing arguments, developing and defending theses. These skills are pushed to the limit in philosophy, but are applicable in any domain.

Requirements and Grading. You will be graded on the basis of three things: 1) essays, 2) exams, and 3) participation.

- 1) Essays. You will write 2 papers. These should be around 1500 words in length. Topics and due dates will be announced in class.
- 2) Exams. There will be 2 in class exams.
- 3) Participation. Though this is a lecture course, we will spend a lot of time having class discussions. Philosophers don't just read and write books and papers: they talk to each other. Philosophical discussions are the most important and most enjoyable part of the discipline.

Your grade will be calculated as a weighted average of your essays, exams, and participation. The weights are: 30% for each paper, 15% for each exam, and 10% for participation.

Grading scale: 0-59% F, 60-62% D-, 63-66% D, 67-69% D+, 70-72% C-, 73-76% C, 77-79% C+, 80-82% B-, 83-86% B, 87-89% B+, 90-92% A-, 93-96% A, 97-100% A+.

Late Policy. Late essays will be penalized by half a letter grade per day late.

Readings. All readings are in Perry, Bratman, and Fischer *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*. The following rough schedule will be made more definite in class.

Weeks 1 and 2: Descartes – *Meditations on First Philosophy*

Weeks 3 and 4: Knowledge and Skepticism

Plato – Excerpt from *Theatetus*

Christopher Grau – Bad Dreams, Evil Demons, and the Experience Machine: Philosophy and the Matrix

Gettier – Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?

Nozick – Excerpt from *Philosophical Explanations*

Week 5: God and Evil

Paley – Natural Theology

Russell – Why I Am Not a Christian

Perry – *A Dialogue on Good, Evil and the Existence of God*

## Weeks 6 and 7: Mind and Body

Russell – The Argument from Analogy for Other Minds

Ryle – Descartes' Myth

Armstrong – The Nature of Mind

Nagel – What Is it Like to Be a Bat?

## Week 8: Mind and Machine

Turing – Computing Machinery and Intelligence

Searle – Minds, Brains, and Programs

## Weeks 9 and 10: Personal Identity

Perry – *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality*

Williams – The Self and the Future

Parfit – Personal Identity

Velleman – So It Goes

## Weeks 11, 12, and 13: Freedom, Determinism, and Responsibility

Chisholm – Human Freedom and the Self

Van Inwagen – The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will

Hume – Of Liberty and Necessity

Frankfurt – Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility

Frankfurt – Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person

Nagel – Moral Luck