

## PHI 101: Introduction to Philosophy

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**Course Description.** This course will introduce you to some basic philosophical questions about knowledge, mind, persons and freedom. These include:

- What is knowledge? How can I know about the world?
- What is it to be conscious? Is my mind just my brain?
- What sort of thing is a person? Can I survive the death of my body?
- What is it to act freely? Am I responsible for what I do?

The aim of the course is to give you practice in the sort of analysis and argumentation that philosophers engage in when they address these and other questions. The emphasis will be on analyzing problems, constructing and evaluating arguments, developing and defending theses.

**Requirements and Grading.** You will be graded on the basis of three things:

1. Essays. There will be 2 papers. These should be around 1500 words. Assignment/Due dates are below.
2. Exams. There will be 2 in class exams. Dates are below.
3. Attendance and participation.

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.

**Texts.** The following texts are required:

- René Descartes – Meditations on First Philosophy
- Bertrand Russell – Problems of Philosophy
- Alter and Howell – A Dialogue on Consciousness
- John Perry – A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality
- Robert Kane – A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will

I've ordered all the books through the university bookstore. The Descartes and Russell books, however, are now public domain.

## **Schedule.**

January 18: First Meeting

### Descartes

January 20: Descartes – Meditations 1 and 2

January 25: Descartes – Meditations 3 and 4

January 27: Descartes – Meditations 5 and 6

February 1: Finish Descartes' Meditations

February 3: First Exam

### Perception

February 8: Russell – Problems of Philosophy 1 and 2

February 10: Russell – Problems of Philosophy 3 and 4

### Inference and Reason

February 15: Russell – Problems of Philosophy 5 and 6

February 17: Russell – Problems of Philosophy 7 and 8

February 22: Russell – Problems of Philosophy 9, 10, and 11; First Essay Assigned

### Consciousness

February 24: Alter and Howell – A Dialogue on Consciousness Monday Night

March 1: Alter and Howell – A Dialogue on Consciousness Tuesday Night; First Essay Due

March 3: Alter and Howell – A Dialogue on Consciousness Wednesday Night

March 8: Alter and Howell – A Dialogue on Consciousness Thursday Night

March 10: Alter and Howell – A Dialogue on Consciousness Friday Night

March 15: Spring Recess

March 17: Spring Recess

March 22: Alter and Howell – A Dialogue on Consciousness Saturday

March 24: Second Exam

### Personal Identity

March 29: Perry – Dialogues on Personal Identity and Immortality 1

March 31: Perry – Dialogues on Personal Identity and Immortality 2

April 5: Perry – Dialogues on Personal Identity and Immortality 3

## Free Will and Responsibility

April 7: Kane – A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will 1 and 2

April 12: Kane – A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will 3 and 4

April 14: Kane – A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will 5 and 6

April 19: Reschedule

April 21: Reschedule; Second Essay Assigned

April 26: Kane – A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will 7 and 8

April 28: Kane – A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will 9 and 10; Second Essay  
Due