Introduction to Philosophy (PHIL 120A)
Fall 2007

Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:20–11:30
Memorial Hall 302

Instructor: Catherine Sutton
Office: Zinzendorf 203
Office phone: 610-861-1589
Email: csutton@moravian.edu
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:15–2:15
                 Wednesdays, 2:15–4:15
                 & gladly by appointment

Course Description

This course introduces students to philosophical problems and methods. Students will examine arguments for and against God's existence, theories of how we come to have knowledge, the nature of the mind and its relation to the body, the free will debate, and theories of ethics. Readings are drawn from classics in the history of philosophy and from current philosophical essays.

Course Goals

➢ Students will study the history of philosophy and become familiar with the work of significant figures in the Western intellectual tradition.
➢ Students will learn how to read and analyze philosophical texts, and by doing so, will sharpen their critical thinking and writing skills.
➢ Students will learn the difference between philosophical questions and other academic questions (such as scientific questions), and they will practice methodology for answering philosophical questions.

Textbook

Reason and Responsibility: Readings in Some Basic Problems of Philosophy, 13th Edition, edited by Joel Feinberg and Russ Shafer-Landau.

Recommended Resources

The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, at Reeves Library, Reference Main Level, B41 .C35 1999
       This is more of an encyclopedia than a dictionary. It has excellent, concise overviews of the philosophers that we will be studying.

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, http://plato.stanford.edu/
> This source is more in-depth than the *Cambridge Dictionary*. It is written by top philosophy professors, and it is a reputable and reliable online source.

Assignments
Students will write and revise a four- to six-page paper.
There will be three essay exams.
There will be occasional short assignments and quizzes on the reading for the day.

Grading
Essay exam one: 20%
Essay exam two: 30%
Essay exam three: 20%
Paper: 20%
Quizzes and short assignments: 10%

Grading scale
Assignment and course grades sometimes include an element of qualitative judgment by the instructor.

94↑=A (Excellent)
90=A-
87=B+
84=B (Good)
80=B-
77=C+
74=C (Satisfactory)
70=C-
67=D+
64=D (Poor)
60=D-
Below 60=F

Paper Submission Guidelines

All assignments should be typed and double-spaced, with standard margins and font size, unless otherwise specified. Number the pages of your papers, and staple your paper before turning it in.

Late papers may be docked ten points for the first day and five points for each additional day. If you need an extension because of extenuating circumstances, make arrangements with the professor as soon as possible.

Attendance

Attendance is key to earning good grades in this class. If you are absent from class, you are responsible for finding out from classmates what you missed—including notes, announcements, and copies of materials. In-class assignments and quizzes cannot be made up; the grade for quizzes is a type of participation grade. If you turn in an assignment late because of an absence, the assignment grade will be docked a late penalty. If you have special circumstances for an absence, make arrangements with the professor as soon as possible.

Plagiarism and Collaboration

The standard penalty for plagiarism or other cheating is an F for the assignment or an F for the course. Plagiarism cases are reported to Moravian's Academic Affairs Office, who may impose different penalties as appropriate to the offense.

Become familiar with the Academic Honesty Policy in the student handbook. If you have questions about the policy or about what counts as plagiarism and what is fair use, please ask so that you are confident about what is and is not permissible.

In this course, students may work together by giving one another *feedback* on papers and other writing. Of course, students may not have someone else do the revising or writing for them. Students may also get feedback from the Moravian College Writing Center. To make an appointment, call 610-861-1592 or stop by the Writing Center on the second floor of Zinzendorf Hall. The Writing Center now offers evening appointments (Sundays through Wednesdays) at Reeves Library. Sign up for those appointments at the Reference Desk.

Students with Disabilities

Reasonable accommodation will be provided on a case-by-case basis to students with documented disabilities. Students who would like accommodations for learning disabilities or ADD/ADHD should meet with Mrs. Laurie Roth in the Office of Learning Services. Students who would like accommodations for other disabilities should meet with Dr. Ronald Kline in the Counseling Center. The student should then speak to the instructor so that appropriate academic accommodations can be made.

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Course and Assignment Calendar
Subject to revision by instructor

Section I: Philosophy of Religion (Does God exist?)

Tues. Aug 28: Course introduction; introduction to philosophy as a discipline

Thurs. Aug 30: Deduction and induction; validity and soundness
Due: Read Aquinas, "The Five Ways," pp. 21–22; William Rowe "The Cosmological Argument," 23–25

T Sept 4: Cosmological argument for God's existence (argument from first causes); principle of sufficient reason; soundness
Due: Read William Rowe "The Cosmological Argument," 25–32

R Sept 6: Ontological argument for God's existence (argument from *being*); Gaunilo's objection
Due: Read Anselm, "The Ontological Argument," 6–7

T Sept 11: Teleological argument for God's existence (argument from design or purpose); argument by induction
Due: Read Wm. Paley, "The Argument from Design," 32–37

R Sept 13: Problem of evil, an argument against God's existence
Due: Read J. L. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence," 78–85, and write short report on assigned section from the article

T Sept 18: Exam 1 (essay and short-answer questions)
Due: Study for exam

Section II: Epistemology (How do we come to know about the world?)

R Sept 20: Introduction to rationalism and empiricism
Due: Read Descartes' Synopsis & First Meditation, 164–168.

T Sept 25: Descartes' epistemology (theory of knowledge)
Due: Read Descartes' Second Meditation and Fourth Meditation, 169–173, 180–184.

R Sept 27: Locke and empiricism; the Kantian compromise
Due: Read John Locke selection, 197–204

Section III: Philosophy of Mind (Do you have a nonphysical mind or soul, or is your mental life located in the gray stuff in your skull?)

T Oct 2: Dualism and idealism; Descartes' philosophy of mind; introduction to the mind-body problem
Due: Read Descartes' Sixth Meditation, 187–195

R Oct 4: Roots of dualism and immortality of the soul
Due: Read selection from Plato's *Phaedo*

T Oct 9: No class; fall recess

R Oct 11: Materialism and its varieties
Due: Read selection from Lucretius's *On the Nature of Things*

T Oct 16: Materialism and its varieties
Due: Read Paul Churchland, "Behaviorism, Materialism, and Functionalism," 311 (begin at "Reductive Materialism") – 317 (through end of sections on eliminative materialism)

R Oct 18: Materialism and its varieties
Due: Read Paul Churchland, "Behaviorism, Materialism, and Functionalism," 317–321

T Oct 23: Contemporary dualism
Due: Read Brie Gertler, "In Defense of Mind-Body Dualism," 285–292 (through the end of section 4)

R Oct 25: Computer minds?
Due: Read Brie Gertler, "In Defense of Mind-Body Dualism," 292–297

Section IV: Metaphysics and the Free-Will Debate

T Oct 30: Introduction to the free will debate; Halloween special: fatalism story; paper workshop
Due: Paper, 4–6 pages (Be prepared for a classmate to read and review your paper.)

R Nov 1: Libertarianism (the free-will view)
Due: Read Roderick Chisholm, "Human Freedom and the Self," 438–445

T Nov 6: Hard- and soft-determinism
Due: Revised Paper

R Nov 8: Conclude determinism; indeterminism and existentialism
Due: Read A.J. Ayer, "Freedom and Necessity," 414-419; read Giberson on Heisenberg and philosophical indeterminism (handout)

T Nov 13: Exam 2 (essay and short-answer questions)
Due: Study for exam

Section V: Ethics (Is morality a matter of fact or a matter of opinion? How should we decide what is the moral thing to do?)

R Nov 15: Relativism and objectivity in ethics; intro to ethical theory
Due: Read Russ Shafer-Landau's "Ethical Subjectivism," 555–566

T Nov 20: Group discussion using three thought experiments in ethics; Reflective equilibrium in ethical theory
Due: Read Mary Midgley's "Trying Out One's New Sword," 567–570

R Nov 22: No class; Thanksgiving recess

T Nov 27: Consequentialist and nonconsequentialist ethics; utilitarian ethics; intro to Kantian ethics
Due: Read J. S. Mill, 642–653. Start reading at "What Utilitarianism Is" header.

R Nov 29: Kantian ethics
Due: Read Kant, 625–640.

T Dec 4: Virtue ethics; rights views
Due: Read Aristotle, 575–586

R Dec 6: Justice and society; course wrap-up
Due: Read John Rawls, "Justice as Fairness," 600–610

Exam week: Final exam (essay and short-answer questions)