

Philosophy 120: Introduction to Philosophy

Instructor: Dr. Jason Bowers

Email: bowersj@moravian.edu

Office: Comenius 205

Office Hours: MW 12:00-1:10pm or by appointment

Course Description

All philosophical thought, no matter how complicated or extensive, begins with the examination of a few simple puzzles. The purpose of this course is to acquaint students with a few of the most famous such puzzles, both from history of philosophy and in its contemporary practice. Topics for this course will include *matter, the mind, art, and mortality*. By the end of this course, students will be able to read professional academic articles on the topics covered, and begin serious academic work of their own.

Texts

All of the required readings will be posted online for free. These readings are taken from the following sources:

The Australasian Journal of Philosophy

Benatar, *Better Never to Have Been: The Harm of Coming into Existence*

Campbell, *Body and Mind*

Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror, or: Paradoxes of the Heart*

Conee and Sider, *Riddles of Existence*

Fisher (ed.), *The Metaphysics of Death*

Rosenberg, *The Practice of Philosophy*

Rosenberg, *Thinking Clearly About Death*

Sorenson, *Seeing Dark Things: The Philosophy of Shadows*

Van Inwagen, *Ontology, Identity, and Modality: Essays in Metaphysics*

Van Inwagen, *The Possibility of Resurrection*

Work and Grading

There will be four unit-based exams, each of which is worth 15% of your final grade, one final exam, which is worth 20% of your final grade, and one final paper, which is worth 10% of your final grade. The remaining 10% of your final grade will be determined by class participation, which includes not only attendance but also discussion and *impromptu* writing assignments.

Group Work Policy

There will be no group work assigned for this course. Any collaboration on papers or exams will be counted as plagiarism.

Late Work Policy

No late work will be accepted without a medical excuse. All medical excuses require documentation from Student Health Services.

Academic Honesty

Moravian College adheres to an Academic Honor Code, which contains the following summary paragraph in the Moravian College Student Handbook:

“Students may not submit homework, computer solutions, lab reports, or any other coursework prepared by, copied from, or dictated by others. If the student is employing the services of a tutor (whether from the campus community or elsewhere), the tutor may not prepare the student's work for class. ... Students may not provide or receive unauthorized help in taking examinations, tests, or quizzes, or in preparing any other requirements for a course. Such restrictions are illustrated by but not limited to the following:

- *Using unauthorized material in an examination, test, or quiz.*
- *Using crib notes in any form, regardless of who prepared them.*
- *Using calculators or any other hand-held electronic devices unless authorized by the instructor.*
- *Using e-mail or text-messaging during any exam without the permission of the instructor.*
- *Stealing, using, or transmitting in writing, electronically, or verbally, actual examinations, tests, quizzes, or portions thereof prior to, during, or following an exam.*
- *Reading or observing another's work without the person's consent, whether it be on paper, in electronic form, or in any other medium.*
- *Soliciting or using a proxy test-taker or acting in that capacity.”*

You are responsible for knowing what counts as academic dishonesty. If you do not understand these guidelines, or are not sure how to apply them, see me immediately.

Cell Phones and Other Class Disruptions

Turn off your cell phones and stow them when you enter class. Do not check your cell phone, or send text messages, during class. Do not listen to an iPod, MP3 player, or any similar device while in class. You may take notes on a laptop computer, but do not surf the web, play games, or check email during class. Drinks of water, trips to the bathroom, and the like should all be handled before class begins, or else after class ends.

Absence Policy

By signing up for this course you undertake to attend all classes and lectures. Excused absences require documentation. Classes missed for athletic or religious reasons must have similar documentation, and must be discussed with me at the start of the semester. **Five or more unexcused absences will result in an F for the course.**

Religious Observance Policy

You must inform me in writing the first week of class if you will be missing any classes due to religious observances. Any absence for religious purposes will be considered unexcused unless you submit the request in writing the first week to both myself and the Registrar.

Learning Disabilities and Classroom Accommodations

Students who wish to receive special accommodations in class or during exams are required to provide me with a written statement from the Director of Learning Services, Elaine Mara. This information is confidential, and will not be shared with any other faculty, staff, or student. If you have questions about this, contact the Office of Learning Services at 610-861-1510.

Tentative Schedule of Readings (Subject to Change)

NOTE: Reading is to be done *before* you come to class. Students are expected to bring copies of readings to class on the days that they are discussed. Anything that directly affects your grade, other than participation, is written in **bold** among the dates in the following schedule.

Unit One - Matter: Puzzles about Constitution

Mon, Jan 14: Introductions and course overview
Wed, Jan 16: Rosenberg, "Philosophy in Action"
Mon, Jan 21: NO CLASS
Wed, Jan 23: Sider, "Constitution"
Mon, Jan 28: Sorenson, "We See in the Dark"
Wed, Jan 30: Van Inwagen, "The Doctrine of Arbitrary Undetached Parts"
Mon, Feb 4: Van Inwagen, continued, and review
Wed, Feb 6: Hershenov, "Scattered Objects"
Mon, Feb 11: **Exam 1**

Unit Two – Aesthetics: Puzzles about Art and the Emotions

Wed, Feb 13: Carroll, "Metaphysics and Horror"
Mon, Feb 18: Carroll, "Why Horror?"
Wed, Feb 20: Kivy, "Is Music an Art?"
Mon, Feb 25: Cohen, "Jokes"
Wed, Feb 27: **Exam 2**
Mon, March 4: NO CLASS
Wed, March 6: NO CLASS

Unit Three – The Mind: Puzzles about Embodiment

Mon, March 11: Campbell, *Body and Mind*, Chapters 1 and 2
Wed, March 13: Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know"
Mon, March 18: Lycan, "Giving Dualism its Due"
Wed, March 20: Lewis, "Mad Pain and Martian Pain"
Mon, March 25: Van Inwagen, "The Possibility of Resurrection"
Wed, March 27: **Exam 3**
Mon, April 1: NO CLASS

Unit Four - Death: Puzzles about Mortality

Wed, April 3: Rosenbaum, "How to be Dead and not Care"
Mon, April 8: Rosenberg, "Death in the First Person"
Wed, April 10: Benatar, *Better Never to Have Been*, Chapter 1
Mon, April 15: Benatar, *Better Never to Have Been*, Chapter 1
Wed, April 17: Benatar, *Better Never to Have Been*, Chapter 2, pp.18-49
Mon, April 22: Benatar, *Better Never to Have Been*, Chapter 7 and review
Wed, April 24: **Exam 4**

The date of the **FINAL EXAM**, which is cumulative, will be announced in class.