
Phil 101

Introduction to Philosophical Problems

Instructor: Nate Bulthuis

E-Mail: nbulthuis@colgate.edu

Office Hours: MW 1.00-3.00 | F 11.15-12.15

Office: 206 Hascall Hall

Course Description

This course is intended to be a general introduction to both the substance and methods of philosophy. Ideally, students should exit this course with both a sense of what sorts of things philosophers spend their time thinking about and an appreciation of how they go about that thought. Because of the breadth and depth of philosophical inquiry (both in regards to its subject matter and its history), we cannot possibly hope to cover everything worthy of investigation, even in a summary and superficial fashion. What we can hope to do however - and what we will do in this course - is cover some particular topics of interest that have been a persistent feature of philosophical discourse throughout the last 2500 years.

Reading

You need to purchase the following textbook for this course, available at the Colgate bookstore:

2016. *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*. 7th Edition. Edited by John Perry, Michael Bratman, and John Fischer. New York: Oxford University Press.

All other readings will be posted on course website. See 'Schedule' below.

Reading Advice: When first engaging a text, it is more important to have a basic grasp of its overall point than it is to understand any particular detail. Accordingly, I advise you to do each of the readings completely in a single sitting, and then to return to the details you missed or were confused by. If, on a second reading, you can't sort out some specific detail, write down what you don't understand and bring it to class. Do your best to raise your question at a point in the class where that detail is relevant to what's being discussed. It is much more likely that you will get a satisfying answer if you ask your question at the appropriate time. In all the readings, it will be helpful to ask yourself 'what is the problem or issue at stake here?' and then 'what solutions or positions is the author arguing for here?'

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation: Attendance at and participation in all class lectures is mandatory. Do be sure to come to class ready to discuss; the best way to develop one's philosophical skills is to exercise one's philosophical capacities on a regular basis. Active discussion is perhaps the most important exercise in this regard.

Weekly Assignments: Please contribute one post (either an original post or a reply to another post) to the weekly discussion forum on Moodle

Exams: There will be two exams in this course: a mid-term exam and a final exam.

Essays: In addition to two exams, essays will constitute a central mode of assessment in the course. There will be three essays in this course, varying in length, demands, and point-value. Extensions for due dates are at my discretion, but typically will only be granted for university-approved reasons.

Grading

Grading will be determined by a combination of attendance and participation, weekly assignments, three essays, and two exams. Below is a tentative breakdown of the weight of the factors which go into your grade, though evidence of improvement throughout the semester may be considered in the final grade assessment.

Attendance and Participation	10
Weekly Assignments	10
Essay 1	5
Essay 2	15
Essay 3	20
Mid-Term Exam	15
Final Exam	25

Website

This course utilizes a Moodle site. It will be used to relay announcements, readings beyond the texts you need to purchase, paper topics, and any other material relevant to this course. It will also serve as the location to complete the weekly assignment. Visit moodle.colgate.edu.

The Writing and Speaking Center

The Writing and Speaking Center in 208 Lathrop Hall offers assistance with essays for any course. Experienced writing consultants can help native and non-native speakers alike with a written paper's focus, development, organization, clarity, citations, or grammar. Details about all meetings will remain private. To make an appointment, see <http://www.colgate.edu/writingcenter> or call [\(315\) 228-6085](tel:3152286085).

Course Accommodations

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors, resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services) by visiting CLTR (101A Lathrop Hall) or by going to www.colgate.edu/cltr.

Students who believe that, due to a special need, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to visit Academic Support and Disability Services at 101A Lathrop Hall. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Academic Dishonesty

A word about academic dishonesty: Don't. It is immoral (it's a form of theft). It also doesn't pass the risk-reward test. It's incredibly easy for us to catch, and the penalties are severe – up to and including expulsion from the university. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please feel free to talk to me. Consult the Academic Honor Code for a more detailed discussion of academic dishonesty.

Date	Notes	Reading	Topics
Week 1 8.25			<i>Welcome!</i> Welcome!
Week 2 8.29 8.31 9.2		8-13 279-284 284-286	<i>The Mind-Body Problem</i> Introduction to Philosophy The Mind-Body Problem Physicalism and Some of Its Problems
Week 3 9.5 9.7 9.9		291-294 287-291 [A]	<i>The Mind-Body Problem</i> Problems for Physicalism, contd. Rejecting the Mental The Intentional Stance
Week 4 9.12 9.14 9.16		295-307 308-311 311-316; [B]	<i>Minds and Machines</i> The Turing Test The Chinese Room Rescuing AI?
Week 5 9.19 9.21 9.23	Essay 1	[C] [D] [E]	<i>Evidentialism and Its Critics</i> Classical Evidentialism Pragmatic Responses Anti-Evidentialist Responses
Week 6 9.26 9.28 9.30		157-159 159-163 163-168	<i>Cartesian Skepticism</i> Meditation 1 Meditation 2 Meditation 3
Week 7 10.3 10.5 10.7	Mid-Term Exam	168-172 174-181	<i>Cartesian Skepticism</i> Meditation 4 Meditation 6
Week 8 10.10 10.12 10.14	Mid-Term Recess	[F: 2-12] [F: 13-23]; [G]	<i>Moral Relativism and Its Critics</i> The Case for Moral Relativism Criticisms of Moral Relativism
Week 9 10.17 10.19 10.21		675-689 646-650 650-656	<i>Moral Problems</i> Reproductive Labor Markets Thomson on Abortion Thomson on Abortion
Week 10 10.24 10.26 10.28	Essay 2	657-674 708-723 708-723	<i>Justice and Self-Interest</i> Hursthouse on Thomson What is Justice? What is Justice?
Week 11 10.31 11.2 11.4		723-734 734-744 595-608	<i>Liberalism and Its Critics</i> The Best of All Possible States Why Be Just? The Original Position
Week 12 11.7 11.9 11.11		637-645 [H] [I]	<i>God and the Problem of Evil</i> More than Justice? An Ethics of Care What does 'God' Mean? The Logical Problem of Evil

Week 13 11.14 11.16 11.18		[J] 395-406 424-439	<i>Free Will</i> The Free Will Defense and the Problem Reborn Incompatibilism & Compatibilism Semi-Compatibilism
Week 14 11.21 11.23 11.25	Thanksgiving		
Week 15 11.28 11.30 12.2		[K] [L: 1-12] [L: 12-23]	<i>The Illusion of the Self?</i> Selves as Fictions The Allure of the Self Shedding the Self
Week 16 12.5 12.7 12.9	Essay 3	854-860 837-848 17-21	<i>Wrapping Up</i> Death Meaningfulness in Life The Value of Philosophy

References

- [A] DENNETT, DANIEL. (2009). 'Intentional Systems Theory.' In Ansgar Beckermann et al (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Mind*, 339-350. Oxford University Press.
- [B] BODEN, MARGARET. (1988). 'Is Computational Psychology Possible?' In *Computer Models of Mind*, 238-251. Cambridge University Press.
- [C] CLIFFORD, WILLIAM. (1999). 'The Ethics of Belief.' In Timothy Madigan (ed), *The Ethics of Belief and Other Essays*, 70-96. Prometheus.
- [D] JAMES, WILLIAM. (1979). 'The Will to Believe.' In *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, 1-31. Harvard University Press.
- [E] WOLTERSTORFF, NICHOLAS. (1983). 'Can Belief in God Be Rational?' In Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (eds), *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, 135-186. University of Notre Dame Press.
- [F] HERSKOVITS, MELVILLE AND LOUIS POJMAN. (2004). 'Is Morality Relative to Culture?' In Stephen Satris (ed), *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Moral Issues*, 2-25. McGraw-Hill.
- [G] RACHELS, JAMES. (1993). 'The Challenge of Cultural Relativism.' In *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, 15-29. McGraw-Hill.
- [H] MORRIS, THOMAS. (1984). 'The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Anselm.' *Faith and Philosophy* 1, n. 2, 177-187.
- [I] MACKIE, JOHN. (1955). 'Evil and Omnipotence.' *Mind* (New Series) 64, n. 254, 200-12.
- [J] PLANTINGA, ALVIN. (1974). *God, Freedom and Evil*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- [K] DENNETT, DANIEL. (1986). 'The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity.' *Philosophia* 15, 275-288.
- [L] VELLEMAN, DAVID. (2006). 'So It Goes.' *The Amherst Lecture in Philosophy* 1: 1-23.