

# Introduction to Philosophy

(PHIL-2300-003)

Fall 2015

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**Office Hours:** W 2-3 and by appointment (email me with 24 hours notice)

**Section:** 003

**Time and Place of Class Meetings:** T/Th 3:30-4:50 Preston Hall 103

**Description of Course Content:** This course is an introductory partial survey of western analytic philosophy and its history. Some of the questions to be explored include the following. *Under what conditions do we know anything at all? What criteria determine that you are the same person as someone who existed yesterday? What factors, if any, determine which actions are right? Can the physical sciences account fully for mental phenomena? How is change over time possible? What criteria determine whether something is possible?* While exploring these and other questions, the course will emphasize clarity in thought, argumentation, and writing. Readings range from Plato and Hume to Mill and Russell to Lewis and Haslanger.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** Students will learn to reason and write clearly about central philosophical topics. In doing so, they will learn to engage, critically examine, and charitably interpret the arguments and theses of the philosophical works read in the course. Moreover, they will develop the skills of critical thought and argumentation more generally. The success of these projected outcomes will be assessed by student performance in writing argumentative essays as well as exams that test for factual comprehension and logical reasoning. These outcomes, if successful, will contribute to virtually all future endeavors in which the student will be asked to exercise careful reasoning and clarity in thought and communication, whether in law, medicine, business, journalism, science, other humanities, the arts, or daily life.

## **Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials:**

*Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition.*

J. Perry, M. Bratman, and J.M. Fischer (Eds.) Oxford: OUP 2015 (hereafter "PBF")

- Additional required texts (marked below with \*\*) are or will be accessible by URL.

## **Descriptions of major assignments and examinations:**

Two short essays (approximately 1000 words)

Midterm exam (multiple choice, short answer, short essay)

Final exam (similar to midterm)

**Attendance:** You should come to every lecture on time and fully prepared by having done the assigned reading. That's what I expect of you. If I get the sense that this expectation is not being met, I will start giving quizzes at the beginning of lecture. That said, I do not plan to take attendance. You're adults and college is expensive. If it's not worth it *to* you to show up, it's not worth it *for* you to show up.

**No Screened Devices:** Students are not allowed to use screened devices (laptops, tablets, phones, etc.) during lecture. Exceptions will be made only for students who have an independently established need to use such devices for learning purposes (e.g. students with disability documentation).

**Grading:**

Short Paper #1/Short Paper #2 (50%)

Midterm (20%)

Final (30%)

Of the two paper grades, the lower will count for 10% of your final grade, the higher for 40%.

- However, if quizzes come into the picture and you miss or perform poorly on more than one quiz, then your highest paper grade will count for no more than 25% of your final grade. (A poor performance is a performance that I judge to reflect a failure on your part to have read the assigned material.)
- Violation of the No Screened Devices policy will also result in your highest paper grade counting for no more than 25%.
- Students who miss or perform poorly on more than one quiz *and* violate the No Screened Devices policy will have their lower paper grade count for 40% and their higher paper grade count for only 10% of their final grade.

**Expectations for Out-of-Class Study:** You are expected to have prepared thoroughly for each meeting by reading and thinking critically about the assigned text(s) for that day's lecture. Beyond the time required to attend each lecture, expect the minimum required out-of-class preparation time to be two hours for each lecture. Expect to spend as many as twenty additional hours preparing for *each* assignment and exam.

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Disability Accommodations:** UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, *The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA)*, and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a letter certified by the **Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD)**. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:

**The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD)** [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or calling 817-272-3364.

**Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS)** [www.uta.edu/caps/](http://www.uta.edu/caps/) or calling 817-272-3671.

Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Title IX:** *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit [uta.edu/eos](http://uta.edu/eos). For information regarding Title IX, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX).*

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

**Student Support Services:** UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>

## **Course Schedule:**

### Philosophy (of the academic, western, analytic variety)

#### Aug. 27: Introduction

- No assigned reading

#### Sept. 1: The Value of Philosophy

- John Perry/Michael Bratman/J.M. Fischer, "Philosophy" (PBF 1-7)
- Bertrand Russell, selection from *Problems of Philosophy* ("The Value of Philosophy" PBF 17-20)
- Plato, selections from *Apology* (19a-24b; 28b.5-34b.5) (PBF 22-25; 28-31)

### Ethics

#### Sept. 3: Justice

- Plato, selections from *Republic* (357a-376.e; 427c-445b) (PBF 723-733; 734-744)

#### Sept. 8: Meta-Ethics

- Gilbert Harman, "Ethics and Observation" (PBF 789-793)
- Nicholas Sturgeon, "Moral Explanations" (PBF 793-808)

Sept. 10: Utilitarianism

- Jeremy Bentham, "The Principle of Utility" (PBF 480-483)
- John Stuart Mill, "Utilitarianism" (PBF 483-499)

Sept. 15: Deontology

- Immanuel Kant, "Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals" (PBF 527-543)

Sept. 17: Utility, Duty, and Famine

- "Writing Philosophy Papers" (PBF 14-16)
- Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" (PBF 518-526)
- Onora O'Neill, "Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems" (PBF 561-567)
- Short Paper #1 Assigned

Epistemology

Sept. 22: Knowledge

- Edmund Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?"\* ([www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org); login with MavID)
- Linda Zagzebski, "The Inescapability of Gettier Problems"\* (jstor.org)

Sept. 24: Cartesian Doubt I

- Rene Descartes, *Meditations* I and II (PBF 157-163)

Sept. 29: Cartesian Doubt II

- Rene Descartes, *Meditations* V and VI (PBF 172-181)
- **(Short Paper #1 due)**

Oct. 1: Induction I

- David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section IV (214-220)

Oct. 6: Induction II

- Nelson Goodman, "The New Riddle of Induction"\* ([http://fitelson.org/confirmation/goodman\\_1955.pdf](http://fitelson.org/confirmation/goodman_1955.pdf))

Oct. 8: Review for midterm

Oct. 13 MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Mind

Oct. 15: Mind and Body

- Gilbert Ryle, "Descartes's Myth" (PBF 272-279)
- David Armstrong, "The Nature of Mind" (PBF 279-286)

Oct. 20: Minds and Machines

- John Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs" (PBF 308-321)

Oct. 22: Phenomenal Consciousness

- Thomas Nagel, "What is it Like to be a Bat?"\* (jstor.org)

Oct. 27: Consciousness and Knowledge

- Frank Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know" (PBF 291-294)

- Alex Byrne, “Inverted Qualia” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*\*  
(<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/qualia-inverted>)

Oct. 29: Perception

- Susanna Siegel “How Does Phenomenology Constrain Object Seeing?”\*  
(<http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~ssiegel/papers/franco.pdf>)

### Metaphysics

Nov. 3: Personal Identity

- John Perry, *Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality* (PBF 322-329)

Nov. 5: Personal Identity

- John Perry, *Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality* (PBF 329-342)

Nov. 10

- Bernard Williams, “The Self and the Future” (PBF 343-353)
- **(Short Paper #2 due)**

Nov. 12 Change and Perdurantism

- “Paradox of Identity” (PBF 874-875)
- David Lewis, excerpt from *On the Plurality of Worlds*\*

Nov. 17 Endurantism

- Sally Haslanger “Endurance and Temporary Intrinsic”\* (jstor)
- E.J. Lowe “The Problem of Intrinsic Change: Rejoinder to Lewis”\* (jstor)

Nov. 19 Fictional Entities

- Amie Thomasson “Fictional Entities”\*  
(<http://thomasson0.wix.com/amie-thomasson#!publications/cee5>)

Nov. 24 Modality I

- Alvin Plantinga “Modalities: Basic Concepts and Distinctions”\*

(Thanksgiving)

Dec. 1 Modality II

- David Lewis, excerpt from *On the Plurality of Worlds*\*

Dec. 3 Wrap Up

Dec. 8 Review

**Note:** I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course. DG