

Introduction to Philosophy

(PHIL-2300-004)

Spring 2017

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Office Hours: by appointment

Section: 004

Time and Place of Class Meetings: T/Th 3:30-4:50, Preston 207

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 skills of critical thought and argumentation more generally. The success of these projected outcomes will be assessed by student performance on argumentative essay assignments 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, technology, or daily life.

Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials:

Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings, 7th 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 each)

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

Final exam (similar to midterm)

Attendance: Students are expected to come to every lecture on time and fully prepared by having thoroughly and carefully read the assigned text(s) for that lecture (see below section on expectations for out-of-class study). That said, I do not plan to take attendance. University students are adults and tuition is expensive. If it's not worth it *to* someone to show up, it's not worth it *for* him or her to show up. *That* said, I may give pop quizzes from time to time to ensure that students are actively engaging the course material.

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 Papers (40%)

Midterm (25%)

Final (30%)

Participation (5%) [this may include reading quizzes]

Of the two paper grades, the lower will count for 10% of your final grade, the higher for 30%.

Expectations for Out-of-Class Study: Students should prepare for each lecture by giving the corresponding reading assignment at least two hours of careful reading, i.e. focused, sustained, and perhaps repeated reading in a quiet setting, with questions and objections noted. Students should expect to spend at least 15-20 hours *outside class* on each short paper and another 15-20 preparing for each exam. These estimates are in addition to the time required to read the course material in preparation for each lecture.

Course Schedule:

Philosophy (of the academic, western, analytic variety)

Jan. 17: Introduction

- No assigned reading

Jan. 19: Basics of Logic

- John Perry/Michael Bratman/J.M. Fischer, “Logical Toolkit” (PBF 8-13)

Jan. 24: 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)

Ethics

Jan. 26: Justice

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

Jan. 31: Meta-Ethics

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

Feb. 2: Utilitarianism

- John Stuart Mill, “Utilitarianism” (PBF 483-499)

Feb. 7: Deontology

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

Feb. 9: Utility, Duty, and Famine

- Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” (PBF 518-526)
- “Writing Philosophy Papers” (PBF 14-16)
- Short Paper #1 Assigned

Epistemology

Feb. 14: Cartesian Doubt I

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

Feb. 16: Cartesian Doubt II

- Rene Descartes, *Meditations* V and VI (PBF 172-181)

Feb. 21: Knowledge I

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

Feb. 23: Knowledge II

- Robert Nozick, "Philosophical Explanations" (excerpt) (PBF 189-196)
- **(Short Paper #1 due)**

Feb. 28: Induction I

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

Mar. 2: Induction II

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

Mar. 7: Review for midterm

Mar. 9: MIDTERM EXAMINATION

****SPRING BREAK****

Mind

Mar. 21: Mind and Body

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

Mar. 23: Minds and Machines

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

Mar. 28: Phenomenal Consciousness

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

Mar. 30: Consciousness and Knowledge

- Frank Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know" (PBF 291-294)
- Alex Byrne, "Inverted Qualia" *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy** (only read intro and sections 1, 2.1, and 2.2) (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/qualia-inverted>)

Metaphysics

Apr. 4: Personal Identity I

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

Apr. 6: Personal Identity II

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

Apr. 11: Personal Identity III

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

Apr. Persistence I: Perdurantism

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

Apr. 18 Persistence II: Endurantism

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

Apr. 20 Fictional Entities

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

Apr. 25 Modality I

- Alvin Plantinga "Modalities: Basic Concepts and Distinctions"*

Apr. 27 Modality II

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

May 2: Wrap Up

May 4: Review for final

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*

University Policies:

Attendance: At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required but attendance is a critical indicator in student success. Each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. However, while UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients "begin attendance in a course." UT Arlington instructors will report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F, faculty report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Blackboard. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

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/aaofaof/>).

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). Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. 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 or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability.

Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS) www.uta.edu/caps/ or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

Non-Discrimination Policy: *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.*

Title IX Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington ("University") is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. *For information regarding Title IX, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or jmhood@uta.edu.*

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 in their courses by 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. Additional information is available at <https://www.uta.edu/conduct/>.

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>.

Campus Carry: Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in face-to-face and online classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” are 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 via the SFS database is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. Students’ anonymity will be protected to the extent that the law allows. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law and aggregate results are posted online. Data from SFS is also used for faculty and program evaluations. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

Final Review Week: for semester-long courses, 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, or view the information at <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>.