

Philosophical Questions Spring 2009
PHIL030 CM
Claremont McKenna College
Mondays and Wednesdays 1:15-2:30
Location: Bauer Centre 23

Instructor: Endre Begby
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursday 10:00-12:00
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Course description

This is an introductory philosophy class, designed to familiarize students with some of the most distinctive themes and ideas in philosophy, classical and contemporary. The class is divided into three thematic sections: (i) Ethics and Moral Philosophy, (ii) Knowledge and Reality, and (iii) Mind and Body.

Readings

Most of the readings for the class will be taken from the book *Introduction to Philosophy: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, edited by John Perry, Michael Bratman, and John Martin Fischer, Oxford University Press, 2006. Make sure you get the 4th edition, published in 2006.

<http://www.oup.com/us/catalog/general/subject/Philosophy/?view=usa&ci=9780195169249>

This book also has a companion website, with plenty of useful materials.

www.oup.com/us/perry

Some additional readings will be supplied through Sakai.

Requirements

Your grade for this class will be based on two papers (4-5 pages each), two exams, and participation in class. The breakdown is as follows: 1st paper 20%, Midterm 20%, 2nd paper 25%, Final 20%, Participation 15%. See below for tentative papers deadlines and exam dates.

You will not receive a final grade in this class if you do not complete all the written requirements. You will be graded along the familiar scale from A to F. I expect the average grade in the class to around B, but I reserve the right to employ the entire scale. In other words, you should not expect an A (or a B) in this class unless you do all the work, and do it well.

Papers that are turned in late without a valid excuse will be penalized by one-third of a letter grade per day. That is, a paper turned in one day late can at best achieve an A-, a paper turned in two days late can at best achieve a B+, and so on. All calendar days count. This entails that no unexcused late assignment will be given higher than an F if it is turned in more than ten days after the assigned due date, and that late penalties continue to accrue over weekends and holidays.

Late work is not penalized if you have a College-recognized excuse—e.g., illness, family or personal emergency. I reserve the right to request proof of any such excuse. Always keep any documentation—e.g., plane tickets, doctors notes, traffic tickets—that can verify your excuse. Actively seek out such documentation (e.g., by doing to a doctor when sick) if you wish to ensure that your excuse will be accepted.

Other

Academic dishonesty: The college policies on cheating and plagiarism will be followed strictly. These policies – particularly the policies on plagiarism – may be more complex than you realize, and you are responsible for familiarizing yourself with them. Note that I count as plagiarism not just word-for-word copies of other people’s writings, but also unthinking paraphrases of such sources. I reserve the right to consult plagiarism-detecting software such as turnitin. A single paragraph lifted or paraphrased from an outside source can be enough to get you into trouble, so if you are at all uncertain whether you are about to turn in a plagiarized paper, you should ask me first.

This class has a Sakai page (log on through sakai.claremont.edu). This page will be my main venue for disseminating messages, assignments, syllabus updates, comments on the readings, and so on. It is your responsibility to make sure that you receive these messages. The Sakai page also has a discussion board, which I strongly encourage you to use for sharing questions, concerns, and insights about our readings and classroom discussions. I will monitor this forum and post as needed. Thoughtful contributions to the Sakai discussion forum will count toward your participation grade for this class.

Tentative schedule

Introductory

1. Wed. Jan. 21 (No readings)

Ethics and Moral Philosophy

2. Mon. Jan. 26 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (pp. 572-587)
3. Wed. Jan. 28
4. Mon. Feb. 2 Mill, *Utilitarianism* (pp. 492-508)
5. Wed. Feb. 4 Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (pp. 536-552)
6. Mon. Feb. 9
7. Wed. Feb. 11 Nozick, “Justice and Entitlement” (pp. 620-628)

8. Mon. Feb. 16 Nozick, cont'd
Rawls, "A Theory of Justice" (pp. 607-620)

9. Wed. Feb. 18

Knowledge and Reality

10. Mon. Feb. 23 *First paper due.*
Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (pp. 171-195)

11. Wed. Feb. 25

12. Mon. Mar. 2 Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (pp. 225-251)

13. Wed. Mar. 4

14. Mon. Mar. 9 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (Sakai)

15. Wed. Mar. 11

Spring break week

16. Mon. Mar. 23 Review session

17. Wed. Mar. 25 *Midterm exam*

Mind and Body

18. Mon. Mar. 30 Fragments from Hobbes, Leibniz, and Descartes (Sakai)

19. Wed. Apr. 1 Russell, "The Argument from Analogy for Other Minds" (pp. 285-287)
Ryle, "Descartes' Myth" (pp. 287-295)

20. Mon. Apr. 6

21. Wed. Apr. 8 Churchland, "Eliminative Materialism" (pp. 321-325)
22. Mon. Apr. 13 Dennett, "Intentional Systems" (pp. 308-320)
23. Wed. Apr. 15
24. Mon. Apr. 20 *Second paper due*
Nagel, "What is it like to be a bat?" (pp. 354-362)
25. Wed. Apr. 22
26. Mon. Apr. 27 Nagel, "Brain Bisection and the Unity of Consciousness." (Sakai)
27. Wed. Apr. 29
28. Mon. May 4 Dennett, "Where am I?" (pp. 412-420)
29. Wed. May 6 *Review session*

Final exam TBA