

Philosophical Questions, Fall 2008

Mondays and Wednesdays 1:15 – 2:30
Bauer Centre, Room 23

Professor Endre Begby
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Office: F12 (Modular offices by the tennis courts)
Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10-12
Phone: 909-607-3358 (email preferred)

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.

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, 2007. Make sure you get the 4th edition, published in 2007.

<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.

Your grade in this class will be based on the following:

- 3 papers, 5-6 pp. (the first worth 20%, the last two worth 25% each)
- Midterm exam (20%)
- In-class participation (10%)

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 simply expect an A (or a B) in this class. Receiving a good grade requires doing all the work, and doing 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 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.

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. As little as 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.

College resources:

Statement of Academic Policy and Statement of Academic Integrity (containing some useful information on how to avoid plagiarism): <http://registrar.claremontmckenna.edu/acpolicy>

Dean of Students’ Guide to Student Life: <http://dos.claremontmckenna.edu/cmguide>

CMC Writing Center: 909-607-4142

Student Health Services: 909-621-8222

Health Education Outreach Program (providing, among other things, nutrition information, sexual health information, free and anonymous HIV testing, wellness counseling, referrals to helplines, and earplugs): 909-607-3602

Women’s Health Center (providing, among other things, gynecological exams, pregnancy and STD testing, and counseling about contraceptives): 909-621-8222

Monsour Counseling Center (providing, among other things, counseling, crisis intervention, emergency services after hours, and support and self-exploration groups): 909-621-8202

Interfaith Chaplain’s Office: 909-621-8685

Office of Black Student Affairs: 909-607-3669

Chicano/Latino Student Affairs: 909-621-8044

Department of Campus Safety: 909-621-8170

Campus Security: 909-607-2000

Tentative schedule:

Introductory

1. W 9/3 (No readings)

Ethics and Moral Philosophy

2. M 9/8 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (pp. 572-587)
3. W 9/10
4. M 9/15 Mill, *Utilitarianism* (pp. 492-508)
5. W 9/17 Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (pp. 536-552)
6. M 9/22
7. W 9/24 Nozick, "Justice and Entitlement" (pp. 620-628)
Rawls, "A Theory of Justice" (pp. 607-620)
8. M 9/29
9. W 10/1 *First paper due.*

Knowledge and Reality

10. M 10/6 Plato, *Phaedo* (available through Sakai)
11. W 10/8
12. M 10/13 Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (pp. 171-195)
13. W 10/15

Fall break Monday 10/20 – no class

14. W 10/22 Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (pp. 225-251)
15. M 10/27
16. W 10/29 *Midterm*
17. M 11/3 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (Sakai)
18. W 11/5

Mind and Body

19. **M 11/10** ***Second paper due.***
Fragments from Hobbes, Leibniz, and Descartes (Sakai)
20. **W 11/12** Russell, “The Argument from Analogy for Other Minds” (pp. 285-287)
Ryle, “Descartes’ Myth” (pp. 287-295)
21. **M 11/17**
22. **W 11/19** Churchland, “Eliminative Materialism” (pp. 321-325)
23. **M 11/24** Dennett, “Intentional Systems” (pp. 308-320)
24. **W 11/26**
24. **M 12/1** Nagel, “What is it like to be a bat?” (pp. 354-362)
25. **W 12/3** Parfit, “Personal Identity” (pp. 399-412)
26. **M 12/8** Dennett, “Where am I?” (pp. 412-420)
27. **W 12/10** Summary.

M 12/15 – Third paper due