

Introduction to Philosophy

Phil 101D · Prof. J. Dunn

Spring 2012
M,W,F 10:30 - 11:30
Harrison 101
DePauw University

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Description

Does God exist? Do you know that you're not now dreaming? Is there any good reason to act morally? In this course we will investigate these questions among others. In doing so, you will be introduced to several major themes in philosophy and works by important philosophers. We will be reading works from ancient philosophy through to contemporary philosophy, including philosophers such as Plato, Descartes, Hume, and Peter Singer. By the end of the course you should have a better understanding of what philosophy is, and should have cultivated the ability to think and write clearly.

Textbook

► *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings (5th Edition)*, Perry, Bratman, & Fischer, OUP.

Grading

Religion Papers (3): 12% (2%/4%/6%)

Short Paper: 8%

Final Paper: 17% (first draft must be submitted on-time for full credit)

Exams (3): 48% (14%/14%/20%)

Participation/First Tens 15%

Course Requirements

Participation /First Tens

One of the best ways to learn philosophy is to engage in careful, informed discussion about the material being read. You are expected to contribute to such discussion each day in class. For such discussions to be profitable, however, they must be *informed*. This means that you are also expected to *carefully* do the reading, and come to class with questions and comments. I will assess this aspect of your participation based on your engagement during and outside class, your attendance, and on several activities we will do in the first ten minutes of class (hence the name "First Tens").

On any given day, our First Ten will consist of one of the following three activities:

(1) Reading Quiz. If you carefully do the reading before each class, you should do fine on these quizzes. Your lowest two reading quiz scores will be dropped. If you are absent from class, or late you cannot make up a reading quiz.

(2) Free Write. You will be asked to write for 5-7 minutes on a question related to the day's reading. I will collect and read these to see what you are thinking, but you get full credit just for doing them. These give you a good chance to identify your own ideas about the material and to practice writing. You cannot make these up if you are late or absent.

(3) Group Discussion/Activity. On some days, we will have a group discussion or activity. I will collect a record of what your group discussed. On other days, I will announce that a Think Piece related to a particular reading assignment is due for the following class. A Think Piece is something between a polished piece of writing and a Free Write. Think of it as a thoughtful letter to a friend. Think Pieces need to be typed and a hard copy needs to be brought to class. On days when a Think Piece is due, you will discuss your Think Piece with fellow students for the First Ten.

Using laptops and smartphones negatively affects class participation and discussion. So please put these items away during class.

Religion Papers

Philosophy is all about fostering real debate between opposing viewpoints. For this assignment you will write a series of three papers on the same topic and respond to the viewpoints of your classmates.

The first paper will be a short piece (200-400 words) responding to a prompt about the existence of God.

I will look through these first papers, select 3-5 as *exhibits* and then post them to Moodle. Your second paper will be a slightly longer piece (500-700 words), which responds in some way to one of the exhibits and furthers the debate.

I will then look through this second batch of papers, select 3-5 as *new exhibits* and then post them to Moodle. Your third, and final paper (1,000-1,300 words), will respond in some way to the new exhibits. For more information about these papers, see the assignment description, which is posted online.

First Paper Due: **Feb. 6**

Second Paper Due: **Feb. 17**

Third Paper Due: **Feb. 27**

Short Paper

This course is divided into three units. During the first unit (Philosophy of Religion), you will write a series of three Religion Papers. During the second unit, you will write one short paper. This paper will require you to answer an in-depth question about the readings and the topics we have discussed in this unit. This is to be a polished piece of writing. The best short papers will have gone through several revisions, and editing.

Short Paper Due: **Apr. 2**

Final Paper

Your final paper is the most involved writing assignment in this class. It should be 1,500 - 2,000 words and is due on the last day of the course, **May 9**.

To help you write a strong final paper, you need to turn in a rough draft before 4/25. I will give you comments on your draft and then return it to you for revisions.

For more information about the paper, see the link on the course website or click [here](#).

* I strongly recommend that you take advantage of the Writing Center in the Academic Resource Center, located in 115 Asbury. After scheduling an appointment, you will have the chance to meet with a trained tutor who will read your work and offer feedback. This is a great way to improve your writing, however slots can fill up quickly, so please plan ahead to take advantage of this great resource.

Exams

At the conclusion of each of the three sections, there will be an in-class exam. The exam will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions.

Exam 1: **Mar. 7**

Exam 2: **Apr. 16**

Exam 3: **May 16** (finals week)

Exams 1 and 2 are non-cumulative, covering material solely from Units 1 and 2 (respectively). These exams are each worth 14% of your overall grade. Exam 3 is cumulative. It will cover the material from Unit 3 in-depth and the material from the earlier units in less detail. This exam is worth 20% of your overall grade.

Other Requirements

You should take control of your experience in this course: what you get out of it will largely be a function of what you put in to it. If you are falling behind or are confused about something, please make arrangements to meet with me. I'm on campus every day and very happy to discuss this interesting material with you.

Things You Can Expect From Me

I will give clear and prompt feedback on your work.

I will be available to discuss the course material outside of class.

I will assist you in choosing a paper topic, and on editing and revising your final paper.

I will be available for extra help when needed.

Special Considerations

DePauw University is committed to providing equal access to academic programs and university-administered activities and reasonable modifications/accommodations to students with disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended in 2008. Any student needing special accommodations due to a disability should contact the Coordinator of Student Disability Services, Pam

Roberts, 302 Harrison Hall or call (765) 658-6267. It is the responsibility of each student to discuss implementation of approved modifications/accommodations with each faculty member and/or staff member within one week of the date of receiving a modification/accommodation approval memo or within the first two weeks of the academic semester.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is very important, and violations are serious offenses, which I take very seriously. There is a clear Academic Integrity Policy that can be found here:

<http://www.depauw.edu/handbooks/student/acadlife/app/aip/>

It is your responsibility to read the university policy. If you are unclear about what constitutes a violation of academic integrity, it is your responsibility to contact me with any questions so that you are clear about it. Ignorance is not an excuse. The *minimum* penalty for violations of Academic Integrity is a 0 on the relevant assignment and a further reduction in your overall grade.