

# INTRO PHILOSOPHY

PHIL 103, Spring 2017  
Murray Hall 204, T/Th 1:10–2:30  
office hours T 2:30–3:30 & by appt

Philosophy is often viewed as the dreamy contemplation of “the big questions”. Philosophers do indeed ask those big questions: Do we really know anything? Is there a god? Do we have free will? How should a moral person act? But they do not engage in whimsical speculation about vaguely defined issues. They use rigorous and disciplined methods of thinking, in the hopes of bringing these deep questions under intellectual control. This course will be an in-depth look at some of these questions (rather than a comprehensive historical survey). You will learn what philosophy is all about and how to do it yourself.

## Requirements

One 3–5 page paper (10%), one 5–7 page paper (20%), two exams (35% each). Papers must be [emailed to me](#) by the start of class on the due date. Late papers lose one letter grade per day. Extensions only in documented extreme circumstances (e.g., not for conflicts with assignments in other classes—plan ahead!). Handouts and announcements will be posted on the course website.

## Website

<http://tedsider.org/teaching/intro/intro.html>

Paper topics, handouts, study guides, cancelled classes and other announcements will be posted here.

## Textbook

Joel Feinberg and Russ Shafer-Landau, *Reason and Responsibility* (16<sup>th</sup> ed)

## Important dates

1/26	no class
2/16	paper 1 due (1:10pm)
3/28	exam 1
4/13	no class
4/27	paper 2 due (1:10pm)
5/5	exam 2 (8:00am)

**Tentative schedule** (Readings from *R&R* unless otherwise noted)

**Note: there will be no class on 1/26 and 4/13**

*Existence of God*

- 1/17 What is philosophy? Preliminaries for discussing God's existence
- 1/19 Cosmological arguments. Aquinas, "The Five Ways"; Clark, "A Modern Formulation of the Cosmological Argument", Rowe, "The Cosmological Argument"
- 1/24 Cosmological arguments continued; argument from design. Paley, "The Argument from Design"
- 1/26 **no class**
- 1/31 Problem of evil. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence"
- 2/2 Problem of evil continued. Swinburne, "Why God Allows Evil"
- 2/7 Pascal's wager. Pascal, "The Wager"; optional: Blackburn, "Miracles and Testimony"
- 2/9 catch-up

*Free will and determinism*

- 2/14 The problem of free will; hard determinism. Holbach, "The Illusion of Free Will"
- 2/16 Hard determinism continued. **Paper 1 due**
- 2/21 Libertarianism. Chisholm, "Human Freedom and the Self"
- 2/23 Soft determinism. Ayer, "Freedom and Necessity"
- 2/28 Soft determinism continued. Wolf, "Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility"
- 3/2 Soft determinism continued

3/7 catch-up

### *Epistemology*

3/9 The challenge of skepticism. Descartes, “Meditations on First Philosophy”, Meditations I and II (skim III–VI).

3/21 Idealism. Berkeley, “Of the Principles of Human Knowledge”

3/23 The problem of induction. Hume, “An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding”, section IV (parts I and II)

3/28 **Exam 1**

3/30 catch-up

### *Ethics*

4/4 Shafer-Landau, “Ethical Subjectivism”

4/6 continued

4/11 Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”

4/13 **no class**

4/18 Wolf, “Moral Saints” (on Blackboard, not in *R&R*)

4/20 Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion”

4/25 Marquis, “An Argument that Abortion is Wrong”

4/27 catch-up. **Paper 2 due**