

## **INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY**

Philosophy 104 -- Fall Term 2021

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### **Syllabus Part II – Topics and Readings**

**Textbook:** *Philosophy: Asking Questions - Seeking Answers* by Stephen Stich & Tom Donaldson (Oxford University Press, 2019). The book is available at the Rutgers University Book Store. New and used copies can also be purchased on Amazon and on many other online booksellers. There is a digital version available here: [HERE](#).

In the reading assignments below, the textbook is abbreviated **S&D**.

All assigned and recommended readings that are not in the textbook are available on the class Canvas website.

Assigned reading, listening and viewing should be completed **before** the class for which they are assigned.

Please Note: Revised and updated versions of the *Topics and Readings* may be posted from time to time. Whenever a change is made, it will be announced in class and in the Announcements section Canvas site.

#### **WEEK 1**

##### **September 1**

###### **Topics:**

- (i) Introduction to the Course
- (ii) What Is Philosophy?

###### **Reading:**

- (i) **S&D**, Preface, pp. xi-xvi, Chapter 1 “What Is Philosophy?” pp. 1-6, Appendix A, “Reading and Writing Tips,” pp. 334-341.
- (ii) Plato, *Apology*
- (iii) **(Recommended but not required):** Bertrand Russell, “The Value of Philosophy,” (Click [HERE](#)). If you would prefer to listen to this, click “Listen to this Text” at the top of the page.

###### **Listening:**

Philosophy Bites Podcast: “What Is Philosophy?” (Click [HERE](#)) Listen to the whole podcast if you have time, but be sure to listen thru 10:53 (= 10 minutes, 53 seconds)

## WEEK 2

September 6 (Labor Day Holiday – No Rutgers Classes)

September 8 (This week only, Monday classes meet on Wednesday. If you are in a Section that usually meets on Monday, the Section will meet on Wednesday, September 8.)

**Topics:** The Philosophy of Religion - Some Important Preliminaries

- (i) The Importance of Definitions
- (ii) The Definition of “God”
- (iii) Religious Tolerance
- (iv) Can Religion Be “True For Me”?
- (v) Are Reasons Necessary?

**Reading:**

Levinovitz, “The Problem With Religious Tolerance”

**S&D**, Chapter 3, “Does God Exist?” pp. 29-31

## WEEK 3

Attendance will be taken in Discussion Sections starting in Week 3

September 13

**Topics:**

- (ii) The First Cause Argument
- (iii) Leibniz’s Cosmological Argument

**Reading:**

**S&D**, Ch. 3, “Does God Exist?” pp. 31-38

**Listening (Strongly recommended, but not required):** The BBC debate between Frederick Copleston & Bertrand Russell

Part 1 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BWFpBTqSN0>), and

Part 2 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7kJOENaNo>)

Each part is about 9 minutes.

September 15

**Topic:**

The Design Argument (a.k.a. The Teleological Argument)

**Reading:**

(i) **S&D**, Chapter 3, “Does God Exist?” pp. 38-46

(ii) Paley, “Natural Theology”

(iii) **(Recommended but not required):** Selections from Hume’s *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Parts 2, 5 & 9)

**Viewing: (Strongly recommended but not required):** “Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2xyrel-2vl>). This is a well-made and very engaging video. But it’s almost 2 hours long, and some of the best material is toward the end.)

## WEEK 4

September 20

**Topics:**

- (i) Anselm’s Ontological Argument
- (ii) Alvin Plantinga and the *Sensus Divinitatis*

**Reading:**

(i) **S&D**, Chapter 3, “Does God Exist?” pp. 46-50

(ii) “An interview with Alvin Plantinga”

## September 22

### Topic:

(i) Pragmatic Arguments for God's Existence: The Ethics of Belief & Pascal's Wager

### Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Chapter 3, "Does God Exist?" pp. 50-58
- (ii) Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief," pp. 1-6
- (iii) Saka, "Pascal's Wager About God"

## WEEK 5

## September 27

**Topic:** The Problem of Evil & Other Arguments Against the Existence of God

### Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 4, "Why Does God Leave Us to Suffer?" pp. 59-75
- (ii) John Mackie, "Free Will and the Problem of Evil"
- (ii) **(Recommended but not required):** Selection from Hume's *Dialogues* (Part 10)

## September 29

**Topic:** Can We Be Completely Certain of Anything?

### Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 5, "Can We Be Completely Certain of Anything?" pp. 77-95
- (ii) Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, First Meditation, pp. 1-4
- (ii) **(Recommended but not required):** Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, pp. 4-19

**Viewing: (Strongly recommended but not required):** *The Matrix* (the classic film directed by Lana & Lilly Wachowski). The Wachowskis got the basic idea from Descartes! If you haven't seen it, you definitely should. If you have seen it, you might want to watch it again. It is available on Amazon and YouTube for \$3.99.

## WEEK 6

## October 4

**Topic:** Can We Trust Our Senses?

### Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 6, "Can We Trust Our Senses?" pp. 97-106
- (ii) **(Recommended but not required):** Locke, Selections from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*

## October 6

**Topic:** Can We Trust Our Senses? (continued)

### Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 6, "Can We Trust Our Senses?" pp. 106-119
- (ii) **(Recommended but not required):** Berkeley, Selections from *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous* (If you would like to read more than this brief selection, a link to the complete text of Berkeley's *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous* is available in the Canvas Module for this week.)

## WEEK 7

## October 11

**Topic:** The Problem of Induction

### Reading:

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 7, "Will the Sun Rise Tomorrow?" pp. 121-139
- (ii) **(Recommended but not required):** Hume, Selections from *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*
- (iii) **(Recommended but not required):** Salmon, "An Encounter With David Hume"

**October 13**

**Topic:** Epistemology a.k.a. The Theory of Knowledge

**Reading:**

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 8, "What Is Knowledge?" pp. 141-150

**WEEK 8**

**October 18**

**Topic:** Epistemology a.k.a. The Theory of Knowledge

**Reading:**

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 8, "What Is Knowledge?" pp. 150-159
- (ii) Christina Starman & Ori Friedman, "Expert or Esoteric? Philosophers attribute Knowledge Differently Than All Other Academics"

**October 20**

**Topic:** Free Will

**Reading:**

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 9, "Do We Have Free Will?" pp. 161-170
- (ii) **(Recommended but not required):** Hume, "Of Liberty and Necessity," = Section 8 of Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, available online at <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/hume1748.pdf>

**WEEK 9**

**October 25**

**Topic:**

Free Will

**Reading:**

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 9, "Do We Have Free Will?" pp. 170-177
- (ii) **(Recommended but not required):** William James, "The Dilemma of Determinism"

**October 27**

**Topic:** The Philosophy of Mind: Dualism & Behaviorism

**Reading:**

- S&D**, Ch. 10, "How Is Your Mind Related to Your Body?" pp. 179-193

**WEEK 10**

**November 1**

**Topic:** The Philosophy of Mind: The Mind-Brain Identity Theory & Functionalism

**Reading:**

- S&D**, Ch. 10, "How Is Your Mind Related to Your Body?" pp. 193-210

**November 3**

**Topic:** Personal Identity: The Soul Theory

**Reading:**

- (i) **S&D**, Ch. 11, "Will You Be the Same Person in Ten Years? Could You Survive Death?" pp. 213-221
- (ii) Perry, *A Dialogue on Personal Identity & Immortality*, The First Night

**WEEK 11**

**November 8**

**Topic:** Personal Identity

**Reading:**

- i) **S&D**, Ch. 11, "Will You Be the Same Person in Ten Years? Could You Survive Death?" pp. 221-242
- ii) Perry, *A Dialogue on Personal Identity & Immortality*, The Second Night & The Third Night

**November 10**

**Topic:** Applied Ethics – Poverty, Vegetarianism, Abortion

**Reading:**

**S&D**, Ch. 15, "What Should We Do? (Part II)" pp. 309-332

**Viewing:**

TED Talk: Peter Singer "The Why and How of Effective Altruism" (Click [HERE](#))

**Listening (Strongly recommended, but not required):**

Philosophy Bites Podcast: Jeff McMahan on vegetarianism (Click [HERE](#))

Practical Ethics Bites Podcast: Rebecca Roache "The Rights & Wrongs of Abortion" (Click [HERE](#))

**WEEK 12**

**November 15**

**Topic:** Normative Ethics, Part 1: What Really Matters?

**Reading:**

**S&D**, Ch. 13, "What Really Matters?" pp. 267-285

**Listening:**

Philosophy Bites Podcast: Susan Wolf on the meaning of life (Click [HERE](#))

**November 17**

**Topic:** Normative Ethics, Part 2: Utilitarianism & Kantian Ethics

**Reading:**

**S&D**, Ch. 14, "What Should We Do? (Part I)" pp. 287-308

**WEEK 13**

**November 22**

**Topic:** Critical Ethics (a.k.a. Meta-Ethics) Part 1: The Divine Command Theory & Cultural Relativism

**Reading:**

**S&D**, Ch. 12, "Are There Objective Truths About Right and Wrong?" pp. 243-253

**Viewing:**

Stephen Darwall on God and Morality, Parts 1 & 2 (Click [HERE](#) and [HERE](#))

**WEEK 14**

**November 29**

**Topic:** Critical Ethics (a.k.a. Meta-Ethics) Part 2: Subjectivism, Expressivism and the Qualified Attitude Theory

**Reading:**

**S&D**, Ch. 12, "Are There Objective Truths About Right and Wrong?" pp. 253-266

**December 1**

**Topic:** Race - Is Race an Illusion?

**Reading:**

Joshua Glasgow, "Is Race an Illusion or a (Very) Basic Reality?"

**Viewing:**

*Race: The Power of an Illusion* – Episode 1, “The Difference Between Us” (Click [HERE](#))

**WEEK 15**

**December 6**

**Topic:** Race – Is Race a Social Construction

**Reading:**

Sally Haslanger, “Tracing the Sociopolitical Reality of Race”

**Viewing:**

*Race: The Power of an Illusion* – Episode 2, “The Story We Tell” (Click [HERE](#))

**December 8 & December 13**

**Topic:** Catch-up and Review