

# Introduction to Philosophy

Phil 104, Fall 2013

Prof. Jonathan Schaffer

**Overview:** We will discuss philosophical issues concerning human knowledge, the mind and the body, personal identity, universals, human freedom, moral responsibility, and the meaning of life itself. These issues are at the center of the historical development of Western philosophy, and at the center of the ongoing conversation of contemporary philosophy. You will be expected to understand key theories and arguments, and to hone your critical and analytic skills.

**Materials:** All readings are available on our website.

**Grading:** You are responsible for regular attendance, three short papers, and one final paper. Attendance will be worth 10% of your final grade, each short paper will be worth an additional 20% of your final grade, and the final paper will be worth the remaining 30% of your final grade. The short papers are due at the beginning of your discussion sections on 10/7, 11/4, and 12/2. The final paper is due by email on 12/20. Assignment details will be posted on our website. Papers will be graded on the basis of depth of understanding, clarity of expression, and creativity of thought. Papers will be penalized 5 points (out of 100) for every date late.

**Core Curriculum Learning Goal:** This course meets goal “o,” namely: “Examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production.” Assessment will be by papers and exams designed to foster this goal.

**Office Hours:** My office is in the Gateway Building (106 Somerset St.), Room 527. I am available by request.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the unacknowledged copying of someone else's ideas or words. It is theft. If you plagiarize, you will receive an F for the course, without exception. If you copy something word for word, put quotation marks around it. If you paraphrase someone's ideas, put the reference at the end of the sentence. When in doubt, cite! Please refer to the university's policy on academic integrity for more information: [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI\\_Policy\\_9\\_01\\_2011.pdf](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf)

**Schedule:** This is our provisional schedule. Like most things in life, it is subject to change:

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|-------|---|
| 9/4   | Introduction  |
| 9/9   | <b>Knowledge:</b> Descartes: First Meditation   |
| 9/11  | Moore: Proof of an External World   |
| 9/16  | Nozick: Philosophical Explanations (excerpt)  |
| 9/18  | Zagzebski: Virtues of the Mind (excerpt)  |
| 9/23  | <b>Mind:</b> Descartes: Sixth Meditation, Descartes-Elizabeth correspondence                        |
| 9/25  | Ryle: Descartes's Myth  |
| 9/30  | Putnam: Minds and Machines  |
| 10/2  | Jackson: What Mary Didn't Know  |
| 10/7  | <i>First paper due</i><br><b>Identity:</b> Locke: An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (excerpt) |
| 10/9  | Hume: A Treatise of Human Nature (excerpt)  |
| 10/14 | Parfit: Personal Identity   |

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| 10/16 | Sider: Temporal Parts   |
| 10/21 | <b>Properties:</b> Russell: The World of Universals                         |
| 10/23 | Williams: The Elements of Being   |
| 10/28 | Armstrong: Universals: An Opinionated Introduction (ch. 1)                  |
| 10/30 | Paul: Logical Parts   |
| 11/4  | <i>Second paper due</i><br><b>Freedom:</b> Strawson: Freedom and Resentment |
| 11/6  | Van Inwagen: The Powers of Rational Beings                                  |
| 11/11 | Frankfurt: Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility                 |
| 11/13 | Sartorio: Making a Difference in a Deterministic World                      |
| 11/18 | <b>Morality:</b> Kant: Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (excerpt)    |
| 11/20 | Mill: Utilitarianism (excerpt)  |
| 11/25 | Hursthouse: On Virtue Ethics (excerpt)                                      |
| 11/27 | Nietzsche: Beyond Good and Evil (excerpt)                                   |
| 12/2  | <i>Third paper due</i><br><b>Life and Death:</b> Nagel: The Absurd          |
| 12/4  | Wolf: The Meanings of Lives   |
| 12/9  | Feldman: Some Puzzles about the Evil of Death                               |
| 12/11 | Nagel: Death  |
| 12/20 | <i>Final paper due</i>  |