

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY
SPRING 2015– RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
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Goals:

Core Curriculum Learning Goal: This course meets goal 'o': 'Examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production.' Assessment will be by an SAS generic rubric embedded in the evaluation criteria laid out in this syllabus.

This class will introduce students to the methods and issues of philosophy focusing on basic questions of the possibility of truth and value, ethics, the existence of God, metaphysics, epistemology, and theory of mind.

Office Hours:

After each class – location to be determined (most likely in the classroom). Students should also feel free to contact me by phone at any point with any questions or concerns.

Text:

Introduction to Philosophy – Classical and Contemporary Readings – 4th, 5th or 6th ed.
John Perry, Michael Bratman and John Martin Fischer

Requirements:

--Exams and Quizzes (60 points)

--Two Optional Quizzes (15 points each)

--Final Exam (30, 45, or 60 points (depending on how many quizzes are taken))

--Two Papers

--2-3 page paper due in class March 7 (15 points)

Grade will be lowered by one letter for each week late.

--3-5 page paper due in class April 25 (25 points)

Grade will be lowered by one letter for each week late, and no papers will be accepted after the final.

Grading:

The following guideline will be used to assess papers and exams

	Exceeds the Standard	Meets the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Comprehension of philosophical theories and concepts	Firm grasp of relevant philosophical ideas	Moderate grasp of relevant philosophical ideas	Little or no grasp of relevant philosophical ideas
Philosophical thinking and critical analysis	Insightful philosophical analysis and thought demonstrated	Effort made to critically evaluate and engage in philosophical thinking on the relevant topic	Little or no demonstration of philosophical thought or critical analysis
Clarity, coherence, and composition	Well-written, coherent and easy to follow	Clear in meaning and coherently organized	Unclear in meaning and difficult to follow

Final grade will be adjusted for the level and quality of participation in class and on-line discussion at sakai site (class discussion forum).

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

My policy for missed classes is as follows: grades are lowered one letter for each absence starting with the fourth.

Class Site:

A Sakai site will be set up for class outlines, announcements, discussion, and grades.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

This schedule is subject to change – changes will be announced in class.

On the Possibility of Value

- Jan 24 Bertrand Russell – *The Value of Philosophy*
- Jan 31 Thomas Nagel – *The Absurd*
Albert Camus – *The Myth of Sisyphus*
- Feb 7 J.L. Mackie – *The Subjectivity of Values*

On the Possibility of God

- Feb 14 Saint Anselm - *The Ontological Argument*
FIRST OPTIONAL QUIZ
- Feb 21 Saint Thomas Aquinas – *The Existence of God*
Bertrand Russell – *Why I Am Not a Christian (Theist)*
Gottfried Leibniz – *God, Evil, and the Best of All Possible Worlds*

On Ethics

- Feb 28 Jeremy Bentham – *The Principle of Utility*
E.F. Carritt – *Criticisms of Utilitarianism*
J.J.C. Smart – *Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism*
Bernard Williams – *Utilitarianism and Integrity*
- Mar 7 Immanuel Kant – *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*
Susan Wolf – *Moral Saints*
FIRST PAPER DUE IN CLASS

On the Possibility of Knowledge

- Mar 28 Rene Descartes – *Meditations on First Philosophy*
SECOND OPTIONAL QUIZ
- Apr 4 Rene Descartes – *Meditations on First Philosophy* (continued)
David Hume – *Of Scepticism with Regard to the Senses*
- Apr 11 David Hume – *Of Scepticism with Regard to the Senses* (continued)
William James – *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*

On Mind and Freewill

- Apr 18 Bertrand Russell - *The Argument from Analogy for Other Minds*
Gilbert Ryle - *Descartes' Myth*
- Apr 25 Daniel Dennett - *Intentional Systems*
Kwasi Wiredu – *The Akan Conception of Mind*
SECOND PAPER DUE IN CLASS
- May 2 Peter van Inwagen – *The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will*
- May 9 FINAL EXAM**