

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY
SPRING 2016– 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 – 6th or 7th ed.
John Perry, Michael Bratman and John Martin Fischer

Requirements:

--Three Tests (20 points each)

If either or both of the first two tests are missed, the material from that test will be on the final test, and the final test will be worth 20 additional points for each of the tests missed.

--Two Papers

--2-3 page paper due in class March 11 (15 points)

Grade will be lowered by one letter for each week late (not counting spring break)

--3-5 page paper due in class April 23 (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 23 Bertrand Russell – *The Value of Philosophy*
- Jan 30 Thomas Nagel – *The Absurd*
 Albert Camus – *The Myth of Sisyphus*
- Feb 6 J.L. Mackie – *The Subjectivity of Values*

On the Possibility of God

- Feb 13 Saint Anselm - *The Ontological Argument*
FIRST TEST
- Feb 20 Saint Thomas Aquinas – *The Existence of God*
 William Paley – *Natural Theology*
 Gottfried Leibniz – *God, Evil, and the Best of All Possible Worlds*

On Ethics

- Feb 27 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 5 Immanuel Kant – *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*
 Rosalind Hursthouse – *Right Action*
FIRST PAPER DUE MARCH 11

On the Possibility of Knowledge

- Mar 26 Rene Descartes – *Meditations on First Philosophy*
SECOND TEST
- Apr 2 Rene Descartes – *Meditations on First Philosophy* (continued)
 David Hume – *Of Scepticism with Regard to the Senses*
- Apr 9 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 16 Bertrand Russell - *The Argument from Analogy for Other Minds*
 Gilbert Ryle - *Descartes' Myth*
- Apr 23 Paul M. Churchland – *Eliminative Materialism*
 Kwasi Wiredu – *The Akan Conception of Mind*
SECOND PAPER DUE IN CLASS
- Apr 30 Peter van Inwagen – *The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will*
- May 7 **FINAL TEST**