

730:103:B1 Introduction to Philosophy
Rutgers University, Summer 2015

Instructor: E.J. Green

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 11am-noon or by appointment

Meeting times: Monday-Thursday, 12:30-2:20 pm

Course description:

This course provides a general introduction to several important philosophical problems. Topics to be covered include the nature and origins of morality, the existence of God, knowledge of the external world, the nature of the mind, and the possibility of artificial intelligence. Students will also be familiarized with methods of philosophical argumentation.

This course satisfies Core Curriculum Goal:

‘o’. Examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production.

Readings:

Textbook: James Rachels & Stuart Rachels. *Problems from Philosophy* (third edition). New York: McGraw-Hill.

The book will be available through the Rutgers bookstore. Additional readings will be provided via the course Sakai site.

Preliminary Schedule (subject to change):

Date	Topic	Reading
May 26	What is philosophy?	
May 27	Types of arguments; Introduction to ethics: Are moral facts relative?	Rachels, Chapter 11
May 28	Where do moral facts come from?	Rachels, Chapter 12
June 1	Consequentialism	Jeremy Bentham, <i>Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation</i> (excerpt)
June 2	Our obligations to the needy	Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”
June 3	Kantian ethics	Immanuel Kant, <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> (excerpt)
June 4	Quiz 1 Existence of God: The teleological argument	Rachels, pp. 10-20
June 8	Existence of God: The	Rachels, pp. 21-23,

	cosmological argument	Aquinas, "The Five Ways"
June 9	Existence of God: The ontological argument	Rachels, pp. 23-26; Anselm, "The Ontological Argument"
June 10	The problem of evil	David Hume, <i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i> (excerpt)
June 11	The problem of evil (cont.)	Rachels, Chapter 3
June 15	Quiz 2 Our knowledge of the external world	Rene Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , Meditations I and II; Rachels, pp. 125-130
June 16	Our knowledge of the external world (cont.)	Rene Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , Meditations III and IV; Rachels, pp. 130-133
June 17	Problems in perception: Sense datum theory vs. direct realism	Rachels, pp. 133-138; Michael Huemer, "Sense-Data," <i>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> , sections 1-2.2
June 18	First essay due Problems in perception (cont.): Perception and unconscious inference	Ramachandran & Ramachandran, "Ambiguities and Perception: What uncertainty tells us about the brain."
June 22	The problem of induction	Hume, <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , Sections II-IV
June 23	The problem of induction (cont.)	Karl Popper, "The Problem of Induction" (excerpt from <i>The Logic of Scientific Discovery</i>)
June 24	Quiz 3 Science and free will	Rachels, Chapter 8; Shaun Nichols, "Is Free Will an Illusion?"
June 25	The debate over free will	Rachels, Chapter 9
June 29	Body and mind	Rachels, pp. 67-80
June 30	Body and mind (cont.)	Rachels, pp. 80-82 Frank Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know"
July 1	The possibility of artificial intelligence	Rachels, Chapter 7
July 2	Quiz 4 Second essay due The possibility of artificial intelligence (cont.)	John Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs"

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation: 10%

Two Essay Assignments (3-4 pages): 50%

Four Quizzes: 40%

Extra Credit Opportunity

I encourage students to identify philosophical problems raised by contemporary art, literature, music, movies, or television. For extra credit, you may write a 2-3 page essay explaining how one of the issues discussed during class arises in a contemporary work of your choice. Further guidelines will be provided in class.

Academic Integrity

All work you submit for this course must be your own. Plagiarism will be regarded as a serious offense. You may not copy another student's work, copy and paste material from a website, or otherwise use an external source without proper citation. If you are unsure whether something constitutes plagiarism, please ask me. The official Rutgers University policy on academic integrity is available at the following web address:

http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf.

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken during each session. Each student will be permitted two unexcused absences. Students who have more than two unexcused absences will start to lose points from their grade. Absences will be excused under the following circumstances: (a) you are observing a religious holiday, (b) you are ill and have a note confirming this from a health care provider, or (c) you have a serious personal or family emergency and have a note confirming this from the office of the Dean of your college.

Missed Quiz Policy

If you miss a quiz without an excuse, you will automatically receive a zero. Excuses for missed quizzes must fall under one of categories (a)-(c) listed above. If you have a valid excuse for missing a quiz, then you will be permitted to take a make-up.

Late Submissions Policy

Essay assignments submitted after the due date will immediately be penalized 10 points. For each additional day in which the assignment has not been submitted, a further 5 points will be deducted.

Class Participation and Etiquette

It is very important in a course like this that students actively participate during class, so substantial time will be allotted for discussions of the material. In borderline cases, I will boost a student's grade if he or she has been an active participant. However, I ask that students remain respectful of one another during these discussions.