

Syllabus for PHIL 103 – Introduction to Philosophy
Taught Online by P. Justin Kalef
Rutgers University, Winter 2015

Topic and purpose of course: This course aims to introduce students to the main methods and topics of philosophy. Through taking the course, you will learn to think more precisely, write more clearly, and read more attentively. Along the way, you'll get started thinking about some of the central problems of philosophy.

Assessment:

You will have an opportunity to earn up to 100 points in this course (not counting bonus points, which may in exceptional cases earn students a final total above 100). This final score will be your final percentage, and will be converted to a letter grade according to the following scale:

A: 90-100 B+: 87-89 B: 80-86 C+: 77-79 C: 70-76 D: 60-69 F: 0-59

Work that is **excellent or outstanding** will earn an A.

Work that is **very good but not quite excellent or outstanding** will earn a B+.

Good work will earn a B.

Work that is **highly satisfactory** but cannot fairly be described as 'good' will earn a C+.

Satisfactory work will earn a C.

Work that constitutes a **minimal pass** will earn a D.

Failing work will earn an F.

The hundred percentage points will be given for your performance on the following tasks:

| <u>Work</u> | <u>Maximum Score</u> |
|---|---------------------------|
| Understanding arguments assignment:..... | 10 points |
| 'Structure and objection' assignment..... | 10 points |
| Best weekly post..... | 5 points x 3 = 15 points |
| Best weekly objection..... | 10 points x 3 = 30 points |
| Best weekly defense/second best weekly objection..... | 5 points x 3 = 15 points |
| Best short email assignment:..... | 20 points |
| Total..... | 100 points |
| Grammar bonus points..... | up to 5 points |
| Bonus points for answering peer questions..... | up to 5 points |

What to do when:

- Week 1: Learning to read, write and reason as a philosopher-

Tuesday, December 23rd: Watch the videos and links to the Jim Pryor pieces under 'December 23rd', followed by the Appendix in the Rachels text.

Understanding Arguments Assignment due at 11:59pm on Thursday, December 25th.

Friday, December 26th: Read Chapter 1 in Rachels. Then watch the video under 'December 26th' and join the forum discussion on Sakai.

Structure and Objection Assignment due at 11:59pm on Friday, December 26th.

- Week 2: Religion -

Weekend of December 27th and 28th: Read Chapters 2-5 in Rachels.

Monday, December 29th: In the morning or afternoon, watch the videos on the week's readings (to be found under 'Week 2'), and review your returned work from the previous week. Then join the forum discussion on Sakai.

Tuesday, December 30th: Make your remaining posts, objections and defenses in the weekly forum (submit to the forum before 4pm on Wednesday the 31st in order to receive early video feedback before the Thursday submission deadline).

- Video feedback on forum contributions made before 4pm on Wednesday will be made available online on the evening of Wednesday, January 31st.

All Week 2 posts, objections and defenses due by 6pm on Thursday, January 1st.

Friday, January 2nd: Continue to contribute to the forum, and design, write, review, and polish your first **short email assignment (submission deadline: 11:59pm on Friday)**.

- Week 3: What exists -

Weekend of January 3rd and 4th: Read Chapters 6-10 in Rachels.

Monday, January 5th: In the morning or afternoon, watch the videos on the week's readings (to be found under 'Week 3'), and review your returned work from the previous week. Then join the forum discussion on Sakai.

Tuesday, January 6th: Make your first posts, objections and defenses in the forum.

Wednesday, January 7th: Submit your posts, objections and defenses to the forum before 4pm on Wednesday the 7th in order to receive early video feedback before the Thursday submission deadline. Then watch for the video feedback Wednesday evening.

Thursday, January 8th: - Continue to contribute to the forum. **All Week 3 posts, objections and defenses are due by 6pm on Thursday, January 8th.**

Friday, January 9th: Continue to contribute to the forum, and design, write, review, and polish your second **short email assignment (submission deadline 11:59pm on Friday)**.

- Week 4: Values -

Weekend of January 10th and 11th: Read Chapters 11-13 in Rachels, plus the Clifford, James and Burger essays (<http://ajburger.homestead.com/files/book.htm>)

Monday, January 12th: In the morning or afternoon, watch the videos on the week's readings (to be found under 'Week 4'), and review your returned work from the previous week. Then join the forum discussion on Sakai.

Tuesday, January 13th: Make your first posts, objections and defenses in the forum.

Wednesday, January 14th: Submit your posts, objections and defenses to the forum before 4pm on Wednesday the 14th in order to receive early video feedback before the Thursday submission deadline. Then watch for the video feedback Wednesday evening.

Thursday, January 15th: - Continue to contribute to the forum. **All Week 4 posts, objections and defenses are due by 6pm on Thursday, January 15th.**

Friday, January 16th: Continue to contribute to the forum, and design, write, review, and polish your third **short email assignment (submission deadline 11:59pm on Friday)**.