



PHI213: Introduction to Philosophy

California Baptist University

Fall 2019

Instructor: Matt Leonard, Ph.D.

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Office: TBD

Office Hours: TBD

Be sure to check out the course website, here:

www.matt-leonard.org/introtophilosophy

Course Description: This course explores some of the most fundamental questions in philosophy. Questions such as: Does God exist? Can you know that you are not dreaming? What is knowledge? Is your mind material? What is consciousness? Are you the same person over time? Do human beings have free will? Is morality relative? What makes a wrong action wrong?

Prerequisite(s): None.

Credit Hours: 3

Required Texts:

1. *The Trial and Death of Socrates*

Author: Plato

ISBN-13: 978-0872205543

2. *Meditations on First Philosophy*

Author: Rene Descartes

ISBN-13: 978-1107059207

3. *The Norton Introduction to Philosophy*, 2nd Edition

Editors: Gideon Rosen, Alex Byrne, Joshua Cohen, Elizabeth Harman, Seana Shiffrin

ISBN-13: 978-0393624427

Course Objectives:

At the completion of this course, students will:

1. identify a number of philosophical questions and a number of historical answers.
2. develop strategies for responding to a number of arguments about the nature of our world.
3. develop an ability to formulate and criticize arguments about the issues we will discuss.
4. learn how to succinctly argue for a position and defend the relevant premises.
5. learn how to critically discuss one another's arguments in a friendly and charitable way.
6. strengthen their writing skills by learning how to write argumentatively.

Grade Distribution:

Participation	10%
Short Paper	30%
Midterm Exam	30%
Final Exam	30%

Letter Grade Distribution:

≥ 93	A	73 - 76	C
90 - 92	A-	70 - 72	C-
87 - 89	B+	67 - 69	D+
83 - 86	B	63 - 66	D
80 - 82	B-	60 - 62	D-
77 - 79	C+	≤ 59	F

Grade Breakdown:

• Participation (10%)

- Attending class is a necessary condition for doing well with your participation grade. You are allowed to miss **2** lectures during the semester without penalty. Any further absences will result in point and/or grade deductions from the participation part of the overall grade.
- Attending every class lecture will automatically get you an 8/10. Talking, asking questions, and/or raising objections every once in a while in lecture will pop you up to a 10/10.

• Short Paper (30%)

- Your paper in this class will be short (4-5 pages). In it you will be required to (1) formulate an argument, (2) defend the premises of the argument, (3) develop an objection to one of the premises of the argument, and (4) respond to the objection on behalf of your opponent.
- Paper topics will be provided one month before the deadline for the short paper.
- You are free to work with one another while you write your essay, but your essay must completely be your own.
- I will work under the assumption that no one has written a philosophy paper before. Though we will be talking quite a bit about how to write a philosophy paper in class, I highly recommend slowly working through the following handout:
<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

• Midterm Exam (30%) and Final Exam (30%)

- Your midterm and final exam will be a mixture of review questions (which will test your knowledge of the course material from lecture) and evaluation questions (which will test your ability to successfully defend your own thesis about a particular issue we discussed in class).
- All midterm and final exam questions will be short-answer questions (where your answers will range from three/four sentences, to a couple of paragraphs, depending on the question).

- Two weeks before each exam, you will be provided with a study guide. The study guide will include a list of possible questions. All of the actual questions on the exam will be taken from the study guide – there will be no surprise questions! (Thus, the most effective way to prepare for the midterm and final exam is to prepare answers for each of the possible questions.)
- You are free to work with one another while you prepare your answers to the tests. However, though there can be heavy overlap of answers to the review questions, your answers to the evaluation questions (questions of the form: “What do you think is the best response to thesis x ? Why?”) need to be your own.

Course Policies:

• General

- Computers are not to be used unless instructed to do so. Electronics are strictly prohibited in class.
- This is a rule just for my intro classes (come take upper division philosophy classes with me and this rule disappears!). This isn’t just *my* rule for intro classes. But I do agree with it. My partial justification: [Click Here](#).
- Exams are closed book, closed notes.
- **No makeup exams will be given, unless for reasons concerning a medical or family emergency.**

• Grades

- Grades in the **C** range represent performance that **meets expectations**; Grades in the **B** range represent performance that is **substantially better** than the expectations; Grades in the **A** range represent work that is **excellent**.
- Grades will be updated on Blackboard.

• Attendance and Absences

- Attendance is expected and will be taken each class. You are allowed to miss **2** classes during the semester without penalty. Any further absences will result in point and/or grade deductions from the participation part of the overall grade.
- Students are responsible for all missed work, regardless of the reason for absence. It is also the absentee’s responsibility to get all missing notes or materials.

• Class Conduct

- While this class contains a decent percentage of lecture, it is a highly discussion based course. It is expected that everyone in the classroom be friendly and charitable during classroom dialogue.

• Students with Disabilities

- Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability must register with CBU’s Disability Services ([Click Here](#)) each semester, to obtain a letter of verification. After obtaining this, deliver this directly to me.

- **Academic Honor Code Summary**

- In addition to skills and knowledge, CBU aims to teach students appropriate ethical and professional standards of conduct. The full text of the academic Honor Code is in the *Student Handbook*, section 22, though here are some excerpts:
- Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty or facilitating any such act are violations of the Honor Code and are not acceptable conduct at California Baptist University. Violations of the Honor Code include, but are not limited to, the following:
 1. Using any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, test, or examinations;
 2. Looking at or copying another student's test or quiz answers;
 3. Taking a test or quiz in part or in whole to use or to give to others;
 4. Providing any unauthorized assistance or aid to others in writing papers, completing assignments, taking quizzes, tests, and/or examinations;
 5. Using electronic communication equipment and/or any other unauthorized electronic device in completing assignments, taking quizzes, test, and/or examinations;
 6. Copying information from a source without proper attribution;
 7. Taking papers from other students, publications, or the Internet;
- Don't plagiarize. Chances are, you will get caught and it creates a headache for everyone involved. At a bare minimum, you'll end up failing the assignment/exam/paper. Violations of the academic honor code could result in your failing the course, depending on the seriousness of the offense.

Tentative Course Outline:

The weekly coverage might change as it depends on the progress of the class. Again, this will always be updated here: www.matt-leonard.org/introtophilosophy. However, you must keep up with the reading assignments. The tentative plan for the course is as follows.

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Does God Exist?

Sept. 3rd: Louise Anthony, "No Good Reason—Exploring the Problem of Evil."
Eleonore Stump, "The Problem of Evil."

[Crash Course in Baby Logic.]

Sept. 9th: Anselm, "The Ontological Argument" from *Proslogion*.
Aquinas, "The Five Ways" from *Summa Theologica*.
Lara Buchak, "Can it be Rational to Have Faith?"
Roger White, "The Argument from Cosmological Fine-Tuning."

THE TRIAL AND DEATH OF SOCRATES

Sept. 16th: Plato, *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo* (the death scene).

ETHICS

Is Morality Relative?

Sept. 23rd: Sharon Street, “Does Anything Really Matter or Did We Just Evolve to Think So?”

Philippa Foot, “Moral Relativism.”

What Makes a Wrong Action Wrong?

Sept. 30th: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, selected readings.

John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, selected readings.

Rosalind Hursthouse, “Virtue Ethics.”

Elizabeth Harman, “Is it Reasonable to ‘Rely on Intuitions’ in Ethics?”

APPLIED ETHICS

Is it Wrong to Not Give to the Poor?

Oct. 7th: Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality.”

Onora O’Neill, “The Moral Perplexities of Famine and World Hunger.”

Is Genetic Engineering Morally Permissible?

Oct. 7th (cont.): “What is CRISPR?” Available here:

<https://www.livescience.com/58790-crispr-explained.html>

MIDTERM EXAM

Oct. 14th: Midterm Review and Midterm Examination.

EPISTEMOLOGY

Are you Dreaming Right Now? Are you Sure?

Oct. 21st: Rene Descartes, *Meditations* 1-3.

GE Moore, “Proof of an External World.”

What is Knowledge?

Oct. 28th: Edmund Gettier, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?”

Linda Zagzebski, “The Inescapability of Gettier Problems.”

Timothy Williamson, “Knowledge and Belief.”

PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

Do You Have a Soul?

- Nov. 4th: Rene Descartes, *Meditations* 4-6.
Elizabeth of Bohemia, "Correspondence with Descartes."
JJC Smart, "Sensations and Brain Processes."
Hilary Putnam, "The Nature of Mental States."

What is Consciousness?

- Nov. 11th: Thomas Nagel, "What is it Like to be a Bat?"
David Chalmers, "The Hard Problem of Consciousness."
Patricia Churchland, "Are Mental States Irreducible to Neurobiological States?"

Short Paper Due.

METAPHYSICS

Do Human Beings Have Free Will?

- Nov. 18th: Peter van Inwagen, "The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism."
Harry Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility."
Susan Wolf, "Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility."
Nomy Arpaly, "Why Moral Ignorance is No Excuse."

Nov. 25th: **Thanksgiving Break. No Classes.**

What is a Person?

- Dec. 2nd: John Locke, "Of Identity and Diversity."
Richard Swineburne, "The Dualist Theory."
Derek Parfit, "Personal Identity"

What is Time?

- Dec. 2nd (cont.): David Lewis, "The Paradoxes of Time Travel." Available Here:
<https://www.matt-leonard.org/uploads/4/6/7/7/46778315/pott.pdf>
Boethius, on God and Time, *The Consolation of Philosophy* (Book 5).

FINAL EXAM DATES AND TIMES

MWF 10:45-11:45:

MWF 12:00-01:00:

MWF 01:15-02:15:

TR 02:00-03:30:

Monday, December 9th, 9:30-11:30AM

Friday, December 6th, 12:00-2:00PM

Monday, December 9th, 12:00-2:00PM

Thursday, December 5th, 12:00-2:00PM