

# INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY (PHIL 2003)

Philosophy 2003 Introduction to Philosophy, Summer II, 2022

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Class Time: MTWThF 9:15-10:45a JBHT 0266

Office Hours: M: 11:30a – 1:30p & W: 11:30a – 12:30p via ZOOM



## 1. WELCOME

Welcome to Introduction to Philosophy!

This introductory course is meant to provide an examination of philosophical topics such as the existence of God, the nature of the human mind, the relationship between appearance and reality, the forms and limits of human knowledge, freedom of the will, the nature of art, and standards of right and wrong... just to name a few! The class includes both historical and contemporary readings. There are no pre-requisites for the course.

## 2. COURSE FORMAT AND MATERIALS

Unless the University alters its policy, this course will meet in person. This is both a lecture and discussion-based course, I expect you to come to class ready to discuss and ask questions about the material. Sometimes, this may amount to group work, other times, it may come in the form of reading aloud, or by discussing a prompted question for the day. We will work with varied materials: texts by philosophers and non-philosophers as well as a couple of in-class film screenings. The required texts are:

**Plato, Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo. Second Edition translated by G.M.A. Grube. ISBN-13: 978-0872206335.**

**Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy, Second Edition. Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy. Edited by John Cottingham. ISBN-13: 978-1107665736.**

\*Both texts are available at the university bookstore.

All other required materials will be posted on Blackboard.

### **3. PROFESSOR INFORMATION**

ZOOM office hours are accessible from the course blackboard page. Each day has a designated link in the sidebar; all you need to do is click on it at the right time, and you will be taken to the relevant ZOOM lobby!

If my office hours do not work with your schedule, I am more than happy to set up a meeting with you. To do so I need a few days' notice, and to be contacted by email to schedule this. Meetings may be either in-person or via ZOOM, based on your preference.

In your emails to me, please include your course title, meeting time, and student ID number.

On weekdays (M-F) I *try* to answer emails within a few hours of receiving them. Monday through Friday, my emails go straight to my phone, and I will respond to them as soon as I can.

On weekends my responses will be a little slower, and dependent on when I check my email. I typically check my email once in the morning, and once in the late afternoon on weekends.

Overall, I cannot guarantee that I can always answer your questions right away. Please allow 24 hours for me to answer your inquiries before re-mailing me. Closer to exams or paper due dates, it may take longer to get a response.

### **4. COURSE CONTENT**

This course consists of two sustained readings, and multiple selected readings.

We will begin our semester with one of the discipline's most pivotal philosophers, Plato. These texts are written as dialogues (in the style of plays) and can be quite fun to read. The dialogues we will be reading cover some major points in the life (and death), of Plato's mentor Socrates, and will focus broadly on big topics like "goodness" and "life and death."

We will then begin a short section on the evidential problem of evil. This is concerned with reconciling the evils that exist in the world with the existence of an all-good, all-knowing, and all-powerful God.

Next, we will read another influential piece of Philosophy, *The Meditations* by Rene Descartes. It is a short but compact book, that covers a massive range of topics, and has been seriously influential in both philosophical history and popular culture.

Towards the end of the class, we will shift our focus to more contemporary, technological issues in philosophy. With the background of two of the great philosophers mastered, you will be well-equipped to think about some of our more challenging and interesting questions in philosophy. Such as (but not limited to): are we living in a computer simulation? are robots deserving of human-decency? How do memes and social media alter and affect our communication?

### **5. LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Extract the writer's argument from the text.
- Explain the evidence or writer's arguments.

- Gather basic familiarity with some of the large movements in the history of philosophy.
- Acquire basic skills in crafting a philosophical argument.
- Demonstrate an improvement in critical and moral thinking skills.

## 6. GRADING POLICY

### Performance (50%):

**Journals (20%):** Each week, you will be required to respond to a prompt on the material in a journal format. These prompts will encourage you to engage with the learning material in a direct way. You will submit these short responses weekly, via blackboard.

**Quizzes (20%):** At the end of each class, you will be given a short quiz, accessible from blackboard course website. It will cover the material which we reviewed that day in class. This quiz is timed, and will last 10 minutes. It opens on canvas at 10:35 each class day. It is closed-note and should be taken in class whenever possible. With the exception of the day 1 practice quiz, on days there is no listed reading, there is no required quiz. Your lowest 2 quiz grades will be dropped at the end of the course.

**Participation (10%):** Regular attendance and class participation is expected. If you have questions on how to participate in a philosophy class, you might consult this short webpage (Olivia Bailey, But How do I participate):

[https://obailey.weebly.com/uploads/1/0/5/6/105611057/but\\_how\\_do\\_i\\_participate.pdf](https://obailey.weebly.com/uploads/1/0/5/6/105611057/but_how_do_i_participate.pdf)

### Formal Writing (20%):

**Expository Paper (20%):** You are required to author an expository paper of 5-7 pages, in which you clearly and thoroughly explain certain concepts and arguments given in the text and provide one original response to that material. This can come in many forms, from relating a theory of art to an art or music piece, to considering personal experience in light of one of the readings, to providing a formal objection to an a philosophical argument. I will distribute the prompt of the paper **two weeks prior to the due date**.

**\*Paper due: 8/4**

### Examinations (15% each, for a total of 30%):

**Exam 1:** Your first exam will cover material directly follow our unit on ancient philosophy. Your exam will be taken at home, via blackboard. It will be available on the day of 7/13 , and you must take it during class time – 9:15-10:45 AM. Exams are timed. You are welcome to use notes or readings to assist in your exam, but I would urge you not to rely heavily on notes due to time constraints.

**\*Exam one date: 7/13**

**Exam 2:** Your second exam will cover our readings over Descartes. Your exam will be taken at home, via blackboard. It will be available on the day of 7/28, and you must take it during class time – 9:15-10:45 AM. Exams are timed. You are welcome to use notes or readings to assist in your exam, but I would urge you not to rely heavily on notes due to time constraints.

**\*Exam two date: 7/28**

**There will be no final examination for the course.**

## **7. LATE WORK, MAKEUPS, AND EXTENSIONS:**

If you are unable to turn in a piece of work due to illness, death or emergency in the family, religious observance, or scholastic/leadership related university sponsored activity, you must contact me via email. I will make accommodations for you to take the exam at another time. Unfortunately, due to the condensed nature of a summer course, I cannot easily offer extensions. Please reach out to me if you have any questions, or if something comes up that might impact your ability to complete the course and I will try to work with you. I want you to succeed!

## **8. UNIVERSITY RESOURCES:**

**Center for Learning and Student Success Class:** The Center for Learning and Student Success (CLASS+) works with students to refine and strengthen the academic skills necessary for success at the University of Arkansas. Call 479.575.2885 or visit the office in Gregson Hall, or visit their website.

**Writing Center:** CLASS+ Writing Support provides one-on-one tutoring assistance. You can work with writing tutors in person or upload your paper for online feedback. Writing tutors help you learn revision strategies for developing your academic and professional writing skills. Schedule a free online or in-person appointment. Call 479-575-6747 or email [writcent@uark.edu](mailto:writcent@uark.edu). 315 Kimpel Hall, or visit their website.

**Center for Education Access:** The Center for Educational Access (CEA) serves as the central campus resource for the University community in regards to students with disabilities and accommodations to remove barriers to access. Call 479-575-3104 or email [ada@uark.edu](mailto:ada@uark.edu). 209 Arkansas Union, or visit their website.

**Counseling and Psychological Services:** The staff of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) works with members of the University to help solve problems, understand themselves, grow personally, develop more satisfying relationships with friends and family and help with other mental health issues. Services are provided by licensed psychologists, counselors, and social workers. Call 479-575-5276 to make an appointment, or visit their website. 24 hour emergency service available, Call (479) 575-5276.

**Research Librarians:** Ask a Librarian! Text: 479-385-0803, Call: 479-575-6645, email: [refer@uark.edu](mailto:refer@uark.edu).

**Full Circle Pantry:** The Jane B. Gearhart Full Circle Food Pantry is available as a free grocery assistance center for all U of A students, staff, and faculty. Full Circle is located on the backside of Walton Residence Hall and is open Mondays from 11a-3p, Wednesdays from 3p-5p, and Thursdays from 10a-2p. If you need assistance outside of these hours, please email [pantry@uark.edu](mailto:pantry@uark.edu) to set up an alternate time. For more information visit [fullcircle.uark.edu](http://fullcircle.uark.edu) or email [pantry2@uark.edu](mailto:pantry2@uark.edu).

## **9. CEA ACCOMIDATIONS:**

University of Arkansas Academic Policy Series 1520.10 requires that students with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodation, please contact me privately at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through the Center for Educational Access (contact 479-575-3104 or visit [cea.uark.edu](http://cea.uark.edu) for more information on registration procedures).

### **10. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**

As a core part of its mission, the University of Arkansas provides students with the opportunity to further their educational goals through programs of study and research in an environment that promotes freedom of inquiry and academic responsibility. Accomplishing this mission is only possible when intellectual honesty and individual integrity prevail.

Each University of Arkansas student is required to be familiar with and abide by the University's 'Academic Integrity Policy' which may be found at <http://provost.uark.edu>. Students with questions about how these policies apply to a particular course or assignment should immediately contact their instructor.

### **11. COURSE SCHEDULE:**

This section will provide a summary of the course schedule. All readings are to be done *before* class begins.

\*All readings are tentative and subject to change.

Week 1:

- 7/5 - Syllabus
- 7/6 - "The Allegory of The Cave", from Plato's Republic
- 7/7 - Plato, "Euthyphro"
- 7/8 - Plato "Apology"

Week 2:

- 7/11 - Plato, "Crito"
- 7/12 - Plato, "Meno"
- 7/13 - **(At-home: Exam 1) NO CLASS**
- 7/14 - Kant, "The Good Will and the Categorical Imperative", excerpt from the Groundwork
- 7/15 - Keith DeRose, "Might God Have Reasons for Not Preventing Evils?"

Week 3:

- 7/18 - **Watch in class: Isao Takahata, "Grave of the Fireflies"**
- 7/19 - **Discuss in Class: Paper Topics and Philosophy Writing.**  
**\*Paper Topics Released**
- 7/20 - Descartes, Meditation 1
- 7/21 - Descartes, Meditation 2
- 7/22 - Descartes, Meditation 3

Week 4:

- 7/25 - Descartes, Meditation 4
- 7/26 - Descartes, Meditation 5
- 7/27 - Descartes, Meditation 6
- 7/28 - (At-home: Exam 2) NO CLASS**
- 7/29 - Nick Bostrom, "Are you Living in a Computer Simulation?"

Week 5:

8/1 - John Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs"

8/2 - Regina Rini, "Raising Good Robots"

**8/3 - Watch in class: Ridley Scott, "Bladerunner"**

8/4 - John Dewey, "Having an Experience"

**\*Paper Due**

8/5 - Anthony Cross, "The Curious Case of Pepe the Frog: On the Ontology and Value of Internet Memes"