Phil 1301: Introduction to Philosophy  
Summer 2015, University of Texas, El Paso  
Class Meets: M-F 9:20—10:30 p.m., UGLC 336

Contact Information

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Office: Worrell 202  
Office Hrs by appointment.

Free and open discussion is the life-blood of philosophy. Consequently, no student shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, gender, disability, place of national origin, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, political affiliation or any other similar factor. I expect all members of the class to be equally tolerant of differing perspectives and ideologies. Critique, evaluate and analyze the ideas put forward by me and others; do not demean or belittle them.

The word philosophy comes from the Greek words philos (love) and sophos (wisdom). So philosophy literally means the love of wisdom. And although philosophy is often thought of as an extremely impractical course of study, its emphasis on achieving wisdom suggests otherwise. Let me explain.

Each of us intuitively understands that there is a difference between someone who is wise and someone who is merely clever or intelligent or learned (educated). Hitler, for instance, was both intelligent and well-educated, but not wise; Mother Theresa on the other hand was wise, but not well-educated. Wisdom, therefore, is not the same as intelligence or cleverness or learnedness. What then does it mean to be wise?

At a minimum, a wise person is a person who can make good decisions about the course of his or her life. That is, good decisions about how to act—which paths to take and which paths not to take. This is the fundamental problem in philosophy: how should I live? What is the good life?

Course Objectives: Well … we aren’t under any illusion that we can actually give you an answer to the basic philosophical question, “What is the good life?” Short of that, however, this class should provide you with a number of important practical skills that will help you to lead a better life. These include:

- An appreciation of a number of fundamental philosophical problems.
- Increased analytical and argumentative skills.
- A heightened awareness of the sorts of basic, often controversial, assumptions we all make on a routine basis and a nagging sense that maybe—just maybe—some of those assumptions are wrong!

As you can see, our goal is not to get you to internalize a bunch of philosophical doctrines. Rather, we want to get you to think critically and self-consciously about the world and your place in it. Doing this will of course require you to study a bit of philosophy—but that is the means, rather than the end.

Course Structure: This course meets MWF. The final session each week is a designated group discussion day. On this day you will meet with a (smaller) group of students and turn in your reaction papers (see the section on “Evaluation” below). You should come prepared to discuss in detail, not only the specific material on which you wrote, but all of the material covered during the preceding week.
Although a certain amount of lecture time is necessary in order to present basic information, you should not feel that discussion is limited to discussion days. **Feel free to ask questions, request clarification, or raise objections at any time.** Indeed, you should **come primed for in class discussion every day.**

**Materials:**  
* Required  
* Optional  
  - A good stiff cup of Joe!

**Evaluation:**
* Four Exams (25% of total grade EACH). These exams will consist of a number of short answer and essays questions. Students may work together, but **must write their own answers.**

The grading scale for this class is given below:

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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>&gt;89.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>&gt;79.5%</td>
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<td>&gt;69.5%</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>&gt;59.5%</td>
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<td>F</td>
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**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is a concern for everyone. By joining the UTEP community every student agrees to abide by the Scholastic Dishonesty Policy. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable to another person.

**Cheating**
* Copying form the test paper of another student  
* Communicating with another student during a test  
* Giving or seeking aid from another student during a test  
* Possession and/or use of unauthorized materials during tests (i.e. Crib notes, class notes, books, etc)  
* Substituting for another person to take a test  
* Falsifying research data, reports, academic work offered for credit

**Plagiarism**
* Using someone’s work in your assignments without the proper citations  
* Submitting the same paper or assignment from a different course, without direct permission of instructors

**Collusion**
Unautorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments
Class Schedule: The following is a detailed schedule of classes. The schedule, however, is flexible. I will freely amend it as time, interest and comprehension dictate.

RBA = A Rulebook for Arguments.
PhilProbs = Philosophical Problems.

*Please note that the assigned books are not really textbooks. The readings are designed to reinforce and complement lecture material, not replace it. Also, you are strongly encouraged to read the introductions to each chapter. In some places I have listed a few “suggested readings” for a section. In order to pass this course, it is not necessary to read this material. However, you will get much, much more out of the course if you do take the time to do the additional reading.

1. Logic, Analysis and Intuition

Suggested Readings for this section:
Chapter 1: What is Philosophy?, PhilProbs
Baker, Intro to Philosophical Thinking, PhilProbs
RBA (yes, all of it; it is not that long!)

M June 08  Validity, Soundness & Argumentation
       Truth Tables and the Logical Connectives
Lecture

T June 09  Argument Forms and Formal Fallacies
           Necessary & Sufficient Conditions
           Lecture.

W June 10  Modal Logic, Analysis and Intuition
           Lecture

2. God, Faith, and Belief

§2.1 A Priori Arguments for God’s Existence

R June 11  Logic Exam

       The Cosmological Argument
       Samuel Clarke, the Cosmological Argument, PhilProbs.
       David Hume, Problems with the Cosmological Argument, PhilProbs.
       St. Thomas Aquinas, the Five Ways, PhilProbs (optional)

F June 12  The Ontological Argument
René Descartes, The Ontological Argument, PhilProbs.
Immanuel Kant, The Impossibility of an Ontological Proof, PhilProbs (optional)

§2.2 A Posteriori Arguments Concerning God’s Existence

M June 15  The Argument from Design
William Paley, The Argument from Design, PhilProbs
Stephen J. Gould, The Panda’s Thumb, PhilProbs
David Hume, Problems with the Argument from Design, PhilProbs

       The Problem of Evil
       David Hume, The Problem of Evil, PhilProbs
       J. L. Mackie, Evil and Omniscience, PhilProbs
§2.3 God’s Existence and Faith

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<th>Topic</th>
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| T    | June 16 | Pascal’s Wager  
Walter Kaufmann, Pascal’s Wager, PhilProbs  
Doxastic Voluntarism and the Ethics of Belief  
W. K. Clifford, the Ethics of Belief, PhilProbs |

3. Ethics

§3.1 Meta-ethics

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| W    | June 17 | Ethical Relativism  
James Rachels, The Challenge of Cultural Relativism, PhilProbs  
Subjectivism vs. Objectivism  
James Rachels, Subjectivism in Ethics, PhilProbs  
Plato, Euthyphro, PhilProbs |

§3.2 Ethical Theory

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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>June 18</td>
<td><strong>Second Exam</strong></td>
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| F    | June 19 | Egoism  
Joel Feinberg, Psychological Egoism, PhilProbs  
James Rachels, Ethical Egoism, available from instructor. |
| M    | June 22 | Deontology  
Immanuel Kant, From the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, PhilProbs |

4. The Metaphysics of Persons

§4.1 Personal Identity

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| W    | June 24 | Unity of Consciousness  
John Locke, Personal Identity, PhilProbs  
Thomas Reid, Of Mr. Locke’s Account of Personal Identity, PhilProbs  
Problems of Fission  
Bernard Williams, The Self and the Future, PhilProbs |
| R    | June 25 | **Third Exam** |
|      |       | The Indeterminacy View  
Derek Parfit, Personal Identity, PhilProbs |
§4.2 The Mind/Body Problem

F June 28 The Mind/Body Problem
Keith Campbell, How the Mind-Body Problem Arises, *PhilProbs*

The Identity Theory
J. J. C. Smart, Sensations and Brain Processes, *PhilProbs*

M June 30 Functionalism
A. M. Turing, Computing Machinery and Intelligence, *PhilProbs*
Jerry Fodor, The Mind-Body Problem, *PhilProbs*
Thomas Nagel, What is it like to be a bat?, *PhilProbs*
Frank Jackson, What Mary didn’t Know, *PhilProbs*

5. Epistemology

§5.1 What is Knowledge?

T July 01 Knowledge, Infallibilism and Skepticism
Rene Descartes, First Meditation, *PhilProbs*

The Gettier Problem
Edmund Getter, Is Justified True Belief Knowledge? On Blackboard

W July 02 Contextualism

R July 03 Fourth Exam