Phil 1301: Introduction to Philosophy
Summer 2017, University of Texas, El Paso
Class Meets: M-F 11:40—1:50 p.m., Miner’s Hall 301

Contact Information

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Email: mamoffett@utep.edu

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.

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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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</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**

Unauthorized 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.

*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 12
   - Validity, Soundness & Argumentation
   - Truth Tables and the Logical Connectives
   - Lecture

   **T** June 13
   - Argument Forms and Formal Fallacies
   - Necessary & Sufficient Conditions
   - Lecture.

   **W** June 14
   - Modal Logic, Analysis and Intuition
   - Lecture

2. **God, Faith, and Belief**

   §2.1 *A Priori Arguments for God’s Existence*

   **R** June 15
   - **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 16
   - 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 19
   - 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
### 3. Ethics

#### §3.1 Meta-ethics

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Ethical Relativism</td>
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<td>James Rachels, The Challenge of Cultural Relativism, <em>PhilProbs</em></td>
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#### §3.2 Ethical Theory

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#### §4. The Metaphysics of Persons

### §4.1 Personal Identity

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Unity of Consciousness</td>
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<tr>
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<td>John Locke, Personal Identity, <em>PhilProbs</em></td>
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<td>Thomas Reid, Of Mr. Locke’s Account of Personal Identity, <em>PhilProbs</em></td>
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#### Problems of Fission

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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Virtue Ethics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Aristotle, From the Nichomachean Ethics, <em>PhilProbs</em></td>
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<td>Rosalind Hursthouse, Normative Virtue Ethics, <em>PhilProbs</em></td>
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### §4.2 The Indeterminacy View

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#### The Indeterminacy View

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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>The Indeterminacy View</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Derek Parfit, Personal Identity, <em>PhilProbs</em></td>
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§4.2 The Mind/Body Problem

F June 30 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 July 03 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 04 Knowledge, Infallibilism and Skepticism
Rene Descartes, First Meditation, PhilProbs

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

W July 05 Contextualism

R July 06 Catch-up/Review

F July 07 Fourth Exam 1:00-2:30 PM