

Philosophy 100: Introduction to Philosophy
Professor Erica L. Neely
Winter 2010

Place and Time: Burgett 115, MTThF 11-11:50 a.m. (section 1); 12-12:50 p.m. (section 2)
Email address: e-neely@onu.edu
Office Hours: 10:30-11 and 2:30-3 daily and by appointment

Texts: *Knowledge, Nature, and Norms*, ed. Mark Timmons and David Shoemaker
Some readings are online; see the section at the end of the syllabus for details.

Web page: <http://webct-new.onu.edu>

Note: I am disability and ESL friendly. If you need accommodation or are having trouble keeping up in class because of language issues, please drop me an email or come to see me. I'm happy to help.

Aims and Objectives

This course provides students with an introduction to philosophy. We examine fundamental philosophical questions that apply to the self, the world, and beyond. Although there is a large abstract component to this class, we will also be considering concrete questions about how to lead our lives and what kind of person each of us is; students are encouraged to think about how to apply the theoretical positions to real life situations that interest them. Moreover, we will be examining both classic and contemporary readings in philosophy, embracing African-American, feminist, and Native American perspectives in addition to philosophers from the more traditional canon.

This course comprises three units. In the first unit, we will consider questions about the self. What is our understanding of the human mind and consciousness? Is there a difference between our minds and our brains, or is the mind somehow simply an organic part of the brain? What constitutes our personal identity and how does society shape that identity? Questions like these help us scrutinize what it means to be human beings, as well as specific individuals.

In the second unit we turn to questions of free will and the existence of God. Do we have free will or are our actions constrained by some kind of predetermination? If our choices are determined by extrinsic forces, can we be held responsible for the results of those choices? Is there a way to prove the existence of God? A number of proofs have been offered throughout the centuries, and a number of challenges have arisen in response. One of the notable questions in philosophy of religion is the problem of evil: given an omniscient, omnipotent, omnibenevolent God, why is there evil in the world? IS there in fact evil in the world or merely phenomena whose goodness cannot be properly judged by human beings?

We will conclude with an examination of knowledge and ethics. This involves issues such as skepticism – how do we know whether to trust our senses? It is clear that we can be deceived sometimes, such as when we dream or have hallucinations, so how do we know when our knowledge is trustworthy? Is it unethical to hold a belief on insufficient evidence? More generally, how do we distinguish right from wrong? There are many different ethical systems – which should we choose?

Assignments and Grading

Three Exams (non-cumulative): 25% each
Participation: 25%

Exams – Each of the three exams covers only one course section and consists of a combination of short-answer and essay questions. You are responsible for the information in your textbook, as well as that brought up in class. With the exception of the final exam, all exams take place at the usual class hour and location as indicated on the syllabus.. **The final exam is on Wednesday, February 23rd, 1:30-3:30 p.m., location TBA.**

Participation – An important part of any philosophy course is discussion; this is the only good way to ensure you understand the ideas we are covering. While I do not take attendance every day in class, note that it is hard to participate if you are not there. Similarly, attendance alone is not sufficient – you need to contribute to the small-group and class discussions. **Note that if you are shy about speaking in whole-class discussions you may share your thoughts with me through email, on the discussion boards for the course, or with me after class.**

Other info – The course as a whole is not curved, but individual assignments will be – that means if everyone finds me totally incomprehensible on a subject, you won't suffer. (Of course, this doesn't help if I'm only incomprehensible to you...) Although final grades are limited to whole letter grades, individual assignments will use the plus/minus scale; this will enable you to see whether your B is closer to an A or closer to a C.

If something extraordinary prevents you from attending an exam, please contact me as soon as possible; I will make reasonable accommodations. Please note that you are responsible for keeping track of exam dates; you are also responsible for any material covered in class.

A day-by-day schedule of readings is included in this syllabus. You may find it helpful to bring your book to class so that you may refer to the readings during class discussions.

Important Dates

F	12/17	No Class
R	1/6	Exam 1
M	1/17	No Class
M	1/31	Exam 2
F	2/18	No Class
W	2/23	Final Exam, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Location TBA

Day-by-Day Reading (complete before class)

November/December

M 11/29 First Day of Class

Part One: Personal Identity and the Mind-Body Problem

1. Personal Identity, Immortality, and Social Identity

T 11/30 Introduction: 1-16
Introduction to Chapter 2: 17-25
“The Meeting” (Frederik Pohl and C. M. Kornbluth): 26-34

R 12/2 “Phaedo” (Plato): 35-37
“The Myth of the Soul” (Clarence Darrow): 38-44

F 12/3 “The Prince and the Cobbler” (John Locke): 45-48
“A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality” (John Perry): 49-61

December

M 12/6 “The Unimportance of Identity” (Derek Parfit): 62-66
“Anorexia Nervosa: Psychopathology as the Crystallization of Culture”
(Susan Bordo) [ONLINE]

T 12/7 “The Fact of Blackness” (Frantz Fanon) [ONLINE]
“We Are Not Free” (Clyde Warrior) [ONLINE]

R 12/9 No new readings

2. The Mind-Body Problem

F 12/10 Introduction to Chapter 3: 67-76
“They’re Made Out of Meat” (Terry Bisson): 77-78
TT1 Due

M 12/13 “In Defense of Dualism” (Curt Ducasse): 79-83
“Dualism: For and Against” (Paul M. Churchland): 84-95

T 12/14 “The Mind-Body Problem” (Jerry A. Fodor): 96-109

R 12/16 “Minds, Brains, and Machines” (John Searle): 110-127

F 12/17 **No Class**

Winter Break

January

M 1/3 “The Puzzle of Conscious Experience” (David J. Chalmers): 128-137

T 1/4 Review

R 1/6 **Exam 1**

Part Two: Free Will and the Existence of God

1. Free Will, Determinism, and Responsibility

F	1/7	Introduction to Chapter 4: 138-149 “Leopold and Loeb” (Clarence Darrow): 150-156
M	1/10	“The Illusion of Free Will” (Baron d’Holbach): 156-161
T	1/11	“Has the Self ‘Free Will?’” (C.A. Campbell): 162-174 “The Problem of Free Will” (Walter T. Stace): 175-182
R	1/13	“The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility” (Galen Strawson): 183-192
F	1/14	“Freedom and Resentment” (P.F. Strawson): 193-205
M	1/17	No Class
T	1/18	“Karma and Freedom” (Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan): [ONLINE] Introduction to Chapter 5

2. The Existence of God and the Problem of Evil

R	1/20	“Rebellion” (Fyodor Dostoevsky): 213-216 “The Ontological Argument/The Lost Island Objection” (St. Anselm/Gaunilo): 217-219
F	1/21	“The Cosmological Argument” (St. Thomas Aquinas): 220-222 “The Teleological Argument” (William Paley): 223-228
M	1/24	“The Wager” (Blaise Pascal): 235-237 “The Evidence of Miracles: An Exchange Between a Christian and an Atheist” (William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong): 229-230
T	1/25	“God” (Simon Blackburn): 238-249 “The Problem of Evil” (David Hume): 250-257
R	1/27	“The Mirror of Evil” (Eleonore Stump): 258-269
F	1/28	Review
M	1/31	Exam 2

Part Three: Knowledge and Ethics

1. Knowledge, Skepticism, and Belief

February

T	2/1	Introduction to Chapter 6: 270-281 “A Brain in a Vat” (John L. Pollock): 282-283
R	2/3	“The Allegory of the Cave” (Plato): [ONLINE] “Within the Sphere of the Doubtful” (René Descartes): 284-289
F	2/4	“Certainty” (G. E. Moore): 290-294

“A Defense of Skepticism” (Peter Unger): 295-300

M 2/7 “The Ethics of Belief” (William Clifford): 301-305
“Is It Wrong Everywhere, Always, and for Anyone to Believe Anything on
Insufficient Evidence?” (Peter van Inwagen): 306-312

2. Ethics

T 2/8 Introduction to Chapter 7: 313-321
“The Myth of Gyges” (Plato): 322-323

R 2/10 “A Defense of Ethical Relativism” (Ruth Benedict): 325-330
“A Defense of Ethical Objectivism” (Louis P. Pojman) [ONLINE]

F 2/11 “Right and Wrong” (Thomas Nagel): 331-338
“In Defense of Utilitarianism” (J. S. Mill): 339-345

M 2/14 “The Moral Law and Autonomy of the Will” (Immanuel Kant): 346-356

T 2/15 “Virtue and Character” (Aristotle): 368-378

R 2/17 Review

F 2/18 **No Class**

W 2/23 **Final Exam, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Location TBA**

Online Readings info

Susan Bordo: 1. Go to this URL from a campus computer:
<http://journals.onu.edu/resdat1/books.cfm>
2. Click on NetLibrary
3. Click on Advanced Search
4. Enter: Author: Bordo
Title: Weight
5. Click on Search
6. Click on “View This E-Book”
7. In the left-hand pane, click on
“Part Two: The Slender Body and Other Cultural Norms”
8. Then click on
“Anorexia Nervosa: Psychopathology as the Crystallization of Culture”
9. This is the article - click on “Next” to turn the pages.

Frantz Fanon: <http://www.nathanielturner.com/factofblackness.htm>

Clyde Warrior: <http://melanconet.com/lib/oc/wearenotfree.html>

Radhakrishnan: Section called Karma and Freedom starts here:

<http://www.archive.org/stream/idealistviewofli029696mbp#page/n259/mode/2up>

Plato: <http://www.historyguide.org/intellect/allegory.html>

Louis Pojman: On electronic reserve at the library