

PHIL 100: Introduction to philosophy

Fall 2011

Instructor: Prof. Dan Moller dmoller@umd.edu

TA's: Greg Canning greg.canning82@gmail.com
Joel Gibson joel_gibson11@hotmail.com

Lectures: T, TH 11:00-11:50, MMH 1400

Office hours: T, TH 3:15-4:00 Skinner 1107B, and by appointment

An introduction to philosophy by way of examining some of the major questions philosophers confront in the theory of knowledge, the nature of mind, and value theory. Readings will include classics by Plato and Descartes, as well as contemporary authors.

Texts

- *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, Plato
- *Discourse on Method & Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes
- Course reader (buy at: <https://students.universityreaders.com/store/>)
 - This reader is mandatory and cannot be found elsewhere.
 - Previous years' readers cannot be used.
 - Students looking to buy/sell used copies of *this* years' reader should coordinate 10 min. before class in weeks 1-4.

Grading

- Writing exercise: ungraded but mandatory
- First paper (1200-1800 words = ~ 4-6 pages): 20%
- Second paper (1200-1800 words): 20%
- Midterm: 20%
- Final: 30%
- Discussion section: 10% (possible reading quizzes)

Policies

- Technology: no laptops or other electronic devices are permitted in lecture; texting or any other cell-use in class will result in dismissal.
- Work turned in past time will be marked down by a full grade for one day late, then a third of a grade for subsequent days, unless arrangements have been made in advance. Papers will not be accepted more than a week late.
- You cannot miss the midterm or final for any reason (except as noted in official University regulations concerning documented emergencies).
- You must observe academic integrity; we will check for plagiarism and other forms of dishonesty and forward all instances to the Honor Council.
- Grading issues: you must talk with your TA about grading first. I will then review your grade at your request, but I reserve the right to *lower* your grade if I find the TA was too generous.

Topics & Readings

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION

9/1

WEEK 2: WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY AND WHY STUDY IT?

9/6-8 Plato *Apology*, *Euthyphro*

EVIDENCE AND BELIEF

WEEK 3: THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

9/13-15 Paley "The Argument from Design," Collins "God, Design and Fine-tuning"

WEEK 4: THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

9/20-22 Mackie "The Problem of Evil," Swinburne "Why God Allows Evil"

WEEK 5: FAITH & EVIDENCE

9/27-29 Clifford "The Ethics of Belief," James "The Will to Believe"

First paper due

WEEK 6: SKEPTICISM

10/4-6 Descartes *Discourse on Method* Parts 1-2, *Meditations* I-III

WEEK 7: FOUNDATIONS OF BELIEF

10/11-13 Descartes *Meditations* IV-V

MIND AND BODY

WEEK 8: THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM

10/18-20 Descartes *Meditations* VI, Shaffer "The Subject of Consciousness" (e-reserve), Sacks "The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat"

WEEK 9: REVIEW & MIDTERM

10/25-27

WEEK 10: CONSCIOUSNESS

11/1-3 Chalmers "The Hard Problem of Consciousness," Jackson "What Mary Didn't Know," Nagel "What is it like to be a Bat?"

WEEK 11: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

11/8-10 Turing "Computing Machinery and Intelligence," Searle "Minds, Brains and Programs"

VALUE

WEEK 12: MORALITY

11/15-17 Rachels "Psychological Egoism," "Ethical Egoism," Plato *Republic*
(excerpt)

WEEK 13: MEANING

11/29-12/1 Kafka "Before the Law," "A Common Occurrence," Camus "The Myth of Sisyphus," Craig "The Absurdity of Life without God" (e-reserve), Wolf "The Meanings of Lives"

Second paper due

WEEK 14: DEATH!

12/6-8 Singer "Redefining Death," "Dr. Shann's Dilemma," Nagel "Death"

WEEK 15: CONCLUSION

12/13

Final exam: Thu, Dec. 15, 8-10am