

Philosophy 100 Spring 2006
Discussion Section 0207
Skinner Hall 1115: 1:00-1:50pm

Teaching Assistant: William Michael Kallfelz

Contact

Information: 1120C Skinner Building (301)405-5841 wkallfel@umd.edu¹
<http://www.glue.umd.edu/~wkallfel/wmkhome.html>

Office Hours: Fridays 2:00pm-4:00pm or by appointment²

I. Success In Philosophy...

"Philosophy is hard to read and even harder to write..."
—Professor Christopher Cherniak

• Welcome to the Introduction to Philosophy! If this is your first experience signing up for such an introductory survey, at the University of Maryland, you may be in for a bit of a surprise (in a – hopefully—good sense.) You are embarking on an intellectual adventure that not only surveys well over 2,500 years worth of material, but also brings you to what is essential to the art and science of reasoning. This has both enormous practical and theoretical ramifications. To find out more, feel free to visit:

<http://www.philosophy.umd.edu/deptwebsite/undergraduateprogram/undergraduate.html>

• For better or worse, the word: “philosophy” is used in many different senses. For example, we often informally speak of our “philosophy towards...X” when we really mean our articulated set of beliefs/points of view towards X. As a cultural tradition, “philosophy” can mean anything ranging from literature to religious or esoteric insights or teachings. **As an academic discipline, however, you are being introduced to a Western tradition that relies centrally on analytical thought.** Ancient Greek thought, the birth of Western philosophy, moved very quickly from being speculative, to an analytically self-critical enterprise.

• This close attention to detail involved in philosophical analysis is what lends merit to the quote above by Cherniak. But this shouldn't scare you off. Be prepared to exercise **patience** and **persistence** when doing your readings, almost as though you were studying a math textbook. Though we all have our individual styles of reading and learning, it is highly recommended to read **actively**, not **passively**. In other words, take notes while reading, draw diagrams, argue with the author in your head. Pause a lot, in an effort to generate your own examples (or even more importantly, as we shall see, your own **counterexamples**.) The craft of doing philosophy involves everything from the “art” of interpretation (like in Literature) to the “science” of construction and

¹ Secondary email: wkallfel@yahoo.com

² “Overload” office hours: Mondays 2:00pm-4:00pm

analysis (like in mathematics.) As you familiarize yourself with issues, you are also absorbing the methods of philosophical reasoning (defined in the above sense, i.e., in the Western, analytical.) So on a practical note, you should try break to up your reading into daily, 'bite-size' chunks. Be prepared to re-read: you'll seldom, if ever, grasp the important subtleties in one pass.

- Good reading skills, as mentioned above, usually translate into good writing skills. There are many "do's and don't's" here. (For some tips, see:
<http://www.princeton.edu/~jimpryor/general/writing.html>
<http://www.sfu.ca/philosophy/writing.htm>
http://philosophy.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/lecture_notes/PHIL1007/Newstead's_Guide.pdf

Aside from acquiring good individual study skills, group discussion is beneficial as well:

II. During Discussion Sections...

- **Show up on time.** I will take roll for every session. Recall the policy as clarified by Dr. O'Dell Sept 1, regarding missed exams. **The student must supply documentation substantiating the reason for the absence, which must be substantially *legitimate* (i.e., illness, family emergency involving closest of kin, etc.) for approval, subject to the professor's discretion.**
- At the outset I'll tend to phrase opening questions as "why questions," or open-ended questions, rather than "yes or no questions," to get the discussion going. However, if we are reviewing material, I might take periodic surveys using "yes/ no" questions. Of course you're always welcome to ask clarifying questions about material covered in the lectures and in the text.
- Be ready to be called upon to discuss a point at any time. As a policy, if you don't want to talk at all during class, then you will must see me at least once during office hours to discuss whatever topic we are covering.
- Be ready to work an argument or problem out on the chalkboard, if I call on you to do so. As Dr. Odell mentioned in the first lecture (Jan 25) don't think of this as an "oral exam" but as a collaborative effort to iron out anything you may be unclear on. (You have all to gain and nothing to lose by going to the board.)
- Make an effort to formulate your comments with some precision (For example, a comment like: "You know, like, if people are bad, then like, ... there is nothing wrong with the death penalty" is better rephrased as "Bad people deserve to be punished"). Keep in the mind the question to ask yourself, when articulating a point or comment, as I will continuously impress is: "Does anyone see a reason to agree or disagree with this?" Another thing would be to consider, once you've made up your mind on which side of a debate you take, to argue for the *opposite side*. This will help you to focus your argument for or against a certain position, rather than merely stating a belief or opinion. Last of all, however, when discussing an actual situation as an example, make sure you're criticizing someone's *argument* and *not* criticizing the *individual*.

- I will on occasion divide you up into small groups (of four or five) and give each group a question to discuss for five minutes and then go back to a general discussion, in where each group will share its private discussion.

III. Policy Concerning Grades...

1. I do not take questions on grades the day I distribute an exam or paper. You are invited to come see me during office hours to discuss any questions you may have.

2. You can appeal the grade or score I have given to Dr. Odell. However, you must discuss the grade with me first

3. Remember, the final decisions on grades are the professor's.

IV. Academic Dishonesty

The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit

<http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html>."

Student Honor Council: 314-8204

Academic dishonesty is a corrosive force in the academic life of a university. It jeopardizes the quality of education and depreciates the genuine achievements of others. Apathy or acquiescence in the presence of academic dishonesty is not a neutral act. All members of the University Community -- students, faculty, and staff -- share the responsibility to challenge and make known acts of apparent academic dishonesty. Any of the following acts, when committed by a student, is an act of academic dishonesty.

A. Cheating: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in any academic exercise.

1. Students completing any examination should assume that external assistance (e.g., books, notes, calculators, conversation with others) is prohibited unless specifically authorized by the instructor.

2. Students must not allow others to conduct research or prepare any work for them without advance authorization from the instructor. This comment includes, but is not limited to, the services of commercial term paper companies.

3. Substantial portions of the same academic work may not be submitted for credit or honors more than once without authorization.

B. Fabrication: Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

1. "Invented" information may not be used in any laboratory experiment or other academic exercise without notice to and authorization from the instructor.

2. One should acknowledge reliance upon the actual source from which cited information was obtained.

3. Students who attempt to alter and resubmit returned academic work without notice to the instructor would be in violation of the Code of Student Conduct.

C. Facilitating Academic Dishonesty: Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

D. Plagiarism: Intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise.

1. *Direct Quotation:* Every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be promptly cited in a footnote. (Proper footnote style for many academic departments is outlined by the MLA Style Sheet or K.L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*)

2. *Paraphrase:* Prompt acknowledgment is required when material from another source is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in your own words.

3. *Borrowed Facts or Information:* Information that is obtained in one's reading or research; which is not common knowledge among students in the course, must be acknowledged. Materials which contribute only to one's general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography and need not be immediately footnoted.

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense which may result in suspension or expulsion from the University. The normal sanction for academic dishonesty is a grade of "XF", denoting "failure due to academic dishonesty." That grade will normally be recorded on the transcripts of students found responsible for acts of academic dishonesty in addition to any other action taken (e.g., suspension or expulsion). A forty member Student Honor Council has the responsibility to investigate allegations of academic dishonesty and to convene Honor Boards to adjudicate charges. In specified circumstances, the Student Honor Council will accept petitions to remove the grade of "XF" from a transcript and replace it with the grade of "F". The *Code of Academic Integrity* is reprinted in full in the Undergraduate catalog for further information, to report Academic Dishonesty or to inquire about serving on the Honor Council call 301-314-8204.

Source <http://w.testudo.umd.edu/soc/dishonesty.html>

V. Problems Outside the Scope of the Class

• Such problems may include anything from trouble with some other class, picking a major, to financial difficulties, psychological conditions such as depression, illness, etc. The University of Maryland has a number of offices set up to address these problems. Useful offices include:

1. Office of Financial Aid – 301-314-9000

2. Counseling Center – 301-314-7651

3. Health Center – 301-314-8180