Introduction to Philosophy: Knowledge and Reality
Philosophy 100
Prof. Brandon C. Look
Fall 2007

Lectures: TR 12:30-1:20 pm
CB 106
Course website: www.uky.edu/~look/Phi100main.htm
Professor’s Office: 1401 POT
Office Phone: 257-3071
Office Hours: TR 9:00-10:00 am
E-mail: look@uky.edu

Teaching Assistants:

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<tr>
<th>Tyler Klaskow</th>
<th>Nazif Muhtaroglu</th>
<th>Brad Vien</th>
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<td>Sections 3, 7, 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 9:30-10:20 CB 217</td>
<td>W 9:00-9:50 MMRB 112</td>
<td>M 9:00-9:50 Main 005</td>
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<td>R 9:30-10:20 CB 217</td>
<td>T 2:00-2:50 CP 107</td>
<td>F 9:00-9:50 CB 211</td>
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<td>W 10:00-10:50 CB 346</td>
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Course Description:

This course is an introduction to philosophy and to the themes and issues of two of its branches: metaphysics (“What is there?”) and epistemology (“What can we know?”). We will address the following questions:

- Does God exist? Or, are we rationally justified in believing that God exists?
- Is the existence of God possible given the apparent evil in the world?
- What can we know about the self?
- What can we know about the world?
- What is the relation between the mind and the body?
- Is the mind identical to the brain?
- Can a computer think?
- If materialism is true, how can we understand the phenomenon of consciousness?
- What makes you the same person over time?
- In what sense (if any) are we free?

The course will have two components: the first, twice-weekly lectures by the professor concerning the assigned readings; the second, once-weekly discussion sections run by the teaching assistants. It is my hope that students will thereby learn not only through the lectures about the content of the discipline of philosophy but also through the discussion sections what it means “to do philosophy.”

It is something of truism, but let it be nevertheless said: what you get out of this course depends to a great deal upon what you put into it.
Course Requirements and Expectations:

Final grades will be based on four separate components and weighted in the following way:

(1) 20% “Reflection” Papers
(2) 20% Class Participation
(3) 20% Mid-term Exam
(4) 40% Final Exam

Because the success of this course depends largely on your reading and reflecting on the assigned texts and attending and thinking about the lectures, you will be required to submit very short weekly “reflection papers”. These papers are to be no more than 250 words in length (and typewritten or computer-printed) and are to be handed in to your teaching assistant at the beginning of your recitation section. Each one is to address the following question:

What, to your mind, is the most interesting and important unanswered question raised in or by the previous week’s readings and lectures and why?

By “unanswered question” I mean an interesting and important difficult question – one to which there is, so far as you can tell, no easy or obvious answer. It is a question you would like the answer to but do not know what it is. If, after stating the question, you can provide a simple answer to it, the question is not a good one. After stating the question, you need to explain why it is interesting, difficult and important.

The point of these exercises is for you to develop the ability to ask good questions. That sounds easy, but it is not. And the ability to ask good, hard questions is central to the philosophical enterprise.

These assignments will begin the week of September 10-14 and run through the week of November 26-30. There will be no assignments October 8-12 (Mid-term on October 9), and November 19-23 (Thanksgiving). That means there will be a total of ten papers. Each piece will be graded according to the following scale: 2 = demonstrates that you have read, understood, and thought about the issues; 1 = shows some engagement with the texts and lectures, but the question, in the end, lacks insight into the material; 0 = nothing handed in or a clear case of not having done the reading or thought about the material.

This course – indeed, philosophy as a discipline in general – also depends upon your willingness and ability to discuss the ideas and issues that arise from these texts and the lectures. Therefore, you will be graded upon your participation in the discussion sections – but in this way: at the end of the term, each of you will be asked to grade the students in your discussion section as well as yourself. In grading, you should ask yourself: How consistently, interestingly, insightfully did your classmate (or you yourself) contribute to class discussion. How much did you benefit from the comments your classmate made? Did your classmate attend the sections regularly? Did he or she treat others with respect? – Note: you can treat someone with respect even while you are disagreeing with him or her and destroying his or her arguments about a topic. And you can demonstrate contempt for someone by letting a comment go with, “Yeah, whatever you say.”
point is this: are you concerned about the truth, about figuring about what is right or a good argument? Are you trying to help yourself and others to get to those end-points? If so, that’s good. If, on the other hand, someone is merely trying to show off intellectually by scoring argumentative points at the cost of someone else; if someone explicitly or implicitly suggests that the views of any or all classmates are unimportant or below him or her; well, that’s not good. Please recognize too that if, in a normal philosophical exchange, your own views are questioned, challenged or criticized, you should not be personally offended. In other words, if you are concerned about truth and the clarity of your views, you should welcome philosophical criticism.

Finally, the exams will consist entirely of essay questions of the form “How does so-and-so argue for x?” or, taking any of the questions listed above, “What do you think and why?” The blog mentioned below has very helpful self-study questions, as does the textbook itself. And I will offer more than enough suggestions and hints that there will be no surprises about the nature and character of the questions. What will be important is your mastery of the material.

Required Texts:
- Please note: there is a blog for this book run by John Martin Fischer (http://gfp.typepad.com/intro_to_philosophy). It contains lots of good information and links to resources.

Various Policies:
- Cheating and plagiarism will be dealt with very harshly. (Consult UK’s student regulations for a description of the possible penalties.)
- Except in extraordinary circumstances, no incompletes will be given.
- Students are to have done the assigned reading prior to class.
- Turn off your cell phones!
- No laptops in class.
Schedule

8/23  Class Mechanics

8/28  Introduction: What is Philosophy?
      The Meaning of Life I
      (Reading: Russell, *The Value of Philosophy*, pp. 9-12
      Nagel, *The Absurd*, pp. 21-28)

8/30  The Meaning of Life II
      (Reading: Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, pp. 43-45;

9/4   The Existence of God I
      (Reading: Anselm, *The Ontological Argument*, pp. 78-79)

9/6   The Existence of God II
      (Reading: Aquinas, *The Five Ways*, pp. 80-82;
      Pascal, *The Wager*, pp. 82-86)

9/11  The Existence of God III
      (Reading: Russell, *Why I Am Not a Theist*, pp. 86-90)

9/13  God and the Problem of Evil I
      (Reading: Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, pp. 91-107)

9/18  God and the Problem of Evil II
      (Reading: Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, pp. 107-25)

9/20  God and the Problem of Evil III
      133-45)

9/25  God and the Problem of Evil IV
      145-56)

9/27  Plato and the Concept of Knowledge
      (Reading: Plato, *Theaetetus*, pp. 161-68;

10/2  Descartes and the Problems of Skepticism
      (Reading: Descartes, *Meditations*, pp. 171-85)

10/4  Descartes and the Problems of Skepticism
      (Reading: Descartes, *Meditations*, pp. 186-95)

10/9  Mid-term Exam

10/11  Skepticism
      (Reading: Nozick, from *Philosophical Explanations*, pp. 202-10)
10/16 Hume’s Problems and Some Solutions  
10/18 Hume’s Problems and Some Solutions  
   (Reading: Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, pp. 240-51)  
10/23 The Traditional Problem of Mind and Body  
   Ryle, *Descartes’s Myth*, pp. 287-94)  
10/25 Minds, Brains, and Machines  
   (Reading: Searle, *Minds, Brains, and Programs*, pp. 341-53)  
10/30 Consciousness I  
   (Reading: Nagel, *What Is It Like to Be a Bat?* pp. 354-62)  
11/1 Consciousness II  
   (Reading: Jackson, *What Mary Didn’t Know*, pp. 363-66;  
   Lewis, *Knowing What It’s Like*, pp. 366-67)  
11/6 Personal Identity I  
   (Reading: Perry, *Dialogue*, pp. 368-82)  
11/8 Personal Identity II  
   (Reading: Perry, *Dialogue*, pp. 382-88)  
11/13 Personal Identity III  
   (Reading: Parfit, *Personal Identity*, pp. 399-412)  
11/15 Personal Identity  
   (Reading: Dennett, *Where Am I?* pp. 412-20)  
11/20 Freedom  
   (Reading: Chisholm, *Human Freedom and the Self*, pp. 421-28)  
11/22 Thanksgiving  
11/27 Freedom, Determinism, and Responsibility I  
   (Reading: Van Inwagen, *The Powers of Rational Beings*, pp. 428-40)  
11/29 Freedom, Determinism, and Responsibility II  
   (Reading: Taylor, *Freedom and Determinism*, pp. 451-63)  
12/4 Freedom, Determinism, and Responsibility III  
   (Reading: Frankfurt, *Freedom of the Will...* pp. 470-80)  
12/6 Review  
12/11 Final Exam 1:00pm