



## PHI 100: Introduction to Problems of Philosophy

### Fall 2016

**Instructor:** Mark Zelcer

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**Office:** 212 Marano

**Office Hours:** Tue 3:45-4:45, Thu 12:30-1:30, and by appointment. Students are also welcome to join me for lunch most Wednesdays.

**Course Text:** *The World of Philosophy*. Edited by Steven M. Cahn. Oxford University Press, 2016.

**Class Meetings:** Tue, Thu 2:20 -3:40; Marano Campus Center, room 132

**Requirements:** 1) Participation: 10%. You will only get these points if the class hears you participate throughout the semester. You will not get these points otherwise.

Attendance is not the same as participation. 2) There will be 10 short (1 page, i.e. 250-300 word) written assignments about the course reading: 30%. 3) Midterm exam: 30%. 4) Final exam: 30%.

**Class policies:**

Attend class

Possess a copy of the assigned text.

Read the assigned material.

Do not use cell phones in class.

Do not talk in class.

Do not sit in the back two rows.

Be considerate of your classmates.

There is no need to email in advance if you will miss one class.

If you plan to leave early, sit near the door.

**Course Description:** This course is an introduction to some basic problems of philosophy. We will address a variety of philosophical topics and questions. The topics include the philosophy of religion, metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, the philosophy of mind, free will, and political philosophy. Hopefully we will cover the bulk of the following:

## Schedule (approximate)

### What is philosophy? (8/30, 9/1)

- "What is Philosophy?" by Monroe C. Beardsley and Elizabeth Lane Beardsley (pages 2-9)

### What is Knowledge? (9/6, 9/8, 9/13)

- Descartes' Meditations (pages 58-61)
- "What is Knowledge?" by A. J. Ayer (pages 76-79)
- Buddhist Epistemology by Christopher Gowans (pages 83-86)

### What is the mind? (9/15, 9/20, 9/22, 9/27)

- "The Ghost in the Machine" by Gilbert Ryle (pages 93-97)
- "What is it like to be a bat?" (pages 107-110)
- "Do Computers think?" by John Searle (pages 110-112)
- "The Body Problem" by Barbara Montero (pages 112-115)

### Free Will (9/29, 10/6)

- "Free Will" by Thomas Nagel (pages 131-136)
- "Free Will and Determinism" by W. T. Stace (pages 136-138)
- "Free Will or Determinism" by Steven M. Cahn (pages 138-146)

### God (10/11, 10/13, 10/18)

- "Does God Exist?" by Ernest Nagel (pages 158-163)
- "Why God Allows Evil" by Richard Swinburne (pages 163-175)
- Pascal's Wager from his *Penses* (pages 185-187)

### Midterm (10/20)

### How should I live? (10/25, 10/27, 11/1, 11/3)

- From *Utilitarianism* by J. S. Mill (pages 259-265)
- From the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* by Kant (pages 252-259)
- From *Nicomachean Ethics* by Aristotle (pages 266-269)

### How should we live? (11/8, 11/10, 11/15, 11/17, 11/22)

- From *On Liberty* by J. S. Mill (pages 430-437)
- *Crito* by Plato (pages 312-322)
- From *A Theory of Justice* by John Rawls (pages 445-448)
- From *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* by Robert Nozick (pages 448-452)

- From *Famine, Affluence, Morality* by Peter Singer (pages 354-360)

Thinking about death (11/29, 12/1)

- “Death” by Thomas Nagel (pages 520-525)
- From Plato’s *Phaedo* (pages XXX-XXX)

*The Meaning of Life* (12/6, 12/8)

- From the Writings of Epicurus (pages 514-519)

Final Exam (Tuesday, December 13. 2:00-4:00PM)

**Students with disabilities:** The Office of Disability Services is available to assist students who have a legally documented disability or students who suspect that they may have a disability. If you have a disabling condition that may interfere with your ability to successfully complete this course, please contact the Office of Disability Services. (Alternative testing for students with learning disabilities is available through Disability Services.)

**Intellectual Integrity:** Intellectual integrity on the part of all students is basic to individual growth and development through college coursework. When academic dishonesty occurs, the teaching/learning climate is seriously undermined and student growth and development are impeded. For these reasons, any form of intellectual dishonesty is a serious concern and is therefore prohibited. For more information see: [www.oswego.edu/integrity](http://www.oswego.edu/integrity). Should you commit any form of academic dishonesty, you may fail the course.