

Introduction to Philosophy (PHIL 101)
Towson University Fall 2021
M/W/F 9-950 AM LA 4103

Instructor: Cara Cummings

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Course Description

Catalog Description

Fundamental problems of philosophy and various proposals for the solution of these problems. Satisfies Core 5 (Arts & Humanities) requirement.

Learning Objectives

The purpose of this course is to expose students to a variety of topics from across philosophy. Some questions we'll discuss include: What is knowledge? How do we know that there is an external world? How do we know that God exists? Is pleasure the highest good? What does it mean for a human being to flourish? Is torture ever justified?

Course Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will have had an introduction to academic philosophy. They will also learn to construct and assess arguments for philosophical positions. Doing so will strengthen their critical thinking skills in all disciplines and even outside of academic life.

Course Requirements

There will be two 3-page papers (each worth 30% of the final grade). There will be a group presentation (worth 30%). Participation and attendance will account for the final 10%.

Paper One: Due by midnight on 10/18

Group Presentation: During weeks 12 & 13

Paper Two: Due by midnight on 12/13

Guidelines and instructions for each assignment are available on blackboard.

Policies & Procedures

Grading

A: 93.6-100 A-: 90-93.5 B+: 86.6-89.9 B: 83.6-86.5 B-: 80-83.5 C+: 76.6-79.9 C: 70-76.5 D+: 66.6-69.9 D: 63.6-66.5 F: 0-63.5

Late Work

Late assignments are penalized at a rate of one letter-grade increment per day late (e.g., a B+ becomes a B- on a 2-day-late paper), up to one week. Assignments that are more than a week late will receive a zero. Deadline extensions are granted only in exceptional, *documented* circumstances, and at the discretion of the instructor.

Absences

You are allowed two unexcused absences before they will begin to affect your grade. Not counting the first week, we have 40 scheduled meetings. Your participation grade will be determined by dividing the number of times that you are in class (not counting the first week) by 38 (maximum 100%). See Towson's absence policy for what counts as an excused absence at www.catalog.towson.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies/class-attendance-absence-policy.

Students with Disabilities

This course is in compliance with Towson University policies for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with Disability Support Services (DSS), 7720 York Road, Suite 232, 410-704-2638 (Voice) or 410-704- 4423 (TDD). Students who suspect that they have a disability but do not have documentation are encouraged to contact DSS for advice on how to obtain appropriate evaluation. A memo from DSS authorizing your accommodation is needed before any accommodation can be made.

Academic Integrity

The University's Academic Integrity Policy is published in the Towson University Undergraduate Catalog and is available online at the web site of Student Affairs located at <https://www.towson.edu/studentaffairs/policies/>. Academic dishonesty specifically includes acts of plagiarism, fabrication and falsification, cheating, abuse of academic materials, and multiple submissions. Especially note that students may not re-use research papers or work submitted in previous or other classes, this includes group projects, or work performed by someone else. Academic dishonesty is unacceptable. The penalty for such dishonesty is a grade of 0 for the assigned work, possible failure for the course and the submission of a letter to the Office of Judicial Affairs.

Course Repetition

Students may not repeat the course more than once without prior permission of the Academic Standards Committee.

Emergencies

Please refer to the following: Web Site: www.towson.edu; Telephone: 410 704-2000. For TU Text Alert System Sign-up at: www.towson.edu/adminfinance/facilities/police/campusemergency/

Incompletes

An 'I' grade may be granted towards the end of the term, but only for verifiable medical reasons or for documented circumstances beyond the control of the student. This grade will not be granted if the student does not meet either of these criteria. The 'I' automatically becomes an 'F' at the end of the next full semester unless changed by the instructor because missing coursework was completed. If the conditions for granting the original incomplete verifiably persist, the instructor

in consultation with the chair of the department may extend the 'I' grade for a period not to exceed an additional regular semester.

Required Texts

All readings will be available on blackboard.

Reading Schedule

Week One: Introductory Logic

- 8/30 Course Introduction (No Assigned Reading)
- 9/1 Argument Clinic (No Assigned Reading)
- 9/3 Diagramming Arguments (No Assigned Reading)

Week Two: Introductory Logic

- 9/6 No Class
- 9/8 Good Rules of Inference (No Assigned Reading)
- 9/10 Informal Fallacies (No Assigned Reading)

Week Three: Philosophy of Religion

- 9/13 The Cosmological Argument, Aquinas
- 9/15 The Ontological Argument, Anselm
- 9/17 The Teleological Argument, Paley

Week Four: Philosophy of Religion

- 9/20 "The Wager", Blaise Pascal
- 9/22 "God, Evil and the Best of All Possible Worlds", Gottfried Leibniz
- 9/24 *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, David Hume

Week Five: Philosophy of Religion

- 9/27 *Euthyphro*, Plato
- 9/29 *Apology*, Plato
- 10/1 Plato Continued

Week Six: Epistemology

- 10/4 The Five Modes, Sextus Empiricus

10/6 First Meditation, René Descartes

10/8 Second Meditation, René Descartes

Week Seven: Epistemology

10/11 Paper Workshop (Read Paper Writing Tips)

10/13 *Theaetetus* (187a-202d), Plato

10/15 “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?”, Edmund Gettier

Week Eight: Epistemology

10/18 *Thought*, Gilbert Harman

10/20 “Contextualism and Knowledge Attributions” (Section I), Keith DeRose

10/22 “The Uniqueness Thesis”, Kopec and Titelbaum

Week Nine: Ethics

10/25 *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I, Chapters 1-5,7, Aristotle

10/27 *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II, Chapters 1-7, Aristotle

10/29 *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI, Chapters 1, 5, 8, 12-13, Aristotle

Week Ten: Ethics

11/1 “Letter to Menoeceus”, Epicurus

11/3 “Utilitarianism”, John Stuart Mill

11/5 “The Experience Machine”, Robert Nozick

Week Eleven: Ethics

11/8 *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Immanuel Kant

11/10 *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Immanuel Kant

11/12 “On a Supposed Right to Lie from Philanthropy”, Immanuel Kant

Week Twelve: Presentations

11/15 Groups 1 & 2

11/17 Groups 3 & 4

11/19 Groups 5 & 6

Week Thirteen: Presentations

11/22 Groups 7 & 8

11/24 No Class

11/26 No Class

Week Fourteen: Applied Ethics

11/29 “Terrorism: A Critique of Excuses”, Michael Walzer

12/1 “Should the Ticking Time Bomb Terrorist Be Tortured?”, Alan Dershowitz

12/3 “Justifying Legal Punishment”, Igor Primoratz

Week Fifteen: Applied Ethics

12/6 “An Eye for an Eye”, Stephen Nathanson

12/8 “The Case against Perfection”, Michael Sandel

12/10 “Genetic Interventions and the Ethics of Enhancement of Human Beings”, Julian Savulescu

Week Sixteen:

12/13 Fun Ontology Puzzles (No Assigned Reading)