

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY: Knowledge, Minds, and Morality

PHI 205 [sections 007, 009, and 010]

North Carolina State University

Spring 2014: Jan 6 – Apr 23

Section 007: T/H, 10:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Daniels 222

Section 009: T/H, 1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m., Withers 105

Section 010: T/H, 3:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m., Withers 120

Prerequisites or co-requisites: none; satisfies 3 credit hours of the 6-hour Humanities GEP requirement.

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(It is best to contact me by email, especially during non-office hours. Feel free to call during office hours, but please don't leave voice-mail messages as I might not get them; email me instead.)

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1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Overview of the Course

Philosophy examines the most fundamental questions about the nature of existence, knowledge, and morality. These questions have haunted human beings since they could wonder about things, and will continue to do so. We confront these questions every day, either indirectly or directly, so facing them head on is instructive and necessary for an examined life. In this course we will examine some philosophical problems, arguments, and theories influential in the history of Western philosophy and contemporary philosophy. These mainly concern the scope and nature of knowledge of the external world, problems of identity over time, the metaphysics of mind, the existence of God, free will and determinism, morality, and justice. As you become familiar with major arguments and theories you will also learn to communicate more precisely and critically about the aforementioned issues. If you work hard and complete all course requirements you will be able to make connections between different philosophical theories, better understand opposing philosophical views, and develop your own theories through critical reflection. You will increase your capacity to analyze, critique and develop arguments relevant to questions about these issues, as well as gain deeper familiarity within many philosophical

ideas. It is expected that you will also come to have a genuine passion for asking philosophical questions and seeking answers to them throughout your life.

What is the point of Philosophy?

Bertrand Russell (*The Problems of Philosophy*, 1912), an influential logician, mathematician, philosopher, social activist, and Nobel Laureate, provided a plausible answer: "Philosophy, though unable to tell us with certainty what is the true answer to the doubts which it raises, is able to suggest many possibilities which enlarge our thoughts and free them from the tyranny of custom. Thus, while diminishing our feeling of certainty as to what things are, it greatly increases our knowledge as to what they may be; it removes the somewhat arrogant dogmatism of those who have never travelled into the region of liberating doubt, and it keeps alive our sense of wonder by showing familiar things in an unfamiliar aspect."

Detailed Description of the Course

The course has four major units organized around central problems of philosophy. In Unit 1, on logic and problems of knowledge, we will look at the nature of valid arguments by examining two valid forms of reasoning and two invalid forms of reasoning. We will also discuss a useful technique for analyzing arguments. Then, we will do some epistemology (or, the theory of knowledge) by investigating whether humans can have knowledge of the external world (i.e., the mind-independent world). The first topic is Cartesian skepticism (as formulated by Rene Descartes) about knowledge of the external world, and how such skepticism might be overcome. We will also examine selections from two great empiricists (empiricists say the primary source of knowledge is sensation), John Locke (who affirms the reality of material objects) and George Berkeley (who denies the reality of material objects).

Elements of Locke's and Berkeley's theories go beyond epistemology and make metaphysical claims. Metaphysics probes the nature of reality beyond the scope of full scientific investigation, and we will discuss some metaphysical problems and their ramifications for our understanding of the world and persons.

In Unit 2, we focus on persons and minds. We will explore the problem of personal identity over time: what *is* a person, and what makes a person the *same* person over time? Since persons are part of the larger class of existing objects, it will be worth asking what makes any object the same object over time. And what do we mean by "the same"? Related to questions of personal identity, we will also look at the mind-body problem, the central metaphysical problem regarding the mind. Is the mind material or immaterial? Does the mind interact with the body? Can machines understand or think? We will read and discuss classic selections from Descartes and Aristotle, as well as influential contemporary articles by Derek Parfit and John Searle.

In Unit 3, we turn our attention to one of the most discussed metaphysical questions: does God exist? What do we mean by "God"? Our focus is on examining rational arguments for and against the claim that God exists. Hence, our study of this topic will not directly touch upon questions of faith or questions about the justification for a particular religious point of view. Instead, we will restrict our objective examination to the existence of a single, all-powerful being, so our efforts will primarily be relevant to monotheistic traditions. We will discuss two classic arguments for God's existence and examine in detail the problem of evil.

Lastly, in Unit 4 we study the nature of free will and morality. After investigating the relationship between free will, determinism, and moral responsibility, we will look at a major challenge to morality discussed by Plato. Then we will examine some highly influential moral theories, including Mill's Utilitarianism, Kant's moral theory, and Aristotle's virtue theory. These theories have had a lasting, profound impact on ethics and provide a useful starting point for ethical decision-making. Near the end

of the course, we will discuss two theories of distributive justice, thus shifting the focus from questions about the morality of individuals' actions to questions about the morality of social and political actions. The central problem concerns how goods should be distributed in society to create a just state.

2. GEP OBJECTIVES AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

General Education Program (GEP) credit and Humanities GEP objectives

Successful completion of PHI 205 (Introduction to Philosophy) satisfies 3 credit hours of the 6-hour Humanities GEP requirement, part of the NC State University General Education Program (GEP). Courses taken towards satisfying GEP requirements cannot be taken For Credit Only (S/U). Credit is not allowed for both PHI 205 and PHI 210.

Because this course satisfies 3 credit hours of the 6-hour Humanities GEP requirement, it "will provide instruction and guidance that help students to:

1. Engage the human experience through the interpretation of human culture;
2. Become aware of the act of interpretation itself as a critical form of knowing in the humanities; and
3. Make academic arguments about the human experience using reasons and evidence for supporting those reasons that are appropriate to the humanities."

(Quoted from the Office of Undergraduate Courses and Curricula, <http://oucc.ncsu.edu/gep-hum>)

How the Humanities GEP Objectives are satisfied by course-specific Student Learning Outcomes

Under each Humanities GEP Objective, course-specific Student Learning Outcomes are specified with explanations of *how* the Humanities GEP Objectives are satisfied by specific Student Learning Outcomes, and *how* the Student Learning Outcomes are measured or assessed (examples are given).

Humanities GEP Objective 1: "Engage the human experience through the interpretation of human culture."

Student Learning Outcome: Students will be able to clearly and precisely analyze problems in philosophy, by reference to logical principles in concert with philosophical theories and arguments, in order to offer sophisticated interpretations of belief systems.

How this Student Learning Outcome fulfills Humanities GEP Objective 1: By learning to clearly and precisely analyze philosophical problems, students gain the capacity to break down components of different belief systems and cultural practices into simpler components. By seeing the fundamental components that make up a set of beliefs and practices, students can better assess whether such beliefs and practices are justified (or how they might be justified). For example, beliefs about personal identity over time break down into questions about what a person is (a consciousness, or a body, an immaterial soul, or something else?) and what identity is (sameness of qualities, sameness of substance, etc.). This kind of analysis is enhanced by reference to historically influential philosophical-ethical principles and theories (such as Locke's consciousness theory of personal identity) and logical distinctions (such as the distinction between qualitative and numerical identity). This allows one to more critically interpret various beliefs about personal identity.

Outcome assessment: This outcome is assessed through objective questions (multiple-choice, true/false) and short argumentative essays.

Below is an example objective question relating to the above Student Learning Outcome, emphasizing the analysis of personal identity.

Example analysis question: Which of the following best represents the *general form* of a theory of personal identity, as discussed in class? (P stands for a person; X represents an unspecified condition.)

- (a) P is the same P at time 1 and time 2 if P has the same X at time 1 and time 2.
 - (b) P is the same P at time 1 and time 2 if and only if P has the same X at time 1 and time 2.
 - (c) If P is the same P at time 1 and time 2, then P has the same X at time 1 and time 2.
- [The correct answer is (b), because it identifies both a necessary and sufficient condition for personal identity, as indicated by the phrase “if and only if”.]

Here is an example argumentative essay topic that requires analysis of an argument advanced by Descartes (see section 5 of the syllabus for further details of the essay assignments).

Example essay question on Descartes and skepticism: Explain how Descartes’ dreaming argument, in his first Meditation, purports to show that humans cannot have knowledge of the external world. What are the key steps in his argument, and how do they work together to support the conclusion? What is the overall conclusion, and why is it significant? Identify and explain one problem for Descartes’ argument.

Humanities GEP Objective 2: “Become aware of the act of interpretation itself as a critical form of knowing in the humanities.”

Student Learning Outcome: Students will develop a more advanced comprehension or understanding of the rational and conceptual basis for nuanced philosophical theories and perspectives.

How this Student Learning Outcome fulfills Humanities GEP Objective 2: Understanding the reasons and ideas that support a claim, regarding questions of human knowledge, reality, and values, requires that one be aware that the same (or, at least, similar) reasons and ideas can often be used to support differing claims that one may claim to *know* (where knowing is itself subject to interpretation and scrutiny in philosophy). In turn, this requires that one give a specific interpretation of the reasons and ideas, linking them to other reasons and ideas to generate a conclusion that yields possible new knowledge. In sum, understanding the rational basis (that is, relating to reasons) and conceptual basis (the basis in ideas) for different perspectives puts one in position to discuss different interpretations of those reasons and ideas.

Outcome assessment: This outcome is assessed through objective questions (multiple-choice, true/false) and short argumentative essays.

Below is an example objective question relating to the above Student Learning Outcome, emphasizing understanding of the historical debate concerning perception and reality between John Locke and George Berkeley, which still resonates today.

Example comprehension/interpretation question: The claims being debated between Locke and Berkeley include which of the following?

- (a) Whether the difference between primary and secondary qualities is real or not.
- (b) Whether ideas exist in the mind or the external world.
- (c) Whether external objects exist.
- (d) All of the above.
- (e) Both a. and c.

[The correct answer is (e). Answer (b) should be excluded because both Locke and Berkeley agree that ideas exist in minds alone.]

Here is an example argumentative essay question that requires comprehension of the rational basis of an ethical theory (see section 5 of the syllabus for further details of the essay assignments).

Example essay question on the Principle of Utility: Answer question 5 of the Reading Comprehension Questions at the end of Mill's "In Defense of Utilitarianism" (in Timmons and Shoemaker 2013, the assigned text). For your convenience, here is the question reprinted: "Mill's reply to the argument [that is, the argument that the Principle of Utility is too demeaning or degrading to human happiness] depends on the idea that in addition to the quantity of pleasure (their "how muchness"), pleasures may differ in quality. What does Mill mean by the quality of pleasures? How does Mill think that differences in quality can be determined? Do you find what he says plausible? Why or why not?"

Humanities GEP Objective 3: "Make academic arguments about the human experience using reasons and evidence for supporting those reasons that are appropriate to the humanities."

Student Learning Outcome: Students will be able to competently *critique and construct arguments* regarding bioethics issues by incorporating philosophical ideas and theories, in accordance with accepted logical forms.

How this Student Learning Outcome fulfills Humanities GEP Objective 3: By learning logical concepts, like the concept of a valid argument, and studying examples of various forms of logical argument, students will begin to employ these in their own reasoning about bioethics issues. Additionally, they will notice philosophical principles and theories, as well as important empirical claims, in arguments, and learn to incorporate them into their own arguments. These theories and claims, given the nature of the course material, relate directly to human experience (e.g., theories about values and the nature of right and wrong, empirical facts about human perception and cognition, the nature of personhood, the nature of the divine, and free will and determinism). Given all of these factors, students will critique and formulate arguments—based on philosophical ideas, logical principles, and relevant facts—concerning human experience and values. In doing so, they will display rational sensitivity to competing arguments and objections.

Outcome assessment: This outcome is assessed through objective questions (multiple-choice, true/false), worksheet problems, and short argumentative essays.

Below is an example objective question relating to the above Student Learning Outcome, emphasizing the ability to critique an argument.

Example of an objective question concerning the critique of an argument: Paley argues, by analogy, that just as a watch has a watch-maker, the universe has a universe-maker. Suppose Paley notes exactly three similarities between the watch and the universe in making his argument, but he also notes one dissimilar feature. Is the following statement true or false? “*The strength of Paley’s argument goes down if more similarities between the watch and the universe are found, and the strength goes up if more dissimilar features are found.*” (Assume all other factors are equal.)

- (a) True.
- (b) False.

[The correct answer is (b), because more similar features increases the strength of the analogy.]

Below is an example worksheet problem relating to the above Student Learning Outcome, emphasizing the ability to form or construct an argument.

Example of a worksheet problem concerning the construction of an argument: Here is the logical form of a *hypothetical syllogism*: “P1: All A’s are B’s. P2: All B’s are C’s. C1: All A’s are C’s.” *Example*: “P1: All whales are mammals. P2: All mammals are animals with neocortices. C1: Thus, all whales are animals with neocortices.” Your task is to create your own example of a hypothetical syllogism concerning either (i) *skepticism about knowledge* or (ii) the *nature of personal identity*. (Discuss your argument with your small group peers.)

Lastly, the argumentative essay question under Humanities GEP Objective 2 above provides an example essay question that requires *critiquing and constructing* an argument. The *critique* component primarily is emphasized by the first and second sub-questions of the assignment, and the *constructing* component primarily is emphasized by the third and fourth sub-questions of the assignment. (See section 5 of the syllabus for further details and additional questions students can choose from.)

3. REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

Nearly all the journal articles and book chapters assigned are classic philosophical pieces, either from the history of philosophy (ancient and modern eras) or recent contemporary essays that have had a significant impact. So you will not be reading textbook stuff, but original, influential works.

1. **Moodle 2:** It is assumed that you have reliable access to a computer and a reliable internet connection; if you do not own a computer, plenty are available for use at the University library, other areas of campus, and at public libraries. You will need to be able to access [Moodle 2](#), the University-approved Learning Management System this course utilizes (Moodle 2 can also be accessed through MyPack Portal).
2. ***Knowledge, Nature, and Norms: An Introduction to Philosophy, 2nd edition.* Mark Timmons and David Shoemaker, eds. 2013. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.** (This may be listed as 2014, but that is a mistake—it is 2013.) Bibliographical information for selections assigned from this anthology can be found on the first page of each selection in it. (Cost: new approx. \$82.20, online rental approx. \$28.80; also check online bookstores, where it may be as low as \$65. D.H. Hill Library keeps a copy of this book—and copies of *all* books for *all* courses during any term—on physical reserve at the circulation desk. The 2009 edition of this anthology is acceptable, but some readings

may differ slightly and references I make to the text in class or on handouts will refer to the second edition, 2013.)

3. **Additional articles or chapters on electronic reserve.** All additional materials are accessible through Moodle, <http://moodle.wolfware.ncsu.edu/>. In some cases, when you click on the link you will be taken to e-reserves, <https://reserves.lib.ncsu.edu/>, so you will have to log in again at that site. All of these articles are reviewed by library staff for uploading in e-reserves. In other cases, you will be taken to a resource freely accessible online. Here is a bibliography of these supplemental readings:

Aristotle. 350 B.C.E. *On the Soul*. Trans. J.A. Smith. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/soul.html>.

Berkeley, George. "Of the Principles of Human Knowledge." In *Reason and Responsibility: Readings in Some Basic Problems of Philosophy*, 14th edition, eds. Joel Feinberg and Russ Shafer-Landau. 2011. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, pp. 223-230. [Berkeley's *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, from which this selection is taken, was originally published in 1710.]

Locke, John. "The Causal Theory of Perception." In *Reason and Responsibility: Readings in Some Basic Problems of Philosophy*, 14th edition, eds. Joel Feinberg and Russ Shafer-Landau. 2011. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, pp. 215-222. [Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, from which this selection is taken, was originally published in 1690.]

Nozick, Robert. Selection from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. In *Today's Moral Issues: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives*, 5th Edition, Daniel Bonevac. 2006. New York: McGraw Hill, pp. 517-524. [Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* was originally published in 1974 by Basic Books.]

Rawls, John. Selection from *A Theory of Justice*. In *Today's Moral Issues: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives*, 5th Edition. Daniel Bonevac. 2006. New York: McGraw Hill, pp. 511-516. [Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* was originally published in 1971 by Harvard University Press.]

Van Inwagen, Peter. 2008. The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will. In van Inwagen's *Metaphysics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

4. **Handouts, study guides, and other course materials.** Instructor-created handouts will typically be available in class as hard copies, and placed on Moodle as well. Their purpose is to provide analysis of readings, commentary on key arguments, and important background information helpful in placing ideas and arguments in context; they are referred to extensively in class, but supplemented with additional commentary, whiteboard notes, and discussion. A study guide for the exams is available on Moodle. (These are all instructor-copyrighted materials. Some additional sources may be found only on specific handouts, where I refer to additional articles or websites not assigned in class; in such cases, bibliographical information is provided on that particular handout. If you have questions about any cited material or want recommended readings, ask.)

Copyright of course materials

All course materials are copyrighted, including instructor-prepared materials (handouts, etc.). They are intended solely for your personal, educational use. You will be required to access the NCSU library electronic reserve (in all cases where materials are on e-reserve, a link is provided from Moodle to the e-reserve site). The electronic copies of journal articles and online resources assigned for this course are made accessible only to individuals enrolled in this course, and provided only for educational purposes consistent with fair use rules. A few resources linked to from Moodle are available on the Internet freely, but you should be aware of policies at those sites when visiting (again, it is assumed that you are using these only for educational purposes). Please consult with me if you have issues with accessing Internet material outside the confines of Moodle or library electronic reserves. Be familiar with the

University Copyright Infringement Policy Statement, regarding the restriction on sharing content of course materials at <http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-01-25-02>. When you access electronic reserves or other copyrighted course material (including instructor-prepared material), you are affirming this statement: "I acknowledge that all documents (hard-copy or electronic, to include articles, lecture notes, handouts, exams, etc.) made available to me for the course PHI 205 taught at NC State University in the current term are copyrighted and intended for my personal use. By logging into the PHI 205 website (through Moodle 2), you certify that you will not share any content of the class PHI 205 NC State University website with a third party without written permission from the instructor, Prof. William Bauer" (statement based on University recommendation).

4. CLASS PROCEDURES

Instructor's role and perspective

A good portion of many meetings will consist of the instructor presenting analyses of key arguments and claims from articles that the class has read, and filling in key background facts and concepts. But these presentations are intended to be informal and you are encouraged to ask questions and bring up interesting points of view at any time. I will *not* be teaching my own theories or arguments that I favor, but those that have been espoused and formulated by other philosophers which you will be examined on. Furthermore, **I will make a concerted effort to not indicate my positions on issues in or out of class** (though this may not always be feasible). This policy is meant to maximize the objectivity of your explorations in the course.

Discussion

I ask that **all class members respect the rights of other class members to express their points of view** about the controversial issues we will discuss. If your tone or demeanor becomes disrespectful to others in class, you may be asked to leave the room (I don't expect this to be an issue). It is highly desirable in studying and doing Philosophy that significant class discussion occur; to that end, **you are encouraged to express your reasoned opinions, questions, and comments during class at any time**. In expressing your view, please stick to the course content or related material: e.g., ask about my formulation of a point on one of the handouts, or give your reaction to a thought experiment in one of the readings, or ask a clarification question about something that seems ambiguous, etc. Almost everyone will have an opinion or claim about most every topic, but what Philosophy is interested in is the justification for such opinions: What is the argument for the claim? What theories lend support to this opinion? Do those theories explain what they are supposed to explain?

Small groups and informal surveys

I will often place you in **small peer groups (3-4 people) to discuss some concept or argument, or complete practice exam-style questions**, and you should use this time to share your perspective and form further questions. Your participation in these small group discussions is expected, but is not graded. Again, good discussion can only help in learning course material and in understanding your own views. I will occasionally conduct informal surveys (simply asking for a show of hands) on various topics in order to bring out different points of view; this is voluntary but it is extremely helpful in generating discussion and appreciating different points of view.

Email

I aim to respond to email messages within 24 hours, and I will keep my responses succinct. As a general rule, try to avoid asking detailed questions about course content in an email; such questions are best

presented in person, because the conversation will probably be more productive and efficient. However, email is the best way to set up a time to meet if you cannot meet during office hours, or if you have a minor question. Visiting during office hours is a great way to review material.

Internet use in class

Please **do not browse the internet or do non-course related activities on laptops or smartphones**. This is distracting to other students and the instructor. If you prefer to take notes on an electronic device, **feel free to access Moodle or relevant course material in class**, but do so as quietly as possible. (However, please do not make audio recordings of classroom discussion or commentary—if doing so is necessary as deemed by the Disability Services Office, please see me first). If your use of electronic devices in class is distracting, you may be asked to leave the room.

5. GRADED ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING PROCEDURES

All assignments and exams combined are worth 200 points, consisting of the following:

2 philosophical problems worksheets: 60 points (approx. 2 pages each; worth 30 points each)

These may consist of puzzles to discuss, reflection questions, argument exercises, etc.

One will be completed covering Units 1 and 2, and one covering Unit 4.

Worksheet 1: discuss Tue, Feb 11; due Thu, Feb 13

Worksheet 2: discuss Thu, Apr 10, due Tue, Apr 15

2 argumentative essays: 60 points (approx. 2 pages or 400-600 words each; worth 30 points each)

Do 2 of 4 options (TOPICS: skepticism; identity of objects over time; artificial intelligence; utilitarianism).

You *cannot* do more than 2 essay options and take the highest 2 scores. On the due day, you can only turn in the specific essay topic for *that* day or a later day, but *not* the option for an earlier day.

Essay option # 1 due: Thu, Jan 16

Essay option # 2 due: Tue, Feb 4

Essay option # 3 due: Thu, Feb 20

Essay option # 4 due: Tue, Apr 8

Midterm exam: 40 points (40 multiple-choice and true/false questions, perhaps matching or other methods too; covers units 1 and 2; 60 minutes; starts promptly at the beginning of class)

The **Midterm Exam is on Tue, Feb 25**, during the normal class time.

Final exam: 40 points (40 multiple-choice and true/false questions, perhaps matching or other methods too; covers units 3 and 4; 60 minutes; starts promptly at the time below)

Section 007: Thu, May 1, 9-10 a.m. (be ready to take the exam at 9 a.m.)

Section 009: Tue, Apr 29, 1-2 p.m. (be ready to take the exam at 1 p.m.)

Section 010: Thu, May 1, 1-2 p.m. (be ready to take the exam at 1 p.m.)

In order to PASS the course, you must do all of the following: (i) achieve sufficient points to earn a passing grade (see the scale below), (ii) take the midterm exam, (iii) take the final exam, and (iv) complete *at least one* of the essay assignments. This means that, theoretically, you could skip or miss any of the other work and still pass the course, **so long as you meet conditions (i) through (iv)**. Missing assignments is, however, *not* recommended. Missing one assignment knocks your score down into the B range automatically; so you are *strongly encouraged* to complete everything. Altogether, the assignment load is not terribly burdensome; but there is quite a bit of required reading, and all of the assignments are carefully designed to motivate your progress through the material while challenging you. Note that

the course assignments are front-loaded: 130 of the course points will be determined by mid-semester (unless you choose to do essay option 4). This is to make the second half of the term more manageable for everyone, when I know many of your other courses tend to get more burdensome.

Course grading scale

The following scale, with 200 possible points, assigns letter grades according to traditional percentages: A's in the 90-100% range, B's in the 80-89% range, C's in the 70-79% range, D's in the 60-69% range, and F's at or below 59%.

Numerical total	Letter grade
195-200	A+
185-194	A
179-184	A-
175-178	B+
165-174	B
159-164	B-
155-158	C+
145-154	C
139-144	C-
135-138	D+
125-134	D
119-124	D-
118 or below	F

Philosophical Problems Worksheets – FURTHER DETAILS

You will complete 2 philosophical problems worksheets worth 30 points each. One will be completed covering Units 1 and 2, and one covering Unit 4. These consist of **exam-style questions, exercises, and reflection questions prompting you to synthesize information**. If you *carefully* and accurately complete each section of the approximately 2-page worksheets, you should do well on them; relative to the exams and essays, the worksheets are easier points to earn. We will discuss the worksheets in class, you'll discuss them in small groups, and then you'll have until the next meeting to turn them in.

Argumentative Essays – FURTHER DETAILS

You will write argumentative essays on two of four topics of your choice: Cartesian skepticism about external objects; the identity of objects over time; artificial intelligence ; or, the principle of utility. There are specific prompts, given in the **essay assignment instructions** at [Moodle 2](#) (hereafter, Moodle). You *cannot* do more than two and take the highest two scores. These should be approx. 2 pages, or approximately 400-600 words; these are length *guidelines*, not absolute requirements—they may be shorter or longer, so long as all the parts of the question are addressed. They are worth 30 points each, for a total of 60 points in the course. Aim for clarity, precision, accuracy, and originality of explanation or argumentation; the more these qualities are displayed, the higher your grade should be. Earning a grade in the "A" range on essays assignments is relatively difficult, typically only earned by about 25% of the class; you should expect to earn a grade at least in the "C" range if you take the assignment seriously and follow instructions; grades below "C" are rare but do occur.

Midterm Exam and Final Exam – FURTHER DETAILS

The Midterm and Final Exams consist of multiple-choice and true/false questions (40 for the Midterm and 40 for the Final). The exams are **designed to assess your understanding of the core concepts, arguments, and theories** that we study, and how all of these relate to each other. Individual letter grades are not assigned for exams, but you can easily determine where you stand on each exam by determining the percentage of points earned (e.g., 36 and above is in the A range). Exam questions are **formed on the basis of the assigned readings, handouts, and class commentary**. Some questions will be *factual or definitional*, such as ‘what does X mean?’ or ‘who maintains that X is the case?’ or ‘what claim does this argument support?’ Other questions will be *inferential*, such as ‘if X is true, then does Y or Z follow?’ or ‘is it true that Z is objection to Y?’ or ‘is it true that reason X supports claim Y?’ This is not an exhaustive list of types of questions, just a snapshot.

There will be **in-class reviews** for both exams (these might be brief, depending on what remains to be covered before the exams). There is a **study packet** on Moodle that breaks the course down into specific topics, listing major concepts, theories, and arguments covered. It also contains a large number of practice questions of the variety found on the Midterm and Final Exams. I expect that this will be of great help in learning the material and preparing for the exams. You are encouraged to go through this packet as we proceed through the topics; one recommendation is to form study groups (maybe the same groups you tend to work with in small-group discussions in class) to go through these questions together. I might also use some of these questions for review in class or to generate class discussion.

Final grades

For the final course grade, the total points earned for essays, exams, and worksheets will be added and letter grades assigned according to the scale above. You can determine where you stand at any given point by dividing your points earned by points possible up to that point to; the percent will give you a good indicator of your current letter grade. The course is designed with a reasonable assignment load and fair standards, so *if you do the work, engage with the issues critically, and study*, you should expect to pass the course in the “C” range. But the standard for earning an A” is hard, as it should be. Extra studying, extra questioning, extra interest, extra attention to detail, etc., can all contribute a couple of extra points earned on an essay or a few more questions answered correctly on an exam...and, for instance, make the difference between a B+ and an A-.

Grades on Moodle

I will enter all grades into the Moodle grade book (and back this up periodically), where only you can see your grade (besides the instructor). **When you receive assignments or exams back in class, be sure to check the accuracy of the Moodle grades and let me know if there is a discrepancy** (which is rare, but it is good to check). Also, be sure to keep returned assignments for your record, just in case there’s a University server meltdown or something. Also, **if you need a report filled out on your current course performance** (for athletics, sororities, fraternities, etc.), please coordinate with me in person or by email.

Attendance

You are expected to attend all meetings. *I will record attendance for every meeting, but this is not a formal component of your grade*. So, poor attendance will not formally harm your grade. Excellent attendance can, of course, help your performance and make the course more interesting and valuable for everyone if you contribute to discussion. Good attendance tends to be associated with stronger performance. *Can good attendance warrant a bump up in grade?* Sometimes it occurs that an

individual's final grade approaches very closely the next highest grade (e.g., within 1 or 2 points) and in this case a small bump might be justified. However, if this situation arises, a reasonable cut-off point will be determined for the class and applied equitably to all individuals that had *good* attendance, defined as not having missed more than two classes (excluding officially excused absences due to medical reasons, religious observances, University business, or other appropriate reasons as specified in the regulation referenced at the end of this passage). The best thing to do is work hard to get the scores you desire. Attendance, participation, hard work, and sincere interest in the topics will pay off both in terms of grades and, most importantly, learning. Please see University policy on attendance at <http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-03>, which will be enforced (including the Drop for Non-Attendance Policy).

Late assignments and make-ups

Make-up exams are not allowed without prior arrangement with the instructor, and are only allowed for reasons approved by University policy (see the previous passage) such as official University athletic obligations. Contact the instructor in person or by email in order to make arrangements. Late essays and worksheets will be penalized 2 point for each day late. Measures are taken to ensure that there are no assignments or exams on days of verifiable religious observance; however, if a verifiable conflict remains for you, please contact the instructor as early as possible to establish make-up arrangements.

Discussing grades and performance

I am always willing to discuss your grades on assignments/exams, and reviewing your performance with me is a good way to make progress. If you wish to contest your grade on an assignment me, do not expect an increase of your grade unless it is clear that a verifiable mistake was made. When this is not the case, and you believe there was a misjudgment of the quality of your assignment, it is advisable to not make a case for more points unless you believe that the assigned grade is off by at least a full letter grade (e.g., you earned a B- but you believe it should be an A-). I am always willing to hear what you have to say, but complaints over a third of a letter grade or a couple of points are not likely to be successful.

6. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY ON COURSEWORK

All students are required to follow the standards of academic honesty as stated in the NC State Code of Student Conduct. **Plagiarism and cheating are serious ethical violations** representing a lack of moral character and dedication to learning. Violations may lead to failure of the course. ***Don't do it.*** Don't cheat yourself, and don't cheat others. **On all exams, assignments, etc., when you submit these in any format, by any means, you are automatically affirming the following statement: "I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this test or assignment."** When submitting essay assignments, you affirm that you have not plagiarized others' work, and that you have given credit to others as required, e.g., where you quote someone, paraphrase someone's quote or ideas, or employ their ideas in your project. You may discuss your essays with others in class (or the instructor, of course), but if this helps you in formulating something or understanding something, it is professionally courteous to include a short acknowledgement (e.g., in a footnote, or at the end of the essay, say "Thanks to... for...").

Penalties for integrity violations will range from grade-reduction to failure of the course; infringements will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. Be familiar with the Code of Student Conduct addressing academic integrity and other important issues, as outlined by the Office of Student Conduct,

at this web address: <http://studentconduct.ncsu.edu/policies-and-procedures>. The official University policy is available at <http://policies.ncsu.edu/policy/pol-11-35-01>, and you should be familiar with it too.

7. PRIVACY POLICY

“Students may be required to disclose personally identifiable information to other students in the course, including via electronic tools like email or web-postings, where relevant to the course. Examples include online discussions of class topics, and posting of student coursework. All students are expected to respect one another's privacy by not sharing or using such information outside the course” (this statement is from official University policy). In this course, no personally identifiable information will be disclosed to individuals outside the class enrollment/roster (e.g., those enrolled in the course can see who else is enrolled) or the course administrative chain (unless required by law or some other University policy).

Your assignments and exams will of course be viewed by the instructor; but if you voluntarily raise a question or make a comment or advance an observation in class, then, of course, that is not private. Furthermore, in returning assignments and exams, for the sake of efficiency the instructor will typically lay out the assignments on a table or windowsill in an ordered fashion (e.g., alphabetically) for individuals to pick up; all assignment grades will be written either on the back page or a page after the first one, so as not to be obviously viewable by others, though comments on the front page may be viewable. If you have concerns about this method of returning your work, please contact the instructor and other arrangements to pick up your work can be made. **You are not allowed to ever collect someone else's graded work.**

We will be discussing important and sometimes controversial topics in class, and each participant can raise questions that others (including the instructor) can respond to, make comments, and advance observations about course content. These discussions are for everyone's benefit, and everyone should feel free to express their personal opinions about the topics we discuss, or simply try out new opinions to test them. Treat your peers *with respect and courtesy*. See University regulation at: <http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-08-00-11>.

8. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES OR SPECIAL NEEDS

Students requiring assistance due to verifiable disabilities or special needs should contact the instructor as soon as possible. “Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of these accommodations, students must register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 919-515-7653. For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, see the [Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation \(REG02.20.01\)](#)” (this statement is from University policy). Here is the website of the Disability Services Office: <http://www.ncsu.edu/dso>.

9. ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND IMPORTANT NOTES

NC State Polices, Regulations, and Rules (PRR)

“Students are responsible for reviewing the NC State University PRR's located at <http://oucc.ncsu.edu/course-rights-and-responsibilities> which pertains to their course rights and

responsibilities” (statement from official University guidance). (This website includes links to policy statements on Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination, Code of Student Conduct, Grades and Grade Point Average, Credit-Only Courses, and Audits.)

Equality of opportunity

“NC State University provides equality of opportunity in education and employment for all students and employees. Accordingly, NC State affirms its commitment to maintain a work environment for all employees and an academic environment for all students that is free from all forms of discrimination. Discrimination based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation is a violation of state and federal law and/or NC State University policy and will not be tolerated. Harassment of any person (either in the form of quid pro quo or creation of a hostile environment) based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation also is a violation of state and federal law and/or NC State University policy and will not be tolerated. Retaliation against any person who complains about discrimination is also prohibited. NC State’s policies and regulations governing discrimination, harassment, and retaliation may be accessed at http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/campus_environ or http://www.ncsu.edu/equal_op. Any person who feels that he or she has been the subject of prohibited discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should contact the Office for Equal Opportunity (OEO) at 515-3148” (statement from official university policy).

Class evaluations

Your feedback about the course and the instruction is valuable. I might ask for informal feedback in an online discussion forum along the way about specific materials or activities in order to make appropriate adjustments to this and further courses. Formal, end-of-course, online evaluations will be conducted per NC State University policies. The evaluation system will be available during the last two weeks of the course, and will close before final exams begin. Here is the official University statement regarding class evaluations: “Students will receive an email message directing them to a website where they can login using their Unity ID and complete evaluations. All evaluations are confidential; instructors will not know how any one student responded to any question, and students will not know the ratings for any instructors.” More information about class evaluations: <http://www.ncsu.edu/UPA/classeval/>; Evaluation website: <https://classeval.ncsu.edu/>; Student help desk: classeval@ncsu.edu

Student grievances

Please see University regulation: <http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-11-40-01>.

Adverse weather policy

Weather can affect Internet accessibility which is essential to the completion of this course. Check <http://www.ncsu.edu/> for updates on the University’s open/closed status, or call 919-513-8888. For the policy on Adverse Weather and Other Emergency Conditions, please see <http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-04-20-07>.

Recording lectures and discussion

“Students may not use recording devices in the classroom without explicit prior permission of the instructor. If permission is granted, there must also be no member of the class who objects. Instructor and class permission is not required when an accommodation notification from Disability Services has been received by the instructor, which identifies a student that requires the use of a recording device. However, the instructor may prohibit the use of any recording device when it would inhibit free

discussion and free exchange of ideas in the classroom” (statement from University policy at <http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-11>).

Philosophy opportunities and CHASS Career Services

From time to time, I might forward information about scholarship opportunities, graduate opportunities, etc., to the class. Additionally, I am happy to discuss with any of you how philosophy connects with various career paths, or about further undergraduate or graduate studies in philosophy. Furthermore, here is a statement from CHASS Career Services that may be of interest especially if you are a CHASS major: “Explore career options related to your major, make decisions about your major or minor, build resumes and cover letters, prepare for interviews, develop internship/job search strategies, maximize career fairs, and more. Use ePACK to make an appointment with your career counselor – Jane Matthews or Woody Catoe – through ePACK. Career Development Center, 2100 Pullen Hall. careers.ncsu.edu.”

10. COURSE SCHEDULE: TOPICS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

The instructor reserves the right to change the course schedule and syllabus content with appropriate notification to students. Any changes will be promptly announced in class or through email.

Most reading assignments are from *Knowledge, Nature, and Norms: An Introduction to Philosophy*, edited by M. Timmons and D. Shoemaker; see the table of contents in the book for page numbers of assigned selections. Other readings are accessible through e-reserves (linked in Moodle). The list of readings below does not indicate all the material you need to be familiar with to do well. Class meetings are designed to complement the assigned readings. For all topics, there are background concepts and distinctions necessary for adequately understanding the material that will only be introduced in class. All handouts (available on Moodle and in class) will be discussed in class—they form the basis of instructor commentary on the given topic or reading, and are designed to highlight key points and arguments from readings, as well as give helpful background. When no handout is used, notes will be made on the white board that serve the same function as the handout; even when handouts are used, diagrams that complement them will likely be introduced in class. *You are responsible* for being familiar with material both from the readings and our discussions. Many of the exam questions, though not all, will reflect material that is covered both in class *and* discussed in the readings; some questions, however, will be based on one or the other.

Recommended sequence of activities to maximize your success

Before class: complete the required reading (also read the short editors’ introductions found at the beginning of most assigned readings, which provide helpful background information and summaries); try to identify the author’s key definitions, main claim, and argument for that claim

In class: listen to instructor commentary and follow the handout or class notes concerning the theory or argument under consideration (hard copies of handouts are provided, but you are permitted to view them on Moodle in class to take electronic notes if you wish); *ask questions*, raise objections, discuss key claims with peers (when a small-group activity is assigned); make notes for points to use in essays

After class: reflect on the theory or argument explored, study notes/handouts, and use the exam study guide to test yourself and organize your studying; take time to outline your points for the essays; test theories and look for connections between concepts; visit the instructor to discuss questions

Important University dates (FYI)

- First day of classes: Mon, Jan 6
- Last day to add course without instructor permission: Fri, Jan 10
- Last day to enroll/add a course; last day to drop a course or change a course from credit to audit with tuition adjustment; last day for undergrads to drop below 12 credits: Fri, Jan 17
- Holiday – NO CLASSES (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day): Mon, Jan 20
- Last day to withdraw or drop a course without a grade; last day to change from credit to audit; last day to change to credit only (MyPack Portal closes for drops at 11:50 p.m.): Mon, Mar 3
- Spring Break – NO CLASSES: Mon-Fri, Mar 10-14 (classes resume on Mon, Mar 17)
- Spring Holiday – NO CLASSES: Thu-Fri, Apr 17-18 (classes resume on Mon, Apr 21)
- Last day of classes: Wed, Apr 23
- Reading days: Thu-Fri, Apr 24-25
- Final exam period: Mon, Apr 28-Tue, May 6
- Spring commencement: Sat, May 10

UNIT 1: LOGIC AND PROBLEMS OF KNOWLEDGE
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Tue, Jan 7

Main topic: (1) philosophical questions and course intro; (2) basic logic part 1 (argument analysis)
Required reading: this entire syllabus

Thu, Jan 9

Main topic: (1) continue basic logic part 1; (2) basic logic part 2 (validity)
Required reading: Timmons and Shoemaker, "Introduction" (pp. 1-18, especially pp. 6-12)

Tue, Jan 14

Main topic: Cartesian skepticism about knowledge of the external world, and objections
Required reading: Descartes, "Meditation I: Of the Things of Which We May Doubt" (for now, read only Meditation I, pp. 332-336, in Timmons and Shoemaker; Meditation II is assigned later)

Thu, Jan 16

Main topics: (1) Locke on perception and qualities; (2) Locke on knowledge of the external world
Required reading: Locke, "The Causal Theory of Perception" (on e-reserve, through Moodle)
****Essay option 1, on skepticism, due** (see essay instructions on Moodle)**

Tue, Jan 21

Main topic: (1) Continue Locke on knowledge; (2) Berkeley on perception
Required reading: Berkeley, "Of the Principles of Human Knowledge" (e-reserve, through Moodle)

Thu, Jan 23

Main topics: (1) Continue Berkeley on perception; (2) Berkeley's argument against the existence of external objects
Reading: Berkeley, "On the Principles of Human Knowledge" (e-reserve, through Moodle)

Tue, Jan 28

Main topic: (1) review Locke/Berkeley discussion; (2) Moore's response to skepticism

Required reading: Moore, "Certainty" (in Timmons and Shoemaker)

UNIT 2: PUZZLES OF PERSONAL IDENTITY AND THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM

Thu, Jan 30

Main topic: a puzzle about the identity of objects over time

Required reading: none assigned

Tue, Feb 4

Main topic: the same consciousness theory of personal identity, and discussion

Required reading: Locke, "The Prince and the Cobbler" (in Timmons and Shoemaker)

****Essay option 2, on identity, due** (see essay instructions on Moodle)**

Thu, Feb 6

Main topic: why personal identity does not matter

Required reading: Parfit, "The Unimportance of Identity" (in Timmons and Shoemaker)

Tue, Feb 11

Main topic: Worksheet 1

Required reading: none assigned

****Worksheet 1: Logic, Knowledge, and Identity** (discuss and begin in class, due next meeting)**

Thu, Feb 13

Main topics: (1) introduction to the mind-body problem; (2) Cartesian dualism

Required reading: Descartes, "Meditation II: Of the Nature of the Human Mind; and That It is More Easily Known than the Body" (pp. 336-343, in Timmons and Shoemaker)

Tue, Feb 18

Main topics: (1) Aristotle's materialist monism; (2) the "Chinese Room" thought experiment

Required reading: (1) Aristotle, *On the Soul*, Book II, Part 1 (online, through Moodle); (2) Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Machines" (read part II, "Can Computers Think?" pp. 148-157, in Timmons and Shoemaker)

Thu, Feb 20

Main topics: (1) continue the "Chinese Room" thought experiment; (2) review for Midterm Exam

Required reading: none assigned

****Essay option 3, on the Chinese room, due** (see essay instructions on Moodle)**

Tue, Feb 25

****MIDTERM EXAM** (covers Units 1 and 2) (60 minutes; please be ready right at the start of class)**

UNIT 3: THE PROBLEM OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Thu, Feb 27

NO CLASS (Instructor at conference)

Tue, Mar 4

Main topic: (1) the ontological argument; (2) Pascal's Wager

Required readings: (1) St. Anselm, "The Ontological Argument" & Gaunilo, "The Lost Island Objection"; (2) Pascal, "The Wager"; (3) Blackburn, "God" (read only the "Infini—Rien" section, pp. 294-296) (all these readings are in Timmons and Shoemaker)

Thu, Mar 6

Main topic: the teleological argument (a.k.a., the argument from design)

Required reading: Paley, "The Teleological Argument" (in Timmons and Shoemaker)

Mon-Fri, Mar 10-14

Spring Break – NO CLASSES (classes resume Mar 17)

Tue, Mar 18

Main topics: (1) cont. the teleological argument; (2) the problem of evil, part 1

Required reading: Hume, "The Problem of Evil" (in Timmons and Shoemaker)

Thu, Mar 20

Main topic: the problem of evil, part 2

Required reading: Dostoevsky, "Rebellion" (in Timmons and Shoemaker)

UNIT 4: PROBLEMS OF FREE WILL AND MORALITY

Tue, Mar 25

Main topic: free will, determinism, & responsibility, part 1

Required reading: van Inwagen, "The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will" (on e-reserve, through Moodle)

Thu, Mar 27

Main topic: (1) free will, determinism, & responsibility, part 2; (2) cultural relativism as a moral theory

Required reading: before meeting, read handout on cultural relativism (available on Moodle)

Tue, Apr 1

Main topics: (1) cont. cultural relativism as a moral theory; (2) divine command theory

Required reading: before meeting, read handout on divine command theory (available on Moodle)

Thu, Apr 3

Main topics: Mill's utilitarianism

Required reading: Mill, "In Defense of Utilitarianism" (in Timmons and Shoemaker)

Tue, Apr 8

Main topic: (1) Kant's categorical imperative; (2) Aristotle's virtue theory

Required reading: (1) Kant, "The Moral Law and Autonomy of the Will" (in Timmons and Shoemaker); (2) Aristotle, "Virtue and Character" (in Timmons and Shoemaker)

****Essay option 4, on Utilitarianism, due** (see essay instructions on Moodle)**

Thu, Apr 10

Main topic: (1) continue Aristotle's virtue theory; (2) Worksheet 2

Required reading: none assigned

****Worksheet 2: Moral Problems: Comparing Ethical Theories**** (discuss and begin in class, due next meeting)

Tue, Apr 15

Main topics: (1) the original position and patterned models of distributive justice; (2) the historical model of distributive justice

Required reading: (1) Rawls, selections from *A Theory of Justice* (on e-reserve, through Moodle); (2) Nozick, selections from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (on e-reserve, through Moodle)

Apr 17-18

Spring Holiday – NO CLASSES (classes resume Apr 21)

Tue, Apr 22

Main topic: (1) follow-up on theories of justice; (2) moral theory and free will: putting it all together (review for the Final Exam); (3) small-group review questions

Required reading: none assigned

Thu-Fri, Apr 24-25

Reading days

****FINAL EXAM**** (covers Units 3 and 4) **Note:** the final exam times below all fall within the official 3-hour final exam periods for this course. But the final exam is not comprehensive and should not take 3 hours to complete; you will have 60 minutes to complete it.

Section 007: Thu, May 1, 9-10 a.m. (be ready to take the exam at 9 a.m.)

(Since it is only a one-hour final exam, and no one should have anything else scheduled in the 3-hour window, I assumed everyone would appreciate an extra hour of studying or sleeping, so we'll meet at 9 a.m. for the exam.)

Section 009: Tue, Apr 29, 1-2 p.m. (be ready to take the exam at 1 p.m.)

Section 010: Thu, May 1, 1-2 p.m. (be ready to take the exam at 1 p.m.)

11. WILLIAM BAUER – MINI BIOGRAPHY (FYI)

I joined the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at NC State in the fall of 2010. So far at NC State, I have taught Introduction to Philosophy and Bio-Medical Ethics. Previously, I was at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln where I completed my doctoral studies in Philosophy and taught for five years. Before that, I studied Philosophy at Miami University (in Ohio), served as a US Army Medical Service Corps officer, and completed a degree in Biology at Illinois Institute of Technology (in Chicago). My primary areas of research and teaching interest include metaphysics (theory of reality, especially the classification of natural properties), philosophy of science, and bioethics. At NC State, I have taught both Introduction to Philosophy and Bio-Medical Ethics. My interests in metaphysics overlap strongly with central problems of bioethics, such as the nature of persons and its importance for euthanasia and abortion, the philosophy of mind and its relevance to animal welfare, and the application of theories of free will to questions of moral responsibility and justice. I enjoy discussions with everyone taking my courses, both in and out of class. I intend for my courses to be a place of exploration, where together we map out argumentative territory, explore and critique new possibilities, and attempt to better understand the relationship between the world, the self, and values. For more information, see www.wabauer.com.

Thanks for taking my course.

The instructor reserves the right to change the course schedule and syllabus content with appropriate notification to students. Any changes will be promptly announced in class or through email.