

# Introduction to Philosophy

## Fall 2016

**Instructor: Jordan Rodgers**  
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**Office: Malloy 300**  
**Office Hours: TR 1:30-3:00 (or by appt.)**

**Course: PHIL 10101-05**  
**Room: DeBartolo B011**  
**Time: MWF 9:25-10:15**

### *Aims of the Course:*

The aim of the course, naturally, is to introduce you to the discipline of philosophy. This is actually not as straightforward a task as you might expect; you'll learn as we go on that philosophers don't tend to agree a lot on what philosophy is (or much of anything, for that matter). Happily, this won't be too much of a problem for us. Philosophy derives its name from the Greek word *philosophia*, which means literally the love ("philo-") of wisdom ("-sophia"). So rather than trying to give you a definitive conception of what philosophy is, my goal will be to try to make you feel a little bit of that love – to develop a taste for thinking rigorously and carefully, for questioning things you had taken for granted in the past, and for imagining new and different possibilities.

The plan is to do this by working through some of the most important texts in the history of philosophy, and grappling with the big questions they raise. Some of them may have occurred to you before, while others will likely be new to you. These questions include ones like the following:

What does it mean to live a good life?  
Is there a God?  
If so, why is there evil in the world?  
Is the mind separate from the body?  
Does our knowledge come primarily from experience or from reason?

Aside from being introduced to thinking about these big questions, you will also be taught how to read difficult texts carefully, and respond sensitively to them in writing. The result will be not only a more developed ability to read, respond to, and develop your own philosophical arguments, but also a greater facility with communicating your ideas in general.

### *Required Texts:*

1. Plato, *Five Dialogues* (Hackett Press, Grube translator) = FD
2. Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford, Ross translator) = NE
3. Descartes, *Discourse on Method, and Meditations on First Philosophy* (Hackett, Cress translator) = DM
4. Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Hackett, Popkin editor) = HD

All other texts will be made available either in handout form or online. **Please get these editions/translations and not others**, for ease of reference in the class. I've tried to select relatively cheap editions, and they can be even cheaper if you try to find used copies. The readings will be difficult, but relatively short. Make sure to keep up! It's easy to start falling behind, but very difficult to catch back up.

### Course Requirements:

#### **Grading Elements**

- One short (3-4 pp.) Paper - 15%
- One longer (5-6 pp.) Paper - 25%
- Attendance/Participation - 20%
- Midterm Exam - 20%
- Final Exam (non-cumulative) - 20%

**Papers** - Paper prompts will be given to you with plenty of advance notice - approximately a week and a half for the short one, and approximately two and a half weeks for the longer one. Please turn your papers in *on time*. If your paper is late, you will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g., a B+ paper turned in one day late will receive a grade of "B," etc.). If you have an approved university excuse, let me know *in advance* of the due date of the paper. I strongly encourage you to come talk to me about your paper ideas in advance also.

**Exams** - Both exams will include short, objective-style questions and longer essay questions. The midterm will take place in the normal room during class time; I will notify you of the place and time of the final when that information is available. The final will NOT be cumulative.

**Attendance & Participation** - I won't be taking official attendance in this course. *However*, this does not mean that skipping lots of classes is a good idea. Part of your grade will be determined by your contributions (questions, ideas) in class and your reading exercise responses (see below), and your success on papers and exams will likely depend in large part upon your presence in and understanding of the lectures and discussions in class. Paper prompts and exams may well reference material which is not present in the readings. As for participation - I'm confident that we will be able to create an environment in class in which you can feel comfortable contributing to the discussion, but if you are intimidated by the prospect of speaking in class, please either email me or come to my office and talk sometimes. I want to see that you're actively engaging with the material, and not just letting the lectures wash over you.

### Academic Dishonesty:

I take the issue of academic dishonesty very seriously, and will penalize any form of plagiarism to the maximum extent permitted to me by the University. Keep in mind that, as a Notre Dame undergraduate, you have agreed to hold yourself to the Notre Dame Honor Code (if you need to brush up on what that means, please check out <http://nd.edu/~hnr/code/>), and that committing plagiarism is in general a really dumb decision - if you do it, I WILL catch you, and it WILL (at best) put your passing of the course in serious jeopardy. If you feel at all tempted to commit any form of academic dishonesty, please come to see me instead. Whatever you're going through, I'm sure that together we can come up with a better solution for it than your committing plagiarism.

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, I strongly suggest that you consult the Philosophy Department's guidelines, which are admirably clear, and can be found here: <http://philosophy.nd.edu/assets/77703/plagiarism.pdf>. If you still have questions after consulting this document, let me know, and we'll straighten it out together.

## Tentative Schedule

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
W - 8/24	Course Introduction	N/A
F - 8/26	Early Greek philosophy; Socrates' defense speech	Plato, <i>Apology</i> (FD, pp. 21-44)
M - 8/29	Socratic definitions I: piety	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> (FD, pp. 1-20)
W - 8/31	Socratic definitions II: virtue	Plato, <i>Meno</i> (FD, pp. 58-69)
F - 9/2	Meno's Paradox	Plato, <i>Meno</i> (FD, pp. 69-79)
M - 9/5	Socrates on knowledge	Plato, <i>Meno</i> (FD, pp. 79-92)
W - 9/7	Socrates' last conversation: Socrates on death and dying	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> (FD, pp. 93-107)
F - 9/9	Socrates on the soul: the first three arguments	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> (FD, pp. 107-122)
M - 9/12	Socrates on the soul: the objections of Simmias and Cebes	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> (FD, pp. 122-144)
W - 9/14	Socrates's death	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> (FD, pp. 144-154)
F - 9/16	Picking on someone your own size: Socrates vs. Thrasymachus	Selections from Plato's <i>Republic</i> (PDF)
M - 9/19	The Ring of Gyges, and the Cave	Selections from Plato's <i>Republic</i> (PDF)
W - 9/21	The Cave and the Divided Line <b>*FIRST PAPER ASSIGNED*</b>	Selections from Plato's <i>Republic</i> (PDF)
F - 9/23	Aristotle's natural philosophy	Selections from Aristotle's <i>Physics &amp; Metaphysics</i> (PDF)
M - 9/26	The four causes; actuality and fulfillment	Selections from Aristotle's <i>Physics &amp; Metaphysics</i> (PDF)
W - 9/28	Aristotle's ethics I: human happiness as <i>eudaimonia</i>	NE, pp. 3-22
F - 9/30	Aristotle's ethics II: what is virtue?	NE, pp. 23-37
M - 10/3	Aristotle's ethics III: the contemplative life	NE, pp. 192-198
W - 10/5	Transition to Christian philosophy; Aquinas' arguments for the existence of God	Aquinas handout (PDF)
F - 10/7	Aquinas' arguments, cont'd	Aquinas handout (PDF)

M - 10/10	Anselm's ontological argument for the existence of God	Anselm handout (PDF)
W - 10/12	The Scientific Revolution: Bacon's new method	Selections from Bacon's <i>Novum Organon</i> (PDF)
F - 10/14	<b>*MIDTERM EXAM*</b>	N/A
10/15-10/23	<b>*NO CLASS - FALL BREAK*</b>	
M - 10/24	The Scientific Revolution, cont'd: Descartes' innovations	DM, pp. 1-13
W - 10/26	Introducing Descartes' project: Doubting Everything (the first Meditation)	DM, pp. 47-53, 59-63
F - 10/28	The second Meditation: I think, therefore I am	DM, pp. 63-69
M - 10/31	The third Meditation: Descartes' argument for the existence of God	DM, pp. 69-81
W - 11/2	The fourth Meditation: Descartes' theory of error	DM, pp. 81-87
F - 11/4	The sixth Meditation: Descartes' mind-body dualism, and the critique of Princess Elisabeth	DM, pp. 92-103; selections from Descartes/Elisabeth correspondence (PDF)
M - 11/7	Descartes wrap-up	No new readings
W - 11/9	Hume's empirical science of the mind: Ideas and Impressions	Selections from Hume's <i>Enquiry</i> (PDF)
F - 11/11	Hume's critique of causality	Selections from Hume's <i>Enquiry</i> (PDF)
M - 11/14	Hume and the problem of induction	Selections from Hume's <i>Enquiry</i> (PDF)
W - 11/16	Hume's Religion Dialogues: Cleanthes' teleological argument	HD, pp. 1-22
F - 11/18	Philo's first attack	HD, pp. 23-38
M - 11/21	Demea's argument; the problem of evil <b>*SECOND PAPER ASSIGNED*</b>	HD, pp. 54-66
11/23 & 11/25	<b>*NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING BREAK*</b>	
M - 11/28	Philo and Cleanthes' final battle, and reconciliation	HD, pp. 67-89
W - 11/30	Hume wrap-up	No new readings
F - 12/2	Sibling Rivalry: Dostoevsky on the Problem of Evil	Selections from Dostoevsky's <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> (PDF)
M - 12/5	Nietzsche's madman: "God is dead, and we have killed him"	Selections from Nietzsche's <i>The Gay Science</i> (PDF)
W - 12/7	Nietzsche's Overman	Selections from Nietzsche's <i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i> (PDF)
F - 12/9	Catch-up day	No new readings
T - 12/15	<b>*FINAL EXAM* (8:00am-10:00am)</b>	N/A