DESCRIPTION: This course is intended to introduce you to some of the major topics and figures in philosophy. We will examine the ideas of several key western philosophers, including Plato, Aristotle, Anselm, Descartes, Berkeley, and Hume. We will also investigate some positions in ethics and the philosophy of religion as well as the problem of free will.

COURSE GOALS:
  i. Develop familiarity with the basic concepts and figures in western philosophy.
  ii. Develop awareness of the influence and role of philosophy in western intellectual development, particularly in its relation to religion and science.
  iii. Improve your argumentation and argumentative essay writing skills.
  iv. Improve your critical reasoning and reading skills.

Course Policies and Procedures:
Attendance: Attendance is taken, and attendance in lectures is expected. Since testable material is regularly introduced in lectures, it is not possible to miss class frequently and still do well in the course.

Late Papers: Assignments must be submitted at the beginning of the class period in which they are due for full credit. Late papers must be turned in by the start of the next class meeting; after that they will not be accepted. All accepted late papers are penalized a flat 10%.

Make-up Work: I am willing to re-schedule assignments for individuals who have a legitimate reason for doing so. If you know you are going to miss an exam date, you must notify me at least two days in advance in order to receive a make-up. Unless you have made a prior arrangement with me, missed exams may be made up only in case of a documented emergency.

Disabilities Policy: If you have a specific disability that qualifies you for academic accommodations, please notify me and provide certification from Disability Services (Office of Special Students Services). The Office of Special Students Services is located in the Student Center, Room 270, Phone 460-7212.

Academic Dishonesty Policy: Academic dishonesty includes cheating on tests and homework as well as plagiarism. If you engage in academic dishonesty, I will notify you that you will receive an ‘F’ in the course. Upon being notified, you have five days to submit a written request to the department chairperson for a hearing on the matter, if you wish to have one. If no hearing request is made, or if the decision from the hearing goes against you, you will receive a course grade of ‘F’. Please see the Student Academic Conduct Policy of the University for details.

Procedures for Assessment of Student Performance: Given that you adhere to the course policies, your grade will be determined on the basis of graded assignments as specified below:

Evaluation:
  Two Mid-semester exams (objective and short-essay) 19% each
  Best 10 of 12 typed Weekly Reading Summaries: 3% each
Final exam (comprehensive: objective and short-essay): 22%
Class attendance and participation: 10%

Weekly Reading Summaries
The Weekly Reading summaries are due at the start of class on the dates listed on the syllabus (as “!”). Do a reading summary only for the article with a “!” after it. You must do at least 8 of the 10 summaries; I will drop the lower grades if you do more than 10. The summaries must be typewritten. They will consist of:
   I. A summary of the article that includes:
      1. A statement of the author’s thesis, that is, what he or she is arguing for or against.
      2. A definition of any special terms that are necessary for understanding the paper.
      3. A sketch of the course of the argument. By “sketch” I mean something similar to an outline highlighting the main issues and objections, although please use normal paragraph style writing, not outline formatting. Be concise here – details are not normally necessary, but use complete sentences throughout your summary.

   II. A question that you have about the article. This can either be a clarification question (e.g., “I don’t understand what P means by saying X”) or a philosophical question (e.g., “Given that P says X, how is he going to avoid the problem of Y?”).

Length: 1-2 pages, single-spaced, or 2-4 pages double-spaced. These must be typed.

Class Attendance. Your score is determined as follows:
   2 or fewer unexcused absences: 10/10
   3 unexcused absences: 8/10
   4 unexcused absences: 6/10
   5-6 unexcused absences: 4/10
   More than 6 unexcused absences: 0%
Regular classroom participation can increase your attendance score, but not above 10.
The number of unexcused absences is determined at the end of the semester by counting the number of times your name is missing from the sign-in sheet that I pass through the class most days.


*There will also be a small number of required readings that I’ll hand out in class.

Syllabus: This syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in advance in class.
= Weekly Reading Summary. The summary is due on the indicated date for the preceding reading. For example, “Aristotle, from The Nichomachean Ethics, 655-74. ( Sept. 5)” means that a reading summary is due for Aristotle’s Nichomachean Ethics selection at the start of class on Sept. 5.

Week of: Topics, Assignments, and Readings


1/30 Aristotle, from The Nichomachean Ethics, 396-406. ( Jan. 31).

Feinberg, “Psychological Egoism”, p. 427-34.

2/13 Anselm, “The Ontological Argument” (Handout)

2/20 Kant, “The Impossibility of an Ontological Proof of the Existence of God” (cont.)


3/6 James, “The Will to Believe”, p. 582-92. ( Oct. 26)
Review for Exam #1

Exam #1 Friday 3/11

3/13 Spring Break (No Class)

3/20 Descartes, from Meditations on First Philosophy, p. 46-64. ( Nov. 2, Meditations 1 and 2 only)

3/27 Descartes, Meditations, cont. ( Nov. 7, Meditation 3 only)

4/3 Berkeley, from Principles of Human Knowledge. Handout ( Nov. 14)

Drop Deadline: April 8th
Comment Key. I use a few abbreviations in grading your papers. Here’s what they mean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awk.</td>
<td>Phrasing or construction is awkward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cit.</td>
<td>Give a citation indicating where you’re getting a quotation or other information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis?</td>
<td>The thesis of your paper is unclear or missing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unc.</td>
<td>What you are saying is unclear or confusing in some way. I can’t understand it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vag.</td>
<td>What you’re saying is vague; I can understand it but it’s too general or abstract.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exp.</td>
<td>Explain further what you are saying. Usually this indicates a need for either a definition of some expression, an illustration of some point, or a justification for a claim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.g.?</td>
<td>Exempli gratia means for example. Give an example.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dev.</td>
<td>Develop some point or claim. This differs from Exp. in that what you’ve said here is justified but needs to be explored. Dev. is often applied to good points that are passed-over too quickly. Slow down and develop the consequences of what you’ve said.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.e.? or Pt?</td>
<td>Id est means that is. I’m having trouble seeing the point of what you’re saying. Often indicates that the marked passage isn’t really relevant to the paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con.?</td>
<td>I don’t see the connection between the indicated remarks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-s.</td>
<td>Non sequitur means does not follow. What you’ve said doesn’t follow from the argument or reasons you’ve given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inc. s</td>
<td>Incomplete sentence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/c</td>
<td>Word choice is wrong or questionable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¶</td>
<td>Begin a new paragraph here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Indicates a general puzzlement on the reader’s part.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Indicates a good point or argument.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>