

PHIL 101: Introduction to Philosophy

UNC Chapel Hill
Summer Session I 2017
MTWRF 1:15-2:45 PM
Greenlaw Hall 305

Instructor:

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Office Hours: M 3-4 PM, R 12-1 PM

Course Description

This course is an introduction to philosophical thought and methodology through an examination of some of the central questions in philosophy. We will touch on many, but not all, of the various areas of philosophy, including ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, social and political philosophy, the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of science. Some of the questions we will consider include: what are our moral obligations and where do they come from? What, if anything, can we come to know, and how do we come to know it? What is the nature of the mind? How should a just society be structured?

Class meetings will proceed through a mix of lecture and discussion, and participation will be a significant component of the course. Students will complete short writing assignments directed toward both understanding the various issues discussed in the course and becoming proficient in clear, concise philosophical argumentation.

Course Requirements

Five short papers (600-800 words each): 50%

In-class final exam: 25%

Participation: 20%

In-class written reflections: 5%

1. Five short papers

Each course at UNC must include at least 10 pages of written work. The written work in this course will take the form of a short paper assignment each week. These five papers (600-800 words each) are to be submitted to the instructor via email, by **8 PM** on the following dates:

Paper 1: Friday, May 26th
Paper 2: Friday, June 2nd
Paper 3: Thursday, June 8th
Paper 4: Tuesday, June 14th
Paper 5: Monday, June 19th

Prompts and further instructions for each paper will be handed out in class at least two class periods prior to the due date, as specified on the course schedule. Each is worth 10% of the course grade.

Late papers: Each student will be given one “free late day,” to be used once in the course, whenever he or she requests it. Otherwise, unless special permission is obtained from the instructor **at least 24 hours before the due date**, late papers will not be accepted without a penalty. Permission will only be given in the event of unforeseen circumstances that prevent the student from completing the paper on time. In the event of such circumstances, the student is responsible for providing suitable documentation to the instructor. When a paper is turned in late without prior permission from the instructor, $\frac{1}{3}$ of a letter grade will be deducted from that paper’s grade for each calendar day that the paper is late.

Plagiarism: The UNC Instrument of Student Governance defines plagiarism as “deliberate or reckless representation of another’s words, thoughts, or ideas as one’s own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise.” All students are expected to adhere to the UNC Honor Code, and plagiarism will be punished as severely as the university allows.

In general, using anyone else’s words in papers will be discouraged in this course. If quoting from assigned readings is necessary in a paper, all quotations must appear in quotation marks, and an internal citation (such as a footnote or endnote) indicating their source must be provided in a standard format. It is also a form of plagiarism to closely paraphrase text from an external source, changing a few of the words but imitating the sentence/paragraph structure of the external source. Text that appears outside of quotation marks in a paper must be the student’s own words, and those words must be presented within the student’s own organizational and sentential structure.

In addition, plagiarism can be committed non-deliberately; if one is reckless in one’s use of other people’s words or ideas, then one has committed plagiarism even if one did not intend to do so. In borderline cases, students should err on the side of consulting the instructor, instead of hoping that they are not committing plagiarism. Students should also contact the instructor with any other questions or concerns about plagiarism-related issues.

2. Final exam

The final exam (worth 30% of the course grade) will be administered on **Thursday, June 22nd, from 11:30 AM until 2:30 PM**. The final exam will be cumulative, covering material from throughout the course. Detailed information about the format of the final exam will be provided at least one week before the date of the exam.

3. Participation

Because philosophical discussion is essential to understanding course material, participation will be a significant component of the course (20% of the course grade). Students are expected to carefully read the material assigned for each class in advance and arrive prepared to participate in discussions of that material. Although attendance is required, even perfect attendance is not sufficient for a grade of A in participation. Students must not only attend class but regularly make valuable contributions to class discussions in order to earn an A in participation. Other forms of participation, such as attending office hours, will also be taken into consideration.

Students who feel that regular participation in group discussions will not be possible for them should contact the instructor with their concerns. Alternative methods of participation will be accommodated for such students to the best of the instructor's ability.

4. In-class reflections

At the start of each class, students will be asked to complete brief written responses to the assigned reading(s) for that class. These written responses will be worth 5% of the course grade. Each student's three lowest grades on these assignments will be dropped, including grades of "0." Students who miss in-class written responses due to lateness or absence will not be permitted to make them up. The purpose of the course policy of dropping the three lowest grades on the responses is to provide leeway for a reasonable number of absences while also incentivizing attendance.

Other Course Policies

1. Non-discrimination policy

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is committed to equality of educational opportunity. The University does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of race, color, gender, age, national origin, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

2. Accommodations

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities. All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. If you have need of these services, please visit <http://accessibility.unc.edu>, call 919-962-8300 or email accessibility@unc.edu. Please contact ARS as early in the term as possible.

Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to revision. Readings may be added, removed and/or adjusted at the instructor's discretion. Any such changes will be announced both in class and via e-mail. Otherwise, students should come to class each day having read the reading assigned for that day.

There is no assigned textbook. All course readings will be posted on Sakai.

Date	Agenda	Assignments
Unit I: Ethics and Moral Philosophy		
Wednesday, 5/17	Thomson, "The Trolley Problem" Pryor, "Guidelines on Reading Philosophy" Pryor, "What is an Argument?"	
Thursday, 5/18	Mill, "Utilitarianism" (selections)	
Friday, 5/19	Williams, "Critique of Utilitarianism" (selections)	
Monday, 5/22	Kant, "Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals" (selections) O'Neill, "A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics"	Paper 1 assigned
Tuesday, 5/23	T. Nagel, "Moral Luck"	
Wednesday, 5/24	Wolf, "Moral Saints"	
Unit II: Knowledge, Justification, and Confirmation		
Thursday, 5/25	Descartes, "Meditations on First Philosophy" (selections) Al-Ghazali, "Deliverance from Error" (selections)	
Friday, 5/26	Moore, "Proof of an External World"	Paper 1 due
Monday, 5/29	Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" J. Nagel, "The Analysis of Knowledge"	Paper 2 assigned
Tuesday, 5/30	Hume, "A Treatise of Human Nature" (selections) Salmon, "The Problem of Induction"	
Wednesday, 5/31	Sainsbury, "The Paradox of the Ravens"	
Unit III: Free Will, Experience, and Reality		
Thursday, 6/1	van Inwagen, "The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism"	
Friday, 6/2	Frankfurt, "Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility"	Paper 2 due, Paper 3 assigned
Monday, 6/5	Armstrong, "The Nature of Mind"	
Tuesday, 6/6	T. Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?"	

Wednesday, 6/7	Parfit, "Why Anything? Why This?"	
Thursday, 6/8	Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence"	Paper 3 due, Paper 4 assigned
Unit IV: Social and Political Philosophy		
Friday, 6/9	Mills, "But What Are You, Really?"	
Monday, 6/12	Dembroff, "Real Talk on the Metaphysics of Gender"	
Tuesday, 6/13	Barnes, "Disability, Minority, and Difference"	
Wednesday, 6/14	Rawls, "A Theory of Justice" (selections)	Paper 4 due, Paper 5 assigned
Thursday, 6/15	Frye, "Oppression"	
Friday, 6/16	Shelby, "Justice, Deviance, and the Dark Ghetto"	
Monday, 6/19	Exam Review Day [no reading]	Paper 5 due
Thursday, 6/22	Final Exam (11:30 AM – 2:30 PM)	