

PHILOSOPHY 1100: INTRO TO PHILOSOPHY

SPRING 2023

Instructor

Matthew Willis

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Meeting Location & Time

Mendenhall Lab 125

MWF 9:10AM - 10:05AM

Instructional Mode: In-person lecture

Office Hours: 3:00PM - 4:00PM Wednesdays, University Hall 337B

Course Description

As an introduction to philosophy, this course will explore questions like: What is the nature of knowledge (and can we ever defeat the skeptic)? Can we prove whether or not God exists? What can science tell us about the world? Do we have free will? How ought we think about morality? And, what makes us, as individuals, who we are? In the process of examining these questions, we will survey some of the major contributions to philosophy from a diverse body of sources, both historical and contemporary. In confronting these issues, students will also learn to recognize and reconstruct philosophical arguments – allowing them to employ some of the concepts and techniques introduced here into their own philosophical argumentation and writing.

Course Texts

All required texts for this course will be provided through Carmen.

General Education Expected Learning Outcomes

GE Legacy: Cultures and Ideas

Goal: Students evaluate significant cultural phenomena and ideas in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; and interpretation and evaluation.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students analyze and interpret major forms of human thought, culture, and expression.
2. Students evaluate how ideas influence the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms which guide human behavior.

GE New: Historical and Cultural Studies Foundation

Cultural Studies

Goal: Successful students will evaluate significant cultural phenomena and ideas to develop capacities for aesthetic and cultural response, judgment, interpretation and evaluation.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

Successful students are able to:

- 1.1B Analyze and interpret selected major forms of human thought, culture, ideas or expression.
- 1.2B Describe and analyze selected cultural phenomena and ideas across time using a diverse range of primary and secondary sources and an explicit focus on different theories and methodologies.
- 1.3B Use appropriate sources and methods to construct an integrated and comparative perspective of cultural periods, events or ideas that influence human perceptions, beliefs and behaviors.
- 1.4B Evaluate social and ethical implications in cultural studies.

Course Requirements and Grading

Weekly in-class writing (20%) 70 points total: Once each week, students will be asked to respond (in writing) to a question posed in class.

Midterm Exam (40%) 140 points: The midterm exam will consist of several short essay questions covering material up to that date and several argument assessment exercises. Students will submit their assignments through Carmen.

Final Exam (40%) 140 points: The final exam will consist of several short essay questions covering material assigned after the posting of the midterm exam and several argument assessment exercises. Students will submit their assignments through Carmen.

Each in-class writing assignment will be collected at the end of that class day. Each exam will allow students one week to complete the assignment.

Grading Scale

- 93–100: A
- 90–92.9: A-
- 87–89.9: B+
- 83–86.9: B
- 80–82.9: B-
- 77–79.9: C+
- 73–76.9: C
- 70–72.9: C-
- 67–69.9: D+
- 60–66.9: D
- Below 60: E

Policies and Other Information

Attendance

You are expected to attend class. Our weekly in-class writing assignments will be used in lieu of taking attendance, thus there is no percentage of your grade tied to attendance simpliciter. Nevertheless, it is crucial to your success that you attend class. If you are absent due to illness or other extenuating circumstances, please contact me and I will provide you with a recording of the missed class day.

Should in-person classes be canceled, I will notify you as to which alternative methods of teaching will be offered to ensure continuity of instruction for this class. Communication will be via Carmen.

Late Work

I cannot guarantee that I will be able to accept your late work. If you miss an assignment, it is best practice to contact me as soon as possible to increase your chances that we can come to some arrangement. However, if you experience some personal difficulty or have some extenuating circumstance, I will make every reasonable effort to accommodate you.

Contact

I highly encourage you to utilize my email if you have any questions whatsoever related to the course. I will respond to you in a timely manner, though you should not expect immediate responses during the weekend or late at night. *When emailing me, it would be immensely helpful if you could include the course name in your subject or message body.*

All assignments, readings, course adjustments, etc. will be announced through Carmen. I will also provide you with ample feedback on your assignments for this course through Carmen.

Course Technology

For help with your password, university email, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the IT Service Desk. The IT Service Desk offers 24-hour support, seven days a week, via email and phone. Phone: 614-688-HELP (4357) Email: itservicedesk@osu.edu Self-Service and Chat support: <http://ocio.osu.edu/selfservice>

Statement about Disability Services

The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university's request process, managed by Student Life Disability Services.

If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Statement on Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed;

illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

Mental Health Statement

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614- 292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614- 292-5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800- 273-TALK or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu.

Diversity Statement

The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. We are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

Religious Accommodations

Our inclusive environment allows for religious expression. Students requesting accommodations based on faith, religious or a spiritual belief system in regard to examinations, other academic requirements or absences, are required to provide the instructor with written notice of specific dates for which the student requests alternative accommodations at the earliest possible date. For more information about religious accommodations at Ohio State, visit odi.osu.edu/religious-accommodations.

Course Schedule

Week & Dates	Notes & Holidays	Topics	Guiding Questions
Week 1		Introduction, Epistemology (Clifford and James)	What is philosophy? How should we behave as thinkers?
Week 2	No class 1/16 (MLK day)	Epistemology, continued (Gettier)	What is knowledge?
Week 3		Epistemology, conclusion (Descartes and Moore)	What can we know?
Week 4		Philosophy of Religion (Aquinas and Pascal)	Can we prove whether God exists?
Week 5		Ethics	What is morality? How should we act?
Week 6	Midterm review 2/17	Applied Ethics (Thomson, Marquis, and Rachels)	Morality in practice: Abortion and Euthanasia
<i>Midterm Exam posted on February 17th.</i>			
Week 7	No class 2/24	Metaphysics	What is there?
<i>Midterm Exam due on February 24th by 11:59PM.</i>			
Week 8		Philosophy of Mind	What is the mind?
Week 9		Philosophy of Science	Does science lead us to truth?
Week 10	No class (Spring Break)		
Week 11	No class 3/24	Personal Identity (Parfit)	What is the basis of personal identity?
Week 12		Philosophy of Race (Mills and Spencer)	What is the nature of race?

Week 13	Philosophy of Gender (Barnes)	What is the nature of gender?
Week 14	Free Will & Meaning	Do we have free will? Does life have meaning?
Week 15	The Value of Philosophy (Russell)	Is philosophy worth doing?
<i>Final Exam posted on April 21st.</i>		
Week 16	Final Review 4/24	
<i>Final Exam due on April 28th by 11:59PM.</i>		