

Introduction to Philosophy: PHIL 103

Fall 2019

Instructor: Kobi Finestone

Email: kobi.finstone@duke.edu

Course Description

This is an introductory course in which you will develop your analytic and philosophical abilities in order to be better able to understand and evaluate arguments both inside and outside of academic settings. Consequently, there are no prerequisites for this course. Instead, you will be exposed to a variety of rigorous philosophical topics and original texts. This will help you develop the aforementioned analytical abilities and prepare for future studies both within philosophy and throughout your university studies.

Meeting Time

TTH 10:05 AM – 11:20 AM

Location: West Duke 204

Office Hours

By Appointment – Email me to arrange office hours.

Assessment

The semester grade is determined by the following breakdown:

- Short Essay 1: **15%**
- Short Essay 2: **15%**
- Presentation: **10%**
- Participation: **10%**
- Term Paper: **50%**

The two short essays will require you to restate a philosophical argument and provide an analytical criticism or defense. Prompts for these assignments will be posted on Sakai. Short Essay 1 will be due on **9/17** and Short Essay 2 will be due on **10/17**. The class will be notified by email when prompts have been uploaded to Sakai.

Each student will present one topic during the course of the semester. Presentations are intended to succinctly relay the information contained in the reading to the class and prepare the class for discussion by including initial questions. The presentation schedule will be finalized during the

third class. Failure to present will result in a zero for the presentation grade unless prior arrangements have been made.

Participation is mandatory for this course as this is a seminar course. There are a variety of ways in which students can participate which includes both speaking and active listening. Students are expected to complete readings *before* class and to be prepared to engage in class discussions. If you feel unable to actively participate in class discussions, please reach out to me and if there is a legitimate reason, we can find alternative means for participation.

The term paper is a substantive ten-page philosophical paper in which you will articulate and defend a thesis. The term paper is a **multi-stage** assignment: (I) Office Hour Meeting, (II) Prompt Proposal, and (III) Term Paper. You will be required to meet with me during office hours to discuss potential prompt ideas for the term paper and then to write up and original prompt of your creation. This is the heart of the assignment. You will be responsible for creating your own prompt for the term paper. More details on this process will be distributed later in the semester.

Attendance Policy

There is no attendance policy, although failure to attend regularly will negatively impact your participation grade. If you are unable to attend, I do recommend reaching out to me although this is not mandatory.

Academic Integrity

The Duke Honor Code applies for this course, as it does for all other courses.

Content Warning

Although much of this course will be dealing with abstract subjects, some of the readings may involve potentially sensitive topics. Do not hesitate to contact me with any concerns you may have with engaging with such topics in an academic setting.

Readings

All readings are provided for free on Sakai as downloadable pdfs. You are responsible for completing the reading *before* class. See the following schedule.

Schedule and Topics

Date	Topic	Reading
8/27/19	Introduction	None
8/29/19	Philosophy of Science	(1) Popper, K. (1957) "Science: Conjectures and Refutations" (2) Popper, K. (1959) "The Problem of Induction"
9/3/19	Philosophy of Science	Turnbull, M (2017) "Underdetermination in Science: What it is and why we should care"
9/5/19	Philosophy of Science	Turnbull, M (2017) "Underdetermination in Science: What it is and why we should care"
9/17/19	Epistemology	Gettier, E. (1963) "Is Justified Belief Knowledge?"
9/19/19	Epistemology	Gettier, E. (1963) "Is Justified Belief Knowledge?"
9/24/19	Epistemology	Chisholm, R. (1966) "Theory of Knowledge": <i>Chapter 4</i>
9/26/19	Epistemology	Chisholm, R. (1966) "Theory of Knowledge": <i>Chapter 4</i>
10/1/19	Epistemology	Christensen, D. (2009) "Disagreement as Evidence: The Epistemology of Controversy"
10/3/19	Epistemology	Christensen, D. (2009) "Disagreement as Evidence: The Epistemology of Controversy"
10/10/19	Philosophy of Mind	Swinburne, R (1996) "A Defense of Substance Dualism"
10/15/19	Philosophy of Mind	Papineau, D. (2002) "Thinking About Consciousness"
10/17/19	Free Will	Ayer, A. (1954) "Freedom and Necessity"
10/22/19	Free Will	Strawson, G. (1998) "Luck Swallows Everything"
10/24/19	Personal Identity	Parfit, D. (1971) "Personal Identity"
10/29/19	Personal Identity	Parfit, D. (1971) "Personal Identity"
10/31/19	Personal Identity	Parfit, D. (1971) "Personal Identity"
11/5/19	Well-Being	Bramble, B. (2016) "The Experience Machine"
11/7/19	Well-Being	Bramble, B. (2016) "A New Defense of Hedonism About Well-Being"
11/12/19	Normative	Thomson, J. (1976) "Killing, Letting Die, and the Trolley Problem"
11/14/19	Normative	Thomson, J. (1976) "Killing, Letting Die, and the Trolley Problem"
11/19/19	Political	Anderson, A. (2006) "The Epistemology of Democracy"
11/21/19	Political	Anderson, A. (2006) "The Epistemology of Democracy"
11/26/19	Meta-Ethics	Wong, D. (2006) "Pluralism and Ambivalence"
12/3/19	Meta-Ethics	Wong, D. (2006) "Pluralism and Ambivalence"
12/5/19	Conclusion	None