

Major Issues in Philosophy

M,W 11:10-12:25 RM: 9135

Professor Corns

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Office hours by appointment

Required Text:

Philosophical Problems: An Annotated Anthology 2nd Ed. Bonjour, Baker.

ISBN: 978-0-205-53937-6

Course Description:

This introductory course will focus on ethics, philosophy of religion, philosophy of mind, personal identity, freedom, and social justice. For the most part, we will concentrate on some readings taken from a broad philosophical tradition known as analytic philosophy. The goal of this tradition is to analyze the arguments and concepts that are regularly employed in scientific and academic inquiries, as well as in ordinary life. Given its emphasis on clarity, argumentation, evidence, and the pursuit of truth, analytic philosophy can appear to be quite different from other (more popular) philosophical traditions, which are closer in spirit to art, literature, poetry, and history. In this course we will be attempting to analyze and clarify certain concepts (e.g. free will, objectivity, personal identity, etc). The broader aim is to build coherent foundations for the structure of beliefs that comprise our world-view. Students will be encouraged to explore their beliefs and give reasons for them.

Schedule*:

8/30: Introduction

Ethics:

9/1: Plato, Euthyphro (17-26)

9/6: Labor Day, College Closed

9/8: Aristotle, From *The Nichomachean Ethics* (396-406)

9/13: John Stuart Mill, From *Utilitarianism* (329-336)

9/15: Kant, From *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (353-363)

9/20: Rachels, *The Challenge Of Cultural Relativism* (420-427)

Ethics paper due 9/25.

Philosophy of Religion

9/22: Ontological, Teleological, and Cosmological Arguments.

Read at least one of: Anselm, *The Ontological Argument* (554-556); Paley, *The Argument from Design* (527-534); Clark, *The Cosmological Argument* (521-524)

9/27: Classes Cancelled

9/29: Kaufmann, *Pascal's Wager*, from *Critique of Religion and Philosophy* (581-582)

Optional: Audio Recording: Sinners in the Hands of an Angry G*d (linked)**

10/4: James, *The Will to Believe* (582-592)

10/6: Mackie, *Evil and Omnipotence* (570-576)

Philosophy of Religion paper due 10/11.

10/11: Columbus Day; College Closed

Philosophy of Mind

10/13: Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (46-52; Meditations 1 and 2)

10/18: Smart, *Sensations and Brain Processes* (162-168)

10/20: Fodor, *Mind-Body Problem* (168-178)

10/25: Searle, *Is the Brain's Mind a Computer Program* (180-187)

10/27: Nagel, *What Is It Like to Be a Bat* (192-198) Jackson, *What Mary Didn't Know* (198-201)

Philosophy of Mind paper due 11/1.

Personal Identity

11/1: Locke, *Personal Identity* (220-226)

11/3: Class Canceled; No classes ending at or before 4PM.

11/8: Williams, *The Self and the Future* (228-237)

11/10: Parfit, *Personal Identity* (237-248)

Personal Identity paper due 11/15.

Final Paper Topics should be approved by 11/15.

Free Will

11/15: Blatchford *A Defense of Hard Determinism*, from *Not Guilty: A Defense of the Bottom Dog* (253-258)

11/17: Campbell, *In Defence of Free Will* (283-290)

11/22: Hume, *Of Liberty and Necessity*, from *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (258-266)

11/24: Nagel, "Moral Luck"***

Free Will paper due 11/29.

Social Justice

11/29: Hobbes, *The Social Contract*, from *Leviathon* (449-459)

12/1: Nozick, *The Entitlement Theory of Justice*, from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (475-483)

12/6: Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, from *A Theory of Justice* (483-495)

12/8: Singer, *Famine, Affluence, and Morality* (348-353)

Social Justice paper due 12/13.

12/13: Catch-Up/TBD

Final Paper due 12/18.

****Please note that the schedule is tentative and highly subject to change.***

***** Available on Blackboard under Course Documents.***

Course Requirements:

Short papers:

Students will be required to write 5 short papers of 500-1000 words on 5 out of the 6 sections of the course (due dates are indicated in the schedule). The first half (about 1-2 pages) of each paper should be devoted to a summary of **one** argument or idea from that section. The second half of the paper should be devoted to your reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with the summarized argument or idea. *Note that both parts of the paper are equally important.* I want to see that you have both understood and developed your own thoughts about the material. Detailed instructions are available on Blackboard under Course Information.

Final Paper:

Students will be required to write a final paper of 1500 words on any topic covered in the course and subject to my approval. *Topics should be approved by November 15.* Your final paper should show an understanding of reading and lectures on that topic and have a thesis that takes a clear position that you support with argument. Detailed instructions are available on Blackboard under Course Information.

Weekly Emails:

Weekly emails of approximately 250 words are due every Friday morning. Emails should connect the material covered that week with situations and events in the “real world,” or if the student thinks this cannot be done, their reasons for so thinking should be given. Weekly emails may be informal, and full points will be given for completion.

Participation:

Students are required to participate and show engagement with the material. Participation points will be given for class participation and emails (in addition to assigned weekly emails) raising questions, applying, or disputing positions on topics discussed in class and in the reading.

Grading:

Grading for the course is designed on a point system, with 1000 points possible. The breakdown is as follows:

Short papers: 55% (110 points each)
Final Paper: 20% (200 points)
Weekly Emails: 15% (10 points each)
Participation: 10% (100 points)

PHI 4900: Philosophy Today

M/W 6-7:15 Room: 9116

Professor Corns

Email: jencorns@gmail.com Office Hours: TBD and by appointment.

Course Description:

In this course we will focus on contemporary philosophical texts made popular in the last 5 years which encapsulate modern perspectives on traditional philosophical issues. As such, we will concentrate on 5 texts which, respectively, explore ethics, global justice, political philosophy, aesthetics, human nature, truth, and religion from distinctively contemporary perspectives. These main texts will be supplemented with classical and more traditional writings to provide the background and theoretical concepts required for rigorous philosophical treatment of the contemporary works. The aim of this course is to develop students' abilities to understand and rigorously approach mainstream philosophical writings.

Required Texts:

On Bullshit. Frankfurt. 2004. Princeton University Press.

The Virtue of Selfishness. Rand. 1964. Signet.

The God Delusion. Dawkins. 2006. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

One World. Singer. 2005. Yale University Press.

Lust. Blackburn. 2004. Oxford University Press.

Requirements:

Short papers: 5 short papers throughout the term, 2 pages each, are due by May 1st.

Oral presentation: Students are required to give one 15-20 minute presentation on their final paper. A presentation schedule will be developed later in the term.

Final paper: A final paper of 12-15 pages will be due by May 20th. Topics need to be approved by me by May 1.

Plagiarism:

Turning in work not your own or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. *If I catch you, I will fail you*. If you are at all unsure what constitutes plagiarism, ask.

Grading:

Short papers: 100 points each (10% each) / 500 points total (50%)

Oral presentation: 200 points (20%)

Final papers: 300 points (30%)

PHI 1600: Logic and Moral Reasoning

M/W 7:35-8:50 Room: 11160

Professor Corns

Email: jencorns@gmail.com Office Hours: TBD and by appointment.

Course Description:

The course offers an introduction to sentential logic with an emphasis on its use and application in moral reasoning. Topics will include formal symbolization or natural language, syntax and semantics of sentential logic, logical derivations and the metatheory of sentential logic.

Readings:

Readings are to be read before you come to class on the day for which the reading has been assigned. As you read, keep track of any relevant questions or comments to be raised in class. I also recommend that you keep a list of definitions throughout the term for your own reference.

Homework:

Homework assignments should be completed and turned in *at the beginning of class* on the due dates indicated. You are welcome and encouraged to work together. *Late homework will not be accepted.*

Exams:

4 exams and a final will be given throughout the course on the dates indicated. *Exams cannot be made up with the exception of a legitimate emergency and/or doctor's note.* It is your responsibility to adjust your schedule to avoid conflicts with exam dates.

Plagiarism:

Turning in work not your own, cheating or copying on exams, or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. *If I catch you, I will fail you.* If you are at all unsure what constitutes cheating, ask.

Grading:

Homework: 40%

Exams: 40% (10% each)

Final: 20%

Schedule:

This schedule is tentative and subject to change. All changes will be both emailed to you and posted on blackboard. Note that I am responsible for advising you of any changes, and you are responsible for checking blackboard and your email regularly.

1/26: Introduction to the Course

1/28: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3
2/2: 1.4, 1.5
Due: Exercises 1.3; 1: a,b,f,h,j,l,n 2: b,d,f
2/4: 1.6, 1.7
Due: Exercises 1.4; 1: b,c,d,f,h,j 2: b,d,f
2/9: Chapter 1 Review
Due: Exercises 1.6; 1: b,d 2: b,h,j 3: a,b,c 4: d,e,f 5: b,f 6: a,b,d,h 1.7; 1: f,g 2: d,f
2/11: **Chapter 1 Exam**
2/16: President's day. Classes canceled.
2/18: 2.1
2/23: 2.2, 2.3
Due: Exercises 2.1; 1: b,c,d,f,j 2: b,d,f,h,j 4: b,d 5: a,c,e,g,h,l,p 6: g,i,j,l,n,o,p
2/25: 2.4
Due: Exercises 2.2; 2: a,b,f 3: b,d 4: c,g 5: f 2.3; 2: a,b
3/2: Chapter 2 Review
Due: Exercises 2.4; 1: a,b,g 2: b 3: a,b,g
3/4: **Chapter 2 Exam**
3/9: 3.1
3/11: 3.2, 3.3
Due: Exercises 3.1; 2: a,g,i,k,m 3: a,c,f,i
3/16: 3.4, 3.5
Due: Exercises 3.2; 2: a,c,e 3: a,e 4: a,c,e,f,i 3.3; 1: b,d 2: a,c,d 3: a,c,e,f
3/18: 3.6
Due: Exercises 3.4; 1: a,d 2: b,f 3: a,e,f 3.5; 1: b,e,i,j 3: a,c,e 4: a,e
3/23: Review Chapter 3
Due: Exercises 3.6; 1: b,c 2: b,d 3: a,b 4: b
3/25: **Chapter 3 Exam**
3/30: 5.1.1- 5.1.3
4/1: 5.1.3-5.1.5
Due: Exercises 5.1.1; 1: a,b,e,g,i 5.1.2; 1: a,b,e 5.1.3; 1: a,c,d
4/6: 5.2, 5.3
Due: Exercises 5.1.4; 1: a,b,d,e 5.1.5; 1: a,c,h 2: b,c
4/8, 4/13, 4/15: Spring Recess. Classes canceled.
4/20: 5.4A
Due: Exercises 5.3; 2: a,i,f,k 3: a,h,j 4: c,d 5: e 6: d 7: c 11: d,g 12: e
4/22: 5.4B
4/27: Chapter 5 Review
Due: Exercises 5.4; 1: b,d, f 4: d 5: e 6: a,c,h
4/29: **Chapter 5 Exam**
5/4: 6.1, 6.2
5/6: TBA Catch-Up
Due: Exercises 6.1; 1: b,c,d 6.2; 4,6
5/11: TBA Catch-up
5/13: Review for Final
Date of the final to be assigned.

PHI 1700: Ethical Theories

M, T, R 2:15-4:45

Room 4180

Professor Corns

Email: jencorns@gmail.com

Office Hours: By appointment.

Course Description:

This introductory course focuses on major ethical theories and the application of those theories to contemporary moral problems. We will critically evaluate and compare traditional theories about the nature of both right and wrong and good and evil, before turning to particular issues concerning which we are called upon to make moral evaluations. The emphasis will be on how, if at all, these theories can be used and applied when making moral decisions and evaluating one another's moral character. Students will be encouraged to critically consider their own ethical views and evaluations with an emphasis on *why* they make the evaluations they do.

Schedule:

July 12: Introduction

July 13: Divine Command Theory; *"Euthyphro," Sharpton/Hitchens Debate

July 15: Virtue Ethics; **Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle, Book 1 and 2, Wuornos and Manson Biographies

July 16: Weekly Email #1 Due

July 19: Utilitarianism; "Utilitarianism," Mill, Chapter 1-4, Kantian Ethics: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Chapter 1*, *Video Research Assignment Option 1*, due July 23.

July 20: Intuitionism; *"Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake," Prichard, Sentimentalism: *A Treatise of human Nature*, Hume, Book 3, Part 1, Section 1, last paragraph, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Hume, Section 1, Appendix 1

July 22: Cultural Relativism: The Challenge of Cultural Relativism," Rachels, Moral Skepticism/Nihilism: Group Discussion, *Video Research Assignment Option 2*, due July 26

July 23: Weekly Email #2 Due

July 26: **Presentations**

July 27: The Legitimacy of Government

Hobbes: Excerpts from *Leviathon*, Sandra Oh reads Emma Goldman, Goldman, "Anarchism: What it Really Stands For"

July 29: The War on Drugs

Drug legalization on Philosophy Talk:

<http://www.philosophytalk.org/pastShows/Druglegalization.htm>

July 30: Weekly Email #3 Due

August 2: Euthanasia

Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia." Foot, "Euthanasia".

August 3: Capital Punishment

Ernest van den Haag, "In Defense of the Death Penalty."* Hugo Adam Bedau, "Capital Punishment."*

August 5: Abortion

Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion." Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral"

August 6: Weekly Email #4 Due

August 9: Vegetarianism

Cohen, "Why Animals Have no Rights." Cavalieri, "The Animal Debate: A Reexamination."

August 10: Poverty

Singer, "Famine, Affluence and Morality," John Arthur, "Famine Relief and the Ideal Moral Code."*

August 12: Catch-Up, TBD

August 13: Final Paper Due

Please note that this schedule is tentative and subject to change.

* Reading to be made available in class. All other readings are available on Blackboard under Course Documents.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Reading: There will be assigned reading for every class session. I have selected the readings with an eye toward keeping them manageable. The first few reading assignments should give you a rough idea of the workload.

Attendance: Attendance will be taken every class session. *A record of 3 or more absences constitutes grounds for failure of the course.* Attendance constitutes 5% of your grade (50 points).

Weekly Emails: A weekly email of 150-200 words is due by midnight Friday summarizing your thoughts or reflections on the material. Students are encouraged in these emails to apply topics discussed to the "real world" and will receive full marks for completion. Weekly emails constitute 20% of your grade (200 points; 50 points each.)

Video Research Assignment: Students will be required to submit *one of two* video research assignments for the topics indicated in the schedule above. Video research assignments should be submitted by email and include a link to a video related to the topic found by the student and a short summary of the video. The video research assignment will constitute 10% (100 points) of your grade.

Presentations: Students will be required to give one ten-minute presentation and submit an accompanying paper of approximately 500 words. Each presentation should focus on an ethical theory of the student's choice. The presentation and paper should summarize the chosen theory and present the student's reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with some argument or idea contained therein. The presentation itself will constitute 10% of your grade, and the accompanying paper will constitute 15% of your grade, for a total of 25% (250 points).

Debates: Students will be required to participate in an in-class debate with a previously assigned topic and scheduled day. Debaters will be judged on their understanding of their assigned topic, their ability to communicate the points of their own side clearly and articulately, their ability to understand the other side, and on their critical engagement with the topic generally. Further details about the debate are provided separately and can be found on Blackboard under Course Information. Debate participation will constitute 25% (250 points) of your grade.

Final Paper: Students will be required to write a final paper of approximately 900 words on any topic from the semester. The final paper should include a summary of the argument or topic of the student's choice and present a rich discussion of the student's own position on the topic. Further details about the final papers are provided separately and can be found on Blackboard under Course Information. Final papers will constitute 15% (150 points) of your grade.