

PHIL 1000: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

Spring 2014

Instructor: Shane Gronholz

Shane.gronholz@colorado.edu

3:00-3:50, 4:00-4:50 Hellems 237

Office Hours: MWF 5:00-6:00, or by appointment, Hellems 15

No Textbook – Readings can be found on Desire2Learn

"The man who has no tincture of philosophy goes through life imprisoned in the prejudices derived from common sense, from the habitual beliefs of his age or his nation, and from convictions which have grown up in his mind without the co-operation or consent of his deliberate reason." – Bertrand Russell

Course Description

In this course, we will explore a variety of important topics in contemporary Western philosophy. The purpose of the class is to help you critically and thoughtfully engage with issues and concepts that are relevant to your life. Along the way we will come to better understand what philosophers do, how they do it, and why. That will entail using and refining your ability to effectively think, argue, read, and write. Philosophical answers are not merely opinion and are not easily found. In this class, we will be *doing philosophy*. This is hard and can even be scary because it involves questioning some of your deepest and most firmly held beliefs about some fundamental questions involving God, knowledge, personal identity, free will, and morality. You almost certainly have false beliefs about some of these issues (as do I). Be prepared to have your beliefs challenged and, when provided with good reason to do so, to revise some of your beliefs.

I'm excited about this course and you should be, too! It's going to be lively and fun and you will come out of it a better thinker, and hopefully a better person, too.

Course Format

The format for this course involves a combination of lecture and class discussion. You should be prepared to engage in discussion every day. That means you'll have to do the readings and come to class.

Online

We will be using Desire2Learn. This can be found at learn.colorado.edu. On D2L you will:

1. Find the readings for the course
2. Find the gradebook so you can see how well you are doing
3. Submit papers via the dropbox

Assessment

1. *Reading Notecards (10%)*. Over the course of the semester, you will turn in 10 reading notecards. These will be handwritten on standard, white 3x5 notecards. **I won't accept anything else**, so you should go get a pack right away if you don't already have some. Each notecard should have two items: (1) A critical comment about the reading. It can be an objection, an implication of the author's thesis, a connection to a previous reading, or any other comment that demonstrates critical engagement with the reading. (2) A question about the reading. It should be a substantive question that shows you have engaged with the reading. Notecards will be accepted only at the beginning of the class (you are not to write them during class). You may only turn in one notecard per week. This means you will have to plan carefully so as not to run out of weeks. They will be evaluated on a credit/no-credit basis. Each card is worth 1% of your grade. If you submit a card that does not meet the requirements or is otherwise lame or unacceptable, you will receive no credit for that card. If you receive a 0 on a card, you will be allowed to submit another card, provided you never turn in more than one card per week. Also, you may not turn in a notecard for a reading after the day on which the reading is assigned. Once we have begun discussing the reading in class, you may no longer submit a notecard for that reading. It should be obvious that it is in your interest to get an early start on the reading notecards. A safe approach would be to simply think of them as weekly notecards, though you can miss a few and/or you won't have to do them the last few weeks of class.
2. *Weekly Quizzes (50%)*. There will be a quiz every Friday. The quizzes will cover content from the readings and from the lecture. Anything from the readings or anything I've said in lecture is fair game for the quiz. Therefore, you should read everything assigned and come to class. There will be 15 quizzes but I will drop your two lowest quiz grades. That is a total of 13 quizzes that will count toward your grade, each of which is worth approximately 4% of your total grade. Except for very special cases, like a documented medical emergency, quizzes cannot be made up. If you miss a quiz, you should consider that one of your quizzes to be dropped. If you anticipate that there is a Friday or two that you will have to miss, you should plan accordingly. Please do not ask me if you can make up quizzes missed due to work, ski trips, or weddings.
3. *Papers (30%)*. There will be two short writing assignments, 3-4 pages, each worth 15% of your final grade. The point is to develop one argument about something related to the course. It is hard to come up with good arguments, so although these papers will be relatively short, you should plan on putting forth a considerable amount of thought and effort. I will discuss papers in detail in class. See the course schedule for due dates.
4. *Participation and classroom conduct (10%)*. Since class discussion is an essential element in this course, your participation in class discussions is required. From time to time, we will also do some in-class activities. Your level of engagement with these will help to determine your grade. Your grade will also depend on the degree to which you contribute to a good learning

environment. You will lose points for being disrespectful or hostile, arriving late, packing up early, and using technology in a distracting way.

Policies, tips, and other stuff:

Late work: Late papers will be lowered by 5 percentage points for every day they are late. For example, if you would have received an 85% and your paper is one day late, your grade will be an 80%. Computer crash or theft is not a legitimate excuse. You should be using Dropbox or something like it. It's free. Talk to me if you have questions about setting up an account. If something extremely dire happens such that an extension is obviously necessary, documentation is required.

Technology in the classroom: Texting during class is prohibited. If you must read or send a text, please step out of the classroom. First-time offenders will be asked to stop. Additional offenses will result in dismissal from class and a loss of participation points. If you use a laptop in class, you may use it only for taking notes. No web-surfing, emailing, IMing, Facebooking, etc. If you use a laptop, disable the wifi.

Extra credit: Extra credit will not be offered. Stay on top of things.

Readings: Keep up with the readings. Anything from the readings is fair game for the quizzes. The amount of reading I have assigned is manageable and it is all well worth your time. Also, philosophy is unlike any other discipline, and you will very likely struggle writing a philosophical paper if you have not read much philosophy.

Email: From time to time, I will be sending you emails with important information about the class, including changes to the readings. You will be responsible for the information I send via email.

Participate a lot: Philosophy is a great deal of fun. Be willing to come to class and participate in the discussion. You will get much more out of the class if you do.

Office Hours: Come to office hours. I like getting to know students and it's a good chance for you to get help on anything you are struggling with.

Other grading notes: Grades are not a personal evaluation of you, and they do not report how hard you tried. They report only how well you completed the assignments. Do not worry too much about your grade, since for most of you, minor differences between grades will have little to no effect on your future lives.

Plagiarism: The honor code is mentioned in general below under "Fine Print" but I want to highlight plagiarism here. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for you to understand what constitutes plagiarism. In nearly every case of plagiarism I have ever encountered, the student claimed that he or she did not intend to plagiarize. This does not count as a legitimate excuse. **The minimum penalty for plagiarism is an F for the course**, though even more severe penalties are possible.

Schedule

1.13 Intro, syllabus
1.15 Layman, "Logic"
1.17 Schick and Vaughn, "Informal Fallacies"
(Optional: Schick and Vaughn, "Relativism, Truth, and Reality", Bertrand Russell, "The Value of Philosophy")

1.20 MLK day, no class
1.22 Anselm, "The Ontological Argument"
Gaunilo, "On Behalf of the Fool"
1.24 Aquinas, "The Five Ways"

1.27 Blaise Pascal, "The Wager"
1.29 John Perry, "Dialogue on Good, Evil, and the Existence of God"
1.31 No new reading

2.3 Edmund Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?"
2.5 Rene Descartes, "Meditations on First Philosophy"
2.7 G.E. Moore, "Proof of an External World"

2.10 David Hume, "An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding"
2.12 Alison Jagger, "Love and Knowledge"
2.14 No new reading

2.17 Class canceled
2.19 Michael Huemer, "Moral Knowledge"
2.21 No new reading

2.24 Bertrand Russell, "The Argument From Analogy for Other Minds"
Gilbert Ryle, "Descartes Myth"
2.26 David Armstrong, "The Nature of Mind"
2.28 No new reading

3.3 Paul Churchland, "Eliminative Materialism"
Frank Jackson, "The Qualia Problem"
3.5 Thomas Nagel, "What is it Like to be a Bat?"
3.7 No new reading

1st Paper Due

3.10 Bernard Williams, "The Self and the Future"
3.12 John Perry, "A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality"
3.14 Harry Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility"

- 3.17 Roderick Chisholm, "Human Freedom and the Self"
- 3.19 Peter Van Inwagen, "The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will"
- 3.21 Class canceled

-Spring Break-

- 3.31 James Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"
- 4.2 James Rachels, "Does Morality Depend on Religion?"
- 4.4 No new reading
- 4.7 John Stuart Mill *Utilitarianism*
- 4.9 James Rachels, "The Debate Over Utilitarianism"
- 4.11 No new reading

- 4.14 Fred Feldman, "Kant"
- 4.16 W.D. Ross, "What Makes Right Acts Right?"
- 4.18 No new reading

- 4.21 Don Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral"
- 4.23 Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"
- 4.25 No new reading

- 4.28 Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"
- 4.30 Alastair Norcross, "Puppies, Pigs, and People"
- 5.2 No new reading

2nd Paper Due

Fine Print:

1. honor code: All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>

2. classroom environment: Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. See polices at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at

http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code

3. disabilities: if you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, and see <http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices>

4. religious holidays: campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. If you anticipate any such conflicts this semester, please contact me in a timely manner so that we can make arrangements that will be acceptable to you. For further information see: http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

5. discrimination, harassment, amorous relationships:: The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student in this class who believes he or she has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>