

Philosophy 101-[04]— Introduction to Philosophy

Department of Philosophy
San Francisco State University
Spring 2013

Class Meeting Time and Place:

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:10-9:25 A.M.
Humanities 471

Instructor: Ryan M. Murphy

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:30-12:30 and by appointment

Office: Humanities 391a

About the Course

This course is designed to introduce students to the discipline of philosophy. First we will consider the nature of knowledge and knowing. What does it mean to know something? What kinds of things can we know? How can we know that we have knowledge? Next, we will examine metaphysical understandings of people as individual selves and the nature of identity. What does it mean to be an individual? How can I be the same person I was 5 years ago, even though I've changed? Is it reasonable to doubt the existence of permanent selves? Finally, we will study different views of ethics and political philosophy. What kinds of rules should a person live by? How should we treat others and why? What is the relationship between getting what we want and doing the right thing? This course will cover a range of thinkers and writers from both the classical tradition of western philosophy as well as the Buddhist tradition. Regular reading and writing are major components of this course. Most of all, this course aims to provide students with the skills necessary to formulate and articulate their own opinions on these and other topics.

GE Designation

This course fulfills the Segment II, Humanities and Creative Arts Area, Category B requirement.

Required Texts

- Cahn, Steven M. (Editor). Classics of Western Philosophy, 8th Edition, Hackett Publishing Company, 2012 (available at the SFSU bookstore)
- Siderits, Mark. Buddhism as Philosophy, Hackett Publishing Company, 2007 (available at the SFSU bookstore)
- Additional supplementary texts will be accessible via the iLearn site for this course.

Suggested Text

- Blackburn, Simon. Think: A Compelling Introduction to Philosophy, Oxford University Press, 1999 (Widely available at bookstores and libraries)

Course Requirements

Attendance:

Regular class attendance is essential for fully learning the materials covered in this course. If you know you will be absent from a class session in advance, please email the instructor at (rmmurphy@mail.sfsu.edu) to document your absence. All excused absences must be documented. If you cannot notify the instructor prior to being absent, you must notify the instructor by e-mail within seven (7) calendar days of the missed class to document the absence as an excused absence.

Careful Reading of All Assigned Material:

There will be reading assigned for most class meetings. Reading assignments should be read by the day that they are listed on the course schedule. Some of our readings are difficult to understand. It is okay if you don't understand the entire reading, but if this is the case, you should come to class prepared with specific questions about parts of the reading that are challenging. Reading the assignments will help your understanding of lectures and enable you to participate in class conversations. Being familiar with material in the readings will be necessary to complete written assignments.

Evaluation & Grading

Weekly Quizzes:

Progress in the class will be periodically evaluated, in part, through weekly quizzes that cover information in the assigned readings for the week as well as anything discussed during class meetings. Weekly quizzes may be administered during class sessions or they may be posted electronically on the iLearn site for this class. They will be short and cover basic information.

Short Writing Exercises (2):

There are two short writing exercises for this course. They are due on Tuesday, February 20 and Tuesday, April 15. Short writing exercises are designed to give you a risk-free opportunity to write about something we've talked about in class. If you have made a clear effort to complete the short writing assignments and turn them in on time, you will receive 100% credit for them. You will also receive written feedback that could be useful if you decide to develop your short writing exercise into a paper. Short writing exercises should be roughly 2 standard typed pages. Details on each short writing exercise will be announced at least one week before the assignments are due.

Paper #1 (with Revisions):

This assignment asks you to accomplish two objectives. First, you are expected to clearly and accurately reconstruct the philosophical argument or position of one of the philosophers we have studied. Secondly, you should state whether you agree or disagree with that philosophical position and give at least one reason that supports your answer. This paper should be between 3 and 5 standard typed pages in length. Writing prompts may be provided for your assistance.

This assignment is due in two stages. The first complete draft of paper #1 is due on Thursday, March 6. After receiving instructor feedback and participating in a peer response workshop, you will revise, edit, or rewrite the paper. The revised version of this paper is due on Thursday, March 20. Details on this assignment, including a specific grading rubric, will be announced no later than two weeks before the first complete draft is due.

Paper #2 :

There are two options for this assignment. You may either write a paper following the same structure as paper #1 (argument reconstruction and your evaluation of the argument), or you may write an essay in which you compare and contrast two different philosophers we have studied during the semester. This paper should be between 3 and 5 standard typed pages in length. Writing prompts may be provided for your assistance.

This assignment is due by the end of the final exam period for this course which is Tuesday, May 20 at 10:30am. Details on this assignment, including a specific grading rubric, will be announced no later than two weeks before the assignment is due.

Grading Scale

The course grade will be based on 1000 total points, distributed as follows:

Weekly Quizzes	150 points
Short Writing Exercises (2)	250 points (125 points each)
Paper #1 (with Revisions)	350 points (150 points for complete draft, 200 points for revised paper)
Paper #2	250 points

Extra Credit:

Opportunities for earning extra credit in the course will be announced during the term. If you would like to propose a project for earning extra credit, please discuss your idea with the instructor for approval. All opportunities for earning extra credit will be available to every student in the class.

Make-Up Policy for Weekly Quizzes

Quizzes can be made up only in cases of documented excused absences (described above) and other cases pursuant to University policy. Make-up quizzes must be arranged with the instructor and must be completed before Thursday, May 15, 2014. Make-up quizzes will generally not be administered during regular class hours. As such they will need to be scheduled during office hours or through third parties such as the DPRC, Philosophy Department, or another proctor. Please speak with the instructor as soon as you know you will need to schedule a make-up exam or quiz. Quizzes missed due to unexcused absences may not be made-up.

Policy on Submitting Late Work

Submitting work by the due date is essential for succeeding in this course. Written assignments (short writing exercises and papers 1&2) must be submitted by the beginning of the class meeting time on the day that they are due in order to be considered "on-time." Written assignments submitted by the beginning of the class meeting following the original due date will be considered "late submissions." Late submissions are only eligible for a maximum of 65% of the original possible points for the assignment. No late work will be accepted beyond the end of the class meeting following the original due date. Late submissions of written assignments due to an excused absence (described above) are eligible for full credit if submitted within 48 hours of the original due date or another time as determined by the instructor in accordance with University policy.

Additional Course Policies and Notes

Accessibility

Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Services Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email (dprc@sfsu.edu).

Religious Holidays

Students who must be absent from class in order to observe religious a holiday must inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays during the first two weeks of the class each semester. If such holidays occur during the first two weeks of the semester, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. Students who meet these conditions will not be penalized for their absence, and will be able to make up the work missed.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of cheating or fraud; it occurs when a student misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgment, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as his or her own. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given an "F" grade. A second instance of plagiarism will result in an "F" for the course. All instances of plagiarism in the College of Humanities will be reported to the Dean of the College, and may be reported to the University Judicial Affairs Officer for further action.

Tutoring Resources

The Learning Assistance Center (LAC) provides free, on-campus writing tutoring for SF State students. It offers both one-time and ongoing tutoring sessions, with some same day appointments available. The LAC is open Monday through Friday from 9am-4pm and Friday from 9am-12pm. For more information and to schedule an appointment, see <http://www.sfsu.edu/~lac/index.html>.

The Campus Academic Resource Program (CARP) also provides free, on-campus tutoring for writing and other subjects. It offers both one-time and ongoing tutoring sessions, with future appointments available. CARP is open Monday through Thursday from 4pm-8pm and Friday from 11am-2pm. For more information and to schedule an appointment, see www.sfsu.edu/~carp1 or call (415)-405-0971.

Maintaining a Classroom Learning Environment

Maintaining an environment conducive to classroom learning is necessary for this class to function. Please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices while class is in session. Disruptive behavior, including derogatory or intentionally disrespectful language, will not be tolerated. Classroom participants who are asked modify their behavior and fail to comply will be asked to leave the class.

Communication with the Instructor

Any questions or concerns related to this course should be brought to the attention of the instructor immediately. I will respond to e-mail communication within 48 hours. In addition to the office hours listed above, you are encouraged to contact the instructor if you would prefer to meet at another time.

Phil 101: Intro to Philosophy, Spring 2014 Course Schedule (Subject to Change; Last Revised 5-1-14)

Abbreviations:

CWP = *Classics of Western Philosophy*

BP = *Buddhism as Philosophy*

iLearn = Reading available electronically via the iLearn site for this course

Tuesday, January 28: Welcome and Introduction, Syllabus and Schedule Overview

Knowing and Knowledge

Thursday, January 30: What we think we know: The Allegory of the Cave

Plato, *Republic*, Book VII (175-178 in CWP)

Tuesday, February 4: The Divided Line: What can be known?

Plato, *Republic*, Book VI (169-175 in CWP, focus on 173-174)

Thursday, February 6: Knowledge from doubt?

Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditation I (533-535 in CWP)

Tuesday, February 11: The relation of Knowledge to Mind and Body

Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditation II (535-539 in CWP)

Thursday, February 13: Thinking about Thinking: A Buddhist Perspective

Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching*, Chapter 10: Right Thinking (59-63 on iLearn)

Tuesday, February 18: Knowledge, Thoughts, and Thinkers

Blackburn, *Think*, Chapter 1: Knowledge (15-48 on iLearn)

Thursday, February 20: Short Writing Exercise #1 Due in Class

No reading assignment.

Metaphysics: Identity and the Self

Tuesday, February 25: Personal Identity and the Bundle Theory of the Self

Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book 1: Of the Understanding, Section 1: Of Personal Identity (900-905 in CWP)

Thursday, February 27: No-Self: Empty Persons, part I

Siderits, Chapter 3.1-3.3 (32-46 in BP)

Tuesday, March 4: No-Self: Empty Persons, part II

Siderits, Chapter 3.4-3.7 (46-64 in BP)

Thursday, March 6: Paper #1 Due in Class

The Ship of Theseus Paradox (handout on iLearn)

Tuesday, March 11: Identity and Society: The Self and the Other

De Beauvoir, "Introduction: The Woman as Other" from *The Second Sex* (on iLearn)

Thursday, March 13: Rethinking and Reworking Paper #1

Peer Response Workshop

Tuesday, March 18: Identity and Self: An Overview

Blackburn, *Think*, Chapter 4: The Self (120-148 on iLearn)

Thursday, March 20: Paper #1 Rewrite Due in Class

No Reading Assignment

Spring Recess, March 24-28 (No Class Meetings)

Values, Political Philosophy, and Applied Ethics

Tuesday, April 1: Ethics, Virtue, and Conscious Choice

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book III, parts 1-5 (290-296 in CWP)

Thursday, April 3: Buddhist Ethics, part I

Siderits, *Early Buddhism: Basic Teachings*, Chapter 2.2 (18-22 in BP)

Tuesday, April 8: Buddhist Ethics, part II

Siderits, *Early Buddhism: Basic Teachings*, Chapters 2.3 & 2.4 (22-31 in BP)

Thursday, April 10: "What Utilitarianism Is"

Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Chapter II (1189-1200 in CWP)

Tuesday, April 15: Utilitarianism in Action

Trolley Problems (on iLearn)

Thursday, April 17: Deontology: An Ethics of Duty

O'Neill, "A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics" (available on iLearn)

Tuesday, April 22: Short Writing Exercise #2 Due

In-Class Case Study: Columbite-Tantalite and Consumer Ethics

Thursday, April 24: The Possibility of Ethics without Selves: Buddhist Ethics concerning others

Siderits, *Buddhist Ethics*, Chapter 4.4 (78-84 in BP)

Tuesday, April 29: Comparative Philosophy: Buddhism and Utilitarianism on Happiness, Suffering, and Desire
Gowans, *Philosophy of the Buddha*, Chapter 11: "The Origin of Suffering" (on iLearn)
Seligman & Royzman, "Happiness: The Three Traditional Theories" (on iLearn)

Thursday, May 1: Valuing the Self as a Political and Productive Agent
Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts on Alienated Labor (54-68 on iLearn)

Tuesday, May 6: Who's to Say what's Right and Wrong?
Williams, "Moral Relativism" (available on iLearn)

Thursday, May 8: Applied Ethics: What are appropriate measures for stopping injustice?
King, "Letter from the Birmingham Jail" (available on iLearn)

Tuesday, May 13: Review & Questions and Answers

- Please bring at least two written questions to class. They will be collected for class participation/weekly quiz points.
- This is the last day to submit a draft/outline for instructor comments

Thursday, May 15: Concluding Conversation

Peer Response Workshop for Paper #2

Please bring the most recent version of your final paper/outline to class

Scheduled Final Exam Time: **Tuesday, May 20, 8:00am-10:30am** Final Draft of Paper # 2 Due

- Please bring a paper copy to the Final Exam meeting
- Please upload an electronic version of your paper to iLearn