

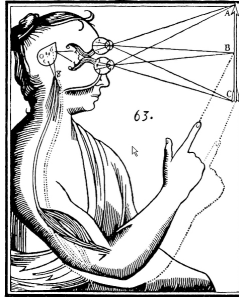
PHI 100–04: Introduction to Philosophy

University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point, Spring Semester 2023

T/R 9:30 – 10:45 Room 193

Dr. Jason Zinser; Email: jzins@uwsp.edu

Office: Room 325 Office Hours: TR 10:45-11:15 or on Zoom



From Rene Descartes (1677)

Course Description

This course will survey many of the seminal problems of Western philosophy in a structured, analytic fashion. We will read both historically influential philosophers as well as contemporary contributions to a variety of philosophical problems.

Course Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- explain the force of arguments and identify what makes “good” and “bad” arguments.
- explain some philosophical questions with knowledge claims, such as skepticism.
- identify arguments for the existence and non-existence of God, as well as criticisms of these arguments.
- identify the underlying issues that define the mind/body problem, and various “solutions” to the problem.
- explain the tension between free will and determinism, and identify various responses to this problem.
- identify several influential ethical theories and distinguish them through examples.

General Education Program – HU Category Learning Outcomes

Students should be able to:

- read closely, think critically, and write effectively about texts or cultural artifacts that reflect on perennial questions concerning the human condition (such as the search for truth and meaning, the confrontation with suffering and mortality, or the struggle for justice, equality, and human dignity).
- investigate and thoughtfully respond to a variety of ideas, beliefs or values held by persons in situations other than one’s own.

Required Texts

Perry, Bratman and Fischer, *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, Eighth Edition. Oxford University Press.

Readings will also be posted on our Canvas site.

Graded Assignments

1. Ten Quizzes/Short Assignments (20% total)
2. Two Papers (10% each – 20% total)
3. Three Exams (20% each – 60% total)

Quizzes: Quizzes will be “pop” and can occur anytime during class. I promise to give at least (12) quizzes or assignments and only the best (10) will count. As a result of this policy, quizzes cannot be made-up for any reason (including sickness, etc.). Please do not ask if there will be a quiz on any particular day.

Papers: Papers (1000-word minimum) will summarize a debate or respond to a particular question. Prompts for papers will be given in class. Papers are to be turned in both electronically and will be checked for “originality” via “Turnitin.com.” Details and suggestions on writing papers, as well as grading criteria, will be distributed in class.

Exams: There will be three exams. Exams will consist of multiple-choice, true/false, short-answer and essay questions. Exam dates are listed on the schedule.

Final grades will be determined on the following scale:

100-93 A	<87-83 B	<77-73 C	<67-60 D
<93-90 A-	<83-80 B-	<73-70 C-	<60 F
<90-87 B+	<80-77 C+	<70-67 D+	

Late Policy: Quizzes cannot be made-up. Short assignments will be docked 10% off per day late. Exams cannot be made-up without a university approved absence notification (e.g. a note from a health care provider explaining why the student couldn't be there). Furthermore, you need to contact me immediately in order to reschedule the exam as early as possible. If this condition is not met, you may not be able to re-take the exam.

Academic Honesty: If you commit any acts of academic dishonesty (such as plagiarism on written work or cheating on an exam) you will earn a zero for that work (and possibly other disciplinary actions). Please refer to the Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures for more information (<https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/CommunityRights.pdf#page=11>).

Attendance: Attendance is not mandatory and will not be recorded (with the exception of the first few classes, which is mandatory). With that said, if you do not attend class on a regular basis, you will do poorly. Furthermore, quizzes and assignments will be administered on a regular basis and schedule changes will be announced in class. If you have an excused absence (illness, family emergency, quarantine), please email me as soon as you can, and we can develop reasonable accommodations. Finally, there will be a seating chart that we will have to adhere to.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement: The ADA is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you require *classroom and/or exam accommodations*, please register with the Disability and Assistive Technology Center and then contact me at the beginning of the course. For more information, please visit the Disability Center's office [here](#).

Schedule: Please note that there may be slight modifications to the schedule throughout the semester. If changes occur, they will be announced in class. Also, be sure to complete the readings listed for a particular day *before class*, since we will be discussing them on the day they are listed. Readings in our text, “Introduction to Philosophy”, are listed as (IP) and readings on Canvas are listed accordingly.

Date	Reading
What is philosophy and how to do it?	
T 1/24	Syllabus and Introduction
R 1/26	Plato, “Apology: Defense of Socrates” (IP, 33-48)
T 1/31	Logical Toolkit (IP) and Reasoning and Critical Thinking Handout (CAN)
R 2/2	Matheson, “Why Think for Yourself?”
Epistemology: The Theory of Knowledge	
T 2/7	Keeley, “Of Conspiracy Theories” (CAN)
R 2/9	O’Connor and Weatherall, “What is Truth?” (CAN)
T 2/14	Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , *only read sections I and II (IP, 164-169)
R 2/16	Film: <i>The Matrix</i> and Review
T 2/21	EXAM I
Philosophy of Religion	
R 2/23	Aquinas, “The Existence of God” (IP, 54-56)
T 2/28	Film: <i>Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial</i>
R 3/2	Hume, “Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion” *only read sections X and XI (IP, 89-100)
T 3/7	Swinburne, “Why God Allows Evil” (CAN)
Philosophy of Mind	
R 3/9	Fodor, “The Mind-Body Problem” (CAN)
T 3/14	Turing, “Computer Machinery and Intelligence” (IP, 282-294)
R 3/16	Film: Smartest Machine on Earth
Spring Break	
T 3/28	Searle, “Minds, Brains, and Programs” (IP, 295-308)
R 3/30	Nagel, “What is it Like to be a Bat?” (CAN)
T 4/4	Churchland, “The Hornswoggle Problem,” and Review
R 4/6	EXAM II
Free Will	
T 4/11	Hume, “Of Liberty and Necessity” (IP, 406-416)
R 4/13	Continued
T 4/18	Chisholm, “Human Freedom and the Self” (IP, 398-405)
R 4/20	Fried, “Beyond Blame” (CAN)
Ethics	
T 4/25	Rachels, “Cultural Relativism” (CAN)
R 4/27	Continued
T 5/2	Mill, “Utilitarianism” (IP, 485-501)
R 5/4	Kant, “Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals” (IP, 520-536)
T 5/9	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (IP, 544-559)
R 5/11	Film: <i>Groundhog Day</i> /REVIEW

Final Exam: Monday, May 15, 12:30-2:30