

## Philosophy 301: Introduction to Philosophy: Spring 2010

Instructor: Prof. Ian Proops

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### Prof. Proops's office hours:

By appointment only. (Procedure: send me an e-mail mentioning several times you can definitely make a meeting and I'll respond with a time I can make. Meeting by appointment avoids congestion in the office and should save both of us time.)

Teaching assistants: Alex Baia ([alex.baia@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:alex.baia@mail.utexas.edu)); Danielle Carducci ([Danielle@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:Danielle@mail.utexas.edu)); Chelsea Harrington ([Chelsea.anne@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:Chelsea.anne@mail.utexas.edu)); Ivan Hu ([ivanjhu@gmail.com](mailto:ivanjhu@gmail.com)).

### TA office hours:

Ivan Hu: Th 1.30-2.30 & by appointment; WAG 414

Chelsea-Anne Harrington: Mon. 4-6 (by appointment); WAG 406

Alex Baia: Thurs 3.30-5.00; WAG 417.

Danielle Carducci: by appointment, WAG 309.

### Course description

This course examines some of the central problems of philosophy, using both contemporary readings and historical texts. Students will be introduced to philosophy's tool kit as well as its "greatest hits." Topics include: God, free will, moral responsibility, ethical theory, applied ethics, personal identity, human knowledge and the philosophy of mind. Further details are contained in the syllabus below. There are no prerequisites for this class.

### Texts

The sole text for this class is: *Reason and Responsibility*, 14<sup>th</sup> edition, edited by Joel Feinberg and Russ Shafer-Landau. **This text will be available at the Co-op on Guadalupe. Unfortunately, earlier editions are NOT suitable for our needs.**

### Grading Policy

The final grade will be based on four components: (1) section attendance and participation (20%) (lecture participation and attendance will **not** be used to determine the grade); (2) a forty-five minute in-class test (25%); (3) one short paper (five pages, double-

spaced, 12 point; 25%); and (4) a longer paper (seven pages, double-spaced, 12 point; 30%). Note: plus and minus grades **will** be awarded. The submission of both papers and the sitting of the final in-class writing exercise are necessary conditions for receiving a non-“F” grade.

### **Policy on Plagiarism**

Students found to have plagiarized will be referred to the relevant Dean, who will impose the appropriate sanctions. Note that, depending on the particulars of the case, sanctions may well include deeming the student to have failed the class, and possibly even the suspension of the student from the University. Further advice on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it will be given at the time of the first assignment.

### **Policy on late papers**

Papers submitted late without a reasonable excuse (e.g., serious illness, documented with a doctor’s note), will be docked one third of a grade for each part-day they are late. So a paper submitted more than 48 hours late but less than 72 hours late will be docked a whole grade; one more than 24 hours late but less than 48 hours late will be docked 2/3 of a grade (so, e.g., from B+ to B-). Papers submitted more than 72 hours late without a reasonable excuse will receive no credit.

### **Extra credit**

There will be no extra-credit assignment in this class.

### **Students with disabilities**

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259.

### **About the in-class writing exercise**

The exercise will take 45 minutes and will take place in the final meeting of the class (i.e., in the class **not** in the section). You will have to answer **three** of the six questions, which three being revealed by your section-leader at the start of the exercise. **So, to be safe, you will need to prepare answers to all six questions.** For each question you should aim to prepare an answer that will cover roughly 2.5-3 pages of a blue book double-spaced (i.e., writing on every other line). **You must bring your own blue book (or green book) to section. The exercise is closed-book (and closed notes). No computers are allowed during the exercise; so you will have to write by hand.** The exercise is worth 25% of the final grade. From the time the exercise is distributed (roughly a week ahead) students will be under exam conditions and shouldn’t ask the TA

or me for the answers! **Please be sure to notify me toward the beginning of the course if you will need any special accommodations.**

## **Syllabus**

You should be sure to have read the readings for a given lecture **before** that lecture.

Note: The quantity of reading assigned sometimes varies from lecture to lecture and on some days, when no new reading is assigned, students will be expected to complete long or involved readings assigned for the previous class. The syllabus is subject to change and supplementation. All page references are to the 14<sup>th</sup> edition of *Reason and Responsibility*.

### **I. God**

#### *1.a) Two traditional arguments for the existence of God*

Tu. Jan. 19. No reading. Introductory discussion of the nature of God

Th. Jan. 21. William Paley: "The Argument from Design," 46-51.

Tu. Jan. 26. William L. Rowe, "The Cosmological Argument," 37-45.

#### *1.b) Two arguments against the existence of God.*

Th. Jan. 28. Are the divine attributes consistent? Is God possible?  
[No readings, though students will be responsible in the in-class test for knowing the material presented in this class.]

Tu. Feb. 2. The Problem of Evil Posed: Fyodor Dostoevsky, "Rebellion," 86-91; and B.C. Johnson, "God and the Problem of Evil," 113-116.

Th. Feb. 4. The Problem of Evil Addressed: Richard Swinburne: "Why God Allows Evil," 105-113.

#### *1. c) Faith without evidence*

Tu. Feb. 9. Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief," 117-121; Kelly James Clark, "Without evidence or argument," 130-134 **FIRST PAPER ASSIGNED**

Th. Feb. 11. Pascal, "The Wager," 135-137. Blackburn, "Miracles and Testimony," 138-144.

## II. Free will

*I. a) The main positions on free will: hard determinism; soft determinism and libertarianism.*

Tu. Feb. 16. Holbach, "The Illusion of Free Will," 451-455.

Th. Feb. 18. David Hume, "Of Liberty and Necessity," 470-474. A. J. Ayer, "Freedom and Necessity." 475-480.

Tu. Feb. 23. Roderick Chisholm, "Human Freedom and the Self," 430-437.

**FIRST PAPER DUE TODAY IN LECTURE.**

*II. b) Free will and moral responsibility*

Th. Feb. 25. Harry Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility," 481-486; Thomas Nagel, "Moral Luck," 487-493.

## III. Ethics

*III a) Ethical Theory*

Tu. Mar. 2. Joel Feinberg: "Psychological Egoism," 520-531.

Th. Mar. 4. James Rachels, "Ethical Egoism," 532-539.

Tu. Mar. 9. John Stuart Mill, "Utilitarianism," 640-652; and John Harris: "The Survival Lottery," 692-696.

Th. Mar 11. Immanuel Kant, "The Good Will and the Categorical Imperative," 625-639.

Tu. Mar 16. NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

Th. Mar. 18. NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

*III b) Applied ethics*

Tu. Mar 23. Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence and Morality," 678-685. James Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia," 697-700. [This material should run over into the following meeting.]

Th. Mar 25. Winding up last meeting's material, *plus*: Peter Singer "All Animals are Equal," 701-713 [On Blackboard].

Tu. Mar 30, Peter Singer, "Unsanctifying human life," 645-651.

Th. April 1. "Martha Nussbaum, "Judging other cultures: the case of Genital Mutilation," 552-60.

Tu. April 6, Judith Thomson, "A defense of abortion," 652-657.

Th. April 8, Don Marquis, "Why abortion is immoral," 658-664.

#### **IV. Personal Identity**

Tu. April 13. John Locke, "The Prince and the Cobbler," 373-376, and Thomas Reid, "Of Mr Locke's Account of Personal Identity," 376-378 .

Th. April 15, David Hume, "The Self," 379-381; Derek Parfit, "Divided Minds and the Nature of Persons," 373-377. [This material should run over to the following meeting].

Tu. April 20, Winding up material from previous meeting plus: Daniel Dennett, "Where am I?", 386-394. **FINAL PAPER ASSIGNED**

#### **V. Human Knowledge/Philosophy of Mind**

##### *V a) Human Knowledge*

Th. April 22. Bertrand Russell, "Appearance and Reality and the Existence of Matter," 175-181.

Tu. April 27. John Pollack, "A Brain in a Vat," 153-154; Michael Huemer, "Three Sceptical Arguments" 155-159.

##### *V b) Philosophy of Mind*

Th. April 29, Frank Jackson, "The Qualia Problem," 315-318. **QUESTIONS DISTRIBUTED (IN CLASS) FOR THE IN-CLASS WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

Tu. May 4, Peter Carruthers, "The mind is the brain," 319-326. **FINAL PAPER DUE IN CLASS.**

Th. May 6, **IN-CLASS WRITING ASSIGNMENT**