

Introduction to Philosophy

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INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy 11; Spring2018; UC Santa Cruz

Professor Rasmus Grønfeldt Winther

Office: Cowell Annex 104

Office Hours: Thursdays 1:30 – 3:00 pm and by appointment.

Webpage (teaching): <http://www.rgwinther.com/Teaching.html> [_ \(http://www.rgwinther.com/Teaching.html\)](http://www.rgwinther.com/Teaching.html)

There is a Canvas page for this course.

Class Meetings: Tu&Th 8:00am-9:35am; Thimann Lecture Hall 003

TAs:

Jordan Dopkins (jdopkins@ucsc.edu (<mailto:jdopkins@ucsc.edu>))

Steven Haug (shaug@ucsc.edu (<mailto:shaug@ucsc.edu>))

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INTRODUCTION

Why do we experience heaven and hell inside our own minds? What is real and how can truth be found? Are social justice and freedom important, and why? Why have children? Why love? What is the meaning of death? Of my own death? Philosophy deals with the big imponderables—questions for which the profit is not in the answers but in the asking.

There are two overarching assumptions in this class. First, that arguing and thinking, as well as experiencing and feeling, almost invariably result in (or *are*) philosophy. Second, that it will benefit *you* to learn to recognize and apply philosophy. Philosophy means (i) analyzing ways of thinking and feeling, (ii) critiquing thought, and (iii) “love of knowledge, wisdom.” Philosophy can expose the validity of arguments; analyze the meanings of terms; critique background assumptions; and increase self-awareness. Philosophy is an open and flexible state of mind teaching you how to be self-reflexive, curious, and conscious about the world around you, and inside of you.

The method of this course is to combine *method* and *content*. You will learn some history of philosophy (e.g., René Descartes, Immanuel Kant, and Onora O’Neill) and some of the “problems of philosophy” (e.g., What is the self? What exists? What would an ethical and good life be?).

You are expected to be active in this class and contribute to class discussions. You will keep a journal. You will write 2 short papers (2 pages each) and 1 long paper (4-5 pages) and complete an in-class midterm (May 31).

Ultimately we would like to forge a nourishing environment, in which we all become students. Teaching may simply be supporting and encouraging each of us to surpass ourselves. How can you move beyond insecurities, laziness, and narrowness, and, instead, construct a beautiful, interesting, and true new *creation* in this world?

BOOK (Available at Bay Tree Bookstore @ UCSC campus)

Perry, J., M. Bratman, and JM Fischer. 2016. *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*. 7th ed. Oxford University Press.

METHODS & EXPECTATIONS

+ **Journals**. You are expected to purchase a little booklet in which you will **keep a philosophical journal**. In this journal, challenge yourself to jot down philosophical and critical thoughts that emerge as you reflect on the complex and urgent matters percolating up inside of you. Have fun with it. Please always bring these journals to lectures and sections, as our teaching process will often include questions that you are expected to answer/free-think in your journals.

+ **Dialogue**. Practice communicating ideas effectively with fellow students, your TA, the professor, and any other members of our class community. Try brainstorming out loud while remaining open-minded about ideas that may conflict with yours. You are encouraged to ask questions and challenge assumptions.

+ **Diversity of Learning Processes**. The lecture learning process will involve a mix of dialogue, lectures (powerpoint + whiteboard), video clips, journal writing, peer-pair and peer-group discussions, and calling randomly on students. In sections, try to speak up and please participate. At home and elsewhere, jot down ideas in your journal, be curious about the writing & reading advice listed below, and talk with friends, acquaintances, and strangers about course themes. Be engaged.

+ **No Electronics**. We will achieve course aims by asking you to be seriously committed to this class. This will include (i) doing all the reading and (ii) *turning off* all cell phones, computers, and access to social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) while in the classroom (lecture or section). I implore you to try to take notes by hand, the “old school” way – you can reformulate those into a Word doc later. **Dare to turn off all your electronics during classtime**.

+ **All assignments are mandatory**. Your assignment will drop by one full letter grade for every day it is late. Your final grade will also drop by one full letter grade if you miss an assignment.

+ **Attendance is mandatory**. Attendance will be taken at every class and section. Although I do NOT recommend that you do so, you may miss up to three lectures or sections, no questions asked. Missing more than three lectures or sections (e.g., 1 lecture + 2 sections) results in your final grade dropping at least a full

letter grade (you may also fail the course). Finally: if you are on the roster and are not present the first day of class, you will be administratively dropped. If you miss the first two days, you cannot take the course.

EVALUATION

1. **Papers** (2 two-page papers; 30% of your grade; 1 long paper is 25% of your grade) (One short paper will be written in class on April 19, the other will be due on May 3; the long paper is due May 24; prompts uploaded electronically at least 7 days before the due date; returned in section the week after the due date; single-spaced, minimum 10 pt. of a reasonable font, minimum 1 inch margins)
2. **Midterm** (30% of your grade) (May 31; in class)
3. Lecture and section **participation; journals** (15% of your grade).

There is no final in this course.

WRITING ADVICE

Writing is essential to our craft as philosophers. Your writing can always improve. Here are some relevant online resources. Read and enjoy!

1. The two best books on writing!

<https://www.amazon.com/Writing-Your-Dissertation-Fifteen-Minutes/dp/080504891X/>
(<https://www.amazon.com/Writing-Your-Dissertation-Fifteen-Minutes/dp/080504891X/>)

<http://www.amazon.com/Stein-Writing-Successful-Techniques-Strategies/dp/0312254210/>
(<http://www.amazon.com/Stein-Writing-Successful-Techniques-Strategies/dp/0312254210/>)

2. Guidelines for philosophical writing:

<http://www.hps.cam.ac.uk/research/wp.html> (<http://www.hps.cam.ac.uk/research/wp.html>)

<http://www.anthonyflood.com/blanshardphilostyle.htm>
(<http://www.anthonyflood.com/blanshardphilostyle.htm>)

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>
(<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>)

<http://www.public.asu.edu/~dportmor/tips.pdf> (<http://www.public.asu.edu/~dportmor/tips.pdf>)

3. Guidelines for essay writing, in general:

<http://www.westmont.edu/~work/material/writing.html>
(<http://www.westmont.edu/~work/material/writing.html>)

4. Oxford English Dictionary. You have online access to this extraordinary resource at:

<http://www.oed.com.oca.ucsc.edu/> (<http://www.oed.com.oca.ucsc.edu/>)

5. "Politics and the English Language." Please read this funny and useful essay by George Orwell (author of 1984) here:

<http://www.resort.com/~prime8/Orwell/patee.html> [_ \(http://www.resort.com/~prime8/Orwell/patee.html\)](http://www.resort.com/~prime8/Orwell/patee.html)

6. From the inimitable Kurt Vonnegut:

<http://kmh-lanl.hansonhub.com/pc-24-66-vonnegut.pdf> [_ \(http://kmh-lanl.hansonhub.com/pc-24-66-vonnegut.pdf\)](http://kmh-lanl.hansonhub.com/pc-24-66-vonnegut.pdf)

7. "10 tools for improving your writing" by RG Winther:

http://www.rgwinther.com/10_tools_for_improving_your_academic_writing_Winther_et_al_26_7_16.pdf
[_ \(http://www.rgwinther.com/10_tools_for_improving_your_academic_writing_Winther_et_al_26_7_16.pdf\)](http://www.rgwinther.com/10_tools_for_improving_your_academic_writing_Winther_et_al_26_7_16.pdf)

Reading carefully is also critical. Here is a great guide for learning and practicing this skill:

<http://www.amazon.com/How-Read-Book-Intelligent-Touchstone/dp/0671212095/>
[_ \(http://www.amazon.com/How-Read-Book-Intelligent-Touchstone/dp/0671212095/\)](http://www.amazon.com/How-Read-Book-Intelligent-Touchstone/dp/0671212095/)

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me, after class or in office hours, **as soon as possible**, preferably within the first week of the Quarter. Contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu (<mailto:drc@ucsc.edu>) for more information.

WARNING

Here is one guideline for proper citation and attribution of other people's work:

<https://guides.library.ucsc.edu/citesources> (<https://guides.library.ucsc.edu/citesources>)

Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Please consult:

https://www.ue.ucsc.edu/academic_misconduct (https://www.ue.ucsc.edu/academic_misconduct)

COMMUNICATION

Please ask all questions about the content or format of the course *during classtime*. If you're wondering about X, almost certainly some of your peers also will be. A non-asked question is a lost teaching opportunity and potentially a question never answered. We'll have "open questions" session for a few minutes during every class.

TUTORING

Learning Support Services (LSS) offers many academic programs to UCSC students. One of these programs is course-specific tutoring that is available to all UCSC students. Students meet in small groups (up to 4 people per group) led by an undergraduate tutor. Students are eligible for up to 2 hours of tutoring per week per course and may sign-up for tutoring at <https://eop.sa.ucsc.edu/OTSS/tutorsignup/>

<https://eop.sa.ucsc.edu/OTSS/tutorsignup/>. All of the tutors hired are current UCSC undergraduate students who have previously taken the course, have received a B or better, and have been recommended by a UCSC faculty member in the appropriate academic discipline.

The following student has been hired to support Phil 11:

Stefani Himes: shimes@ucsc.edu (<mailto:shimes@ucsc.edu>)

CLASS READINGS. By week. Please have all readings for a given week completed by the Tuesday of that week. (**ALL READINGS ARE IN THE PERRY, BRATMAN, AND FISHER TEXTBOOK.**)

Week 1 (April 3 and 5)

Part 1: Philosophy, Logical Toolkit, and Writing Philosophy Papers (start p. 1)

Week 2 (April 10 and 12) Philosophy: Foundations

- Bertrand Russell, "The Value of Philosophy" (start p. 17)
- Plato, "Apology: Defence of Socrates" (start p. 21)

Week 3 (April 17 and 19) God (Christian)

- Saint Thomas Aquinas, "The Existence of God" (start p. 42)
- Blaise Pascal, "The Wager" (start p. 50)
- John Perry, "Dialogue on Good, Evil, and the Existence of God" (start p. 91)

April 19: In-class paper.

Week 4. (April 24 and 26) Knowledge & Reality

- René Descartes, "Meditations on First Philosophy" (start p. 157)
- David Hume, "An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding" (start p. 211)

Week 5 (May 1 and 3) Minds & Persons

- Gilbert Ryle "Descartes's Myth" (start p. 272)
- A. M. Turing "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" (start p. 295)

Week 6 (May 8 and 10) Ethics: Utilitarianism

- Bernard Williams “Utilitarianism and Integrity” (start p. 510)
- Peter Singer “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” (start p. 518)

Week 7 (May 15 and 17) Justice and Equality

- John Rawls “A Theory of Justice” (start p. 595)
- Debra Satz “Markets in Women’s Reproductive Labor” (start p. 675)
- <https://hazlitt.net/longreads/anatomy-surrogacy> [_ \(https://hazlitt.net/longreads/anatomy-surrogacy\)_](https://hazlitt.net/longreads/anatomy-surrogacy)

Week 8 (May 22 and 24) Ethics: Kantian & Aristotelian

- Onora O’Neill “Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems” (start p. 561)
- Rosalind Hursthouse “Right Action” (start p. 584)

Week 9 (May 29 and 31) Paradoxes & Midterm

- The Paradox of the Heap; Goodman’s New Riddle of Induction (start pp. 875; 876)
- Midterm

Week 10 (June 5 and 7) Existential Issues

- Albert Camus “The Myth of Sisyphus” (start p. 811)
- Thomas Nagel “The Absurd” (start p. 813)
- Susan Wolf “The Meanings of Lives” (start p. 837)