

Introduction to Philosophy (PHIL)

CTY Course Syllabus

Course Description

Is there a real world, or is everything a figment of my imagination? Do we have free will, or do our brains simply respond mechanically to stimuli? What, if anything, distinguishes right from wrong? Philosophers relentlessly pursue the fundamental questions of life, and their techniques apply to problems in any discipline or endeavor. They establish standards of evidence, provide rational methods of resolving conflicts, and create techniques for evaluating ideas and arguments.

This course is a survey of several major areas of Western analytic philosophy: metaphysics and epistemology, ethics, philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, philosophy of religion, and philosophy of science. Students explore such concepts as the nature of the world and how we have access to knowledge of the world; moral behavior and the nature of good and evil; the relationship between minds and bodies; the relationship between our thoughts and the external world; arguments for and against the existence of God; and how we should employ logical analysis and empirical observations to evaluate arguments. For each topic, students consider positions of historical thinkers such as Plato, Descartes, and Hume, as well as those of contemporary philosophers such as John Rawls and Hilary Putnam. Students reflect upon philosophical issues through debate, discussions, and formal critical essays in order to develop the analytical skills necessary for effectively evaluating arguments and thinking independently.

Learning Outcomes/Competency

The following outcomes are expected of students who complete this course:

Logic

Understand the nature of reasoning; articulate his/her thoughts in a logical and clear fashion; recognize fallacies; construct good arguments; evaluate deductive arguments; evaluate inductive arguments.

Ethics

Express reasons in support of a moral claim; understand that there are better and worse reasons for making a moral decision; explain the difference between an act being morally permissible and being morally necessary.

Metaphysics: Personal Identity

Recognize the complexity of our criteria for personal identity and consider the possibility that our commonsense beliefs about the self may be mistaken.

Metaphysics: Mind-Body Problem

Understand and explain the central problems concerning the conception of mind; write clearly about the different theories concerning the relationship between the mind and the body.

Epistemology

Be more aware of their own intuitions about knowledge; understand the major philosophical approaches to epistemology; understand the complexity of how humans interact with knowledge.

Philosophy of Religion

Understand and explain clearly the theistic conception of God; explain the different arguments for the existence of God; explain the problem of evil for theistic belief; and understand the complexity of evaluating justified religious belief.

Topics in Brief:

Week 1

- 1) Philosophical Method/Logic
- 2) Ethics
- 3) Applied Ethics
- 4) Debate on abortion

Week 2

- 1) Epistemology
- 2) Mind Body Problem
- 3) Debate on the mind-body problem

Week 3

- 1) Metaphysics- Personal Identity
- 2) Philosophy of Religion
- 3) Debate on the existence of God

Detailed schedule follows, beginning on the next page:

Detailed Schedule:

Day Zero (Sunday): Opening Day

Evening

- Introductions
- Defining philosophy group discussion

Day One (Monday): Philosophical Method and Logic

Morning

- Pre-Test
- What is philosophy?
- Logic
 - Arguments, Premises and Conclusions
 - Recognizing Arguments
- Activities:
 - **Writing Assignment 1:** Define Philosophy. Explain what is unique about philosophical thought and philosophical methodology.
 - Exercise 1.1 (III) Together (definitions)
 - Exercise 1.1 (I) (1-10) Together
 - Exercise 1.1 (I) (10-20) Groups Competition
 - Exercise 1.2 (IV) Together (definitions)
 - Exercise 1.2 (I) (1-10) Together
 - Exercise 1.2 (10-20) Groups Competition
 - Exercise 1.2 (II) (1-10)

Afternoon

- Deduction and Induction
- Validity, Truth, Soundness, Strength and Cogency
- Activities:
 - **Writing Assignment 2:** Define Philosophy. Explain what is unique about philosophical thought and philosophical methodology.
 - Exercise 1.3 (II) Together (definitions)
 - Exercise 1.3 (I) (1-10) On your own

Evening Study Hall

- Complete unfinished exercises

Day Two (Tuesday): Philosophical Method and Logic/Fallacies

Morning

- Review
- Validity, Truth, Soundness, Strength and Cogency (Continued)
- QUIZ-LOGIC
- Activities:
 - Exercise 1.4 (IV) Together (definitions)
 - Exercise 1.4 (I) (1-10) On Your Own
 - Exercise 1.4 (II) (1-10) Together

- Exercise 1.4 (III) (1-20) Group Competitions

Afternoon

- Fallacies in General
- Fallacies of Relevance
- Activities:
 - Exercise 3.1 (1-10) Together/own your own
 - Exercise 3.2 (1-20) Group Competitions

Evening Study Hall

- Review for Quiz

Day Three (Wednesday): Metaethics and Applied Ethics

Morning

- QUIZ- FALLACIES
- ETHICS
- The Ring of Gyges, Plato (p. 507)
- Ethical Egoism, James Rachel (p. 520)
- Utilitarianism, John Stuart Mill (p. 598)
- Activities:
 - Reading, lecture and review questions.
 - Review questions will be discussed and answered among small groups. Each group will present their results.

Afternoon

- APPLIED ETHICS
- Debate Preparation: Abortion
- Judith Jarvis Thompson (p. 404)
- Anthony Kenny (p. 415)
- Activities:
 - Reading, lecture, discussion and group debate preparation.
 - Divide up into teams
 - Develop Thesis
 - Construct Arguments
 - Consider Rebuttals and Responses

Evening Study Hall

- Reading/Debate Preparation

Day Four (Thursday): Ethical Theories

Morning

- ETHICS
- Deontology, Kant (p. 594)
- Virtue Ethics, Aristotle (p. 584)
- Activities:

- Reading, lecture and review questions.
- Review questions will be discussed and answered among small groups. Each group will present their results.

Afternoon

- APPLIED ETHICS
- Debate Preparation - Abortion
- Lynne Rudder Baker (p. 421)
- Susanne Gibson (p. 429)
- Activities:
 - Reading, lecture, discussion and group debate preparation.
 - Divide up into teams
 - Develop Thesis
 - Construct Arguments
 - Consider Rebuttals and Responses

Evening Study Hall

- Debate Preparation

Day Five (Friday): Applied Ethics/ Debate on Abortion

Morning

- Debate Preparation – Abortion
- Activities:
 - Reading, lecture, discussion and group debate preparation.
 - Divide up into teams
 - Develop Thesis
 - Construct Arguments
 - Consider Rebuttals and Responses

Afternoon

- DEBATE: On Abortion
- Activities:
 - Debate competition
 - Team 1 vs. Team 2
 - Team 3 vs. Team 4
 - Pro-Team Opening 7 minutes
 - Con-Team Opening 7 minutes
 - Pro-Team Rebuttal 5 minutes
 - Con-Team Rebuttal 5 minutes
 - Pro-Team Response 3 minutes
 - Con-Team Response 3 minutes
 - The competing teams will have 30 minutes to re-visit and improve their arguments.
 - The teams not competing will be the judges.
 - Debate competition finals

Evening Study Hall

- Plato and Descartes

Sunday Evening Study Hall

Reading:

- Plato and Descartes

Day Six (Monday): Epistemology

Morning

- EPISTEMOLOGY
- Rationalism
- The Myth of the Cave, Plato (p. 264)
- Meditations I and II, Descartes (p. 266)
- Activities:
 - Reading, lecture and review questions.
 - Review questions will be discussed and answered among small groups. Each group will present their results.

Afternoon

- *The Matrix*
- Activities:
 - **Writing Assignment 3:** How is the problem in the movies *The Matrix* related to Descartes Meditations?

Evening Study Hall

- Teaching Assistant

Day Seven (Tuesday): Epistemology

Morning

- Empiricism
- Where Do Our Ideas Come From, Locke (p. 275)
- To Be Is To Be Perceived, Berkeley
- Activities:
 - Reading, lecture and review questions.
 - Review questions will be discussed and answered among small groups. Each group will present their results.

Afternoon

- Debate Preparation: Body and Mind
- Activities:
 - Reading, lecture, discussion and group debate preparation.
 - Divide up into teams
 - Develop Thesis
 - Construct Arguments
 - Consider Rebuttals and Responses

Evening Study Hall

- Debate Preparation

Day Eight (Wednesday): Epistemology

Morning

- Gettier Problem (Handout)
- Theories of Justification: Foundationalism, Coherentism, Foundherentism (Handout)
- Activities:
 - Divide up into groups and come with a critique of one of the theories of justification.

Afternoon

- Analytic vs. synthetic claims and a priori vs. a posteriori knowledge
- Activities:
 - **Writing assignment 4:** Describe how a priori analytic claims differ from a posteriori synthetic claims. Can there be such a thing as a priori synthetic claim? Why is this important and what is this question's historical significance?

Evening Study Hall

- Reading
- Debate Preparation

Day Nine (Thursday): Philosophy of Mind

Morning

- PHILOSOPHY OF MIND
- Mind as Distinct from Body, Descartes (p. 217)
- The Concept of Mind, Gilbert Ryle (p. 220)
- The Problem of Consciousness, John Searle (p. 239)
- Activities:
 - Reading, lecture and review questions.
 - Review questions will be discussed and answered among small groups. Each group will present their results.

Afternoon

- Body-Mind
- Debate Preparation
- Activities:
 - Discussion
 - Reading, lecture, discussion and group debate preparation.
 - Divide up into teams
 - Develop Thesis
 - Construct Arguments
 - Consider Rebuttals and Responses

Evening Study Hall

- Reading
- Debate Preparation

Day Ten (Friday): Debate on Empiricism vs. Rationalism

Morning

- Debate Preparation: Mind-Body
- Activities:
 - Discussion
 - Reading, lecture, discussion and group debate preparation.
 - Divide up into teams
 - Develop Thesis
 - Construct Arguments
 - Consider Rebuttals and Responses

Afternoon

- Debate: Mind-Body
- Activities:
 - Debate competition
 - Team 1 vs. Team 2
 - Team 3 vs. Team 4
 - Pro-Team Opening 7 minutes
 - Con-Team Opening 7 minutes
 - Pro-Team Rebuttal 5 minutes
 - Con-Team Rebuttal 5 minutes
 - Pro-Team Response 3 minutes
 - Con-Team Response 3 minutes
 - The competing teams will have 30 minutes to re-visit and improve their arguments.
 - The teams not competing will be the judges.
 - Debate competition finals

Sunday Evening Study Hall

Reading

- Locke and Hume

Day Eleven (Monday): Personal Identity

Morning

- PERSONAL IDENTITY
- Of Identity and Diversity, John Locke, (p. 339)
- Of Personal Identity, David Hume (344)
- Activities:
 - Reading, lecture and review questions.
 - Review questions will be discussed and answered among small groups. Each group will present their results.

Afternoon

- The First Night, John Perry (p. 325)
- Identity and Identities, Bernard Williams (p. 356)
- Activities:

- **Writing Assignment 5:** Describe which of the four theories discussed best explains the problem of personal identity. Defend your answer.

Evening Study Hall

- Reading

Day Twelve (Tuesday): Philosophy of Religion

Morning

- Ontological Argument, Anselm (p. 55)
 - Objections to Ontological Argument
- Whether God Exists, Aquinas (p. 58)
- Why Does God Let People Suffer, David Hume (p. 63)
- Activities:
 - Reading, lecture and review questions.
 - Review questions will be discussed and answered among small groups. Each group will present their results.

Afternoon

- Teleological Argument, William Paley (p. 60)
- Debate Preparation: On the Existence of God
- Activities:
 - Reading, lecture, discussion and group debate preparation.
 - Divide up into teams
 - Develop Thesis
 - Construct Arguments
 - Consider Rebuttals and Responses

Evening Study Hall

- Reading
- Debate Preparation

Day Thirteen (Wednesday): Philosophy of Religion

Morning

- Faith and Reason, Augustine (p. 55)
- The Will to Believe, William James (p. 74)
- The Leap of Faith and the limits to Reason, Kierkegaard (p. 71)
- Activities:
 - Reading, lecture and review questions.
 - Review questions will be discussed and answered among small groups. Each group will present their results.
 - **Writing assignment 6:** Is it rational to believe in God? Why or why not?

Afternoon

- Debate Preparation: On the Existence of God
- Activities:
 - Reading, lecture, discussion and group debate preparation.
 - Divide up into teams
 - Develop Thesis

- Construct Arguments
- Consider Rebuttals and Responses

Evening Study Hall

- Debate Preparation
- Post Test

Day Fourteen (Thursday): Philosophy of Religion

Morning

- Debate Preparation: On the Existence of God

Afternoon

- Debate: On the Existence of God
- Activities:
 - Debate competition
 - Team 1 vs. Team 2
 - Team 3 vs. Team 4
 - Pro-Team Opening 7 minutes
 - Con-Team Opening 7 minutes
 - Pro-Team Rebuttal 5 minutes
 - Con-Team Rebuttal 5 minutes
 - Pro-Team Response 3 minutes
 - Con-Team Response 3 minutes
 - The competing teams will have 30 minutes to re-visit and improve their arguments.
 - The teams not competing will be the judges.
 - Debate competition finals

Evening Study Hall

- Off

Day Fifteen (Friday): On the Existence of God

Morning

- Discussion
- Get ready for departure