

PHIL 100: *Introduction to Philosophy*
Fall 2006

* **An unexamined life is not worth living.**

* **Everyone has opinions, but few think.**

Class meeting time: T R 1:00-2:15 pm

Classroom: LH 402

Telephone: (714) 278-7560

E-mail: jeelooliu@fullerton.edu

Instructor: Dr. JeeLoo Liu

Office location: H-311A

Office hours: T 3:00 – 5:00 pm

R 2:15 – 3:15 pm

or by appointment

**Text: *Reason and Responsibility: Readings in Some Basic Problems of Philosophy*
 (12th Edition) (ed.) Joel Feinberg and Russ Shafer-Landau**

Course description:

This course is designed to give students an overall picture of the issues with which philosophers throughout history have been concerned. The topics covered will include the rationality of religious faith, the examination of our knowledge about the world, the nature of personal identity and the possibility of life after death, as well as the problem of free will versus determinism. Students must be prepared to keep an open mind about various ideas and be willing to suspend any dogmatic belief. Do not expect to have one final answer that the whole class would accept. What is more important than finding answers, is the process of thinking in our attempt to find answers. Classes will be in the lecture/discussion format. There will also be four debates or panel discussions on various topics. All students are required to participate in one debate.

- Course objectives:**
- (i) To learn to read some philosophical writings and understand their basic arguments.
 - (ii) To learn to criticize others' arguments and to develop the ability to formulate one's own arguments.
 - (iii) To cultivate one's ability for independent and critical thinking.
 - (iv) To cultivate the habit of reflection on, and examination of, one's own ideas.
 - (v) To restore one's sense of wonderment and one's ability to question.

Learning Goals:

This course meets the **General Education** learning goals of category **III. B. 2—Introduction to the Humanities**—in the following ways:

- 1) By developing understanding of philosophical thought and methodologies, which represent an important example of the humanistic perspective.
- 2) By developing understanding of why and how philosophical thought and methodologies originated and evolved as they have.
- 3) By exploring differences and similarities between how philosophy makes sense of the world and our experience and how other perspectives make sense of the world and our experience.
- 4) By developing understanding and appreciation of how philosophy contributes to the political and cultural institutions of contemporary society.
- 5) By familiarizing students with key theories and methodologies in Western philosophy.
- 6) By requiring the application of philosophical ideas and arguments to values, experiences, and meanings in one's own life and using that application to help understand what it means to be human today.
- 7) By cultivating and assessing writing skills in the following ways:
 - a. short study questions, to be completed for every session
 - b. essay assignments
 - c. essay exams
 - d. promoting critical thinking and reading skills, which play an essential role in good writing.

Grading: One paper (5 pages)	20 %
Study Questions (see policy #2, #3)	20 %
Mid-term exam (in class)	20 %
Final exam (non-cumulative)	20 %
Debate or panel discussion	10 %
General participation	10 %
Full attendance	2 points extra credit

To receive a final grade for the course, no portion of your grade can be a “zero”.

COURSE GRADES: Calculated on the following scale

95-100	A	70-73	C-
90-94	A-	67-69	D+
87-89	B+	64-66	D
84-86	B	60-63	D-
80-83	B-	Under 60	F
77-79	C+		
74-76	C		

Academic Dishonesty:

“Academic dishonesty is comprised of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for work by the use of any dishonest, deceptive, fraudulent, or unauthorized means.” The most commonly observed form of academic dishonesty is copying others’ writings on the Internet. Even when you are merely borrowing a single sentence from someone else, doing so without proper quotation marks and author-attribution counts as plagiarism. **Students who commit acts of academic dishonesty will automatically fail the course.** Students with questions about how to cite others’ work should see the instructor.

Class Attendance and Participation:

Students must be conscientious about attending classes on a regular basis. Any consecutive absences must be given proper explanation. **You are allowed up to three absences without explanation. After the 3rd absence, every absence will constitute a half-grade reduction (3 points off in the final average) in your final grade.** To excuse your absences from that point on, you will need to present credible documentation. Class participation includes active discussion in class, raising relevant questions, answering questions, and paying close attention in class. **Everyone (each student as well as the instructor) is responsible for making this class interesting, engaging, and thought-provoking.**

Classroom Etiquettes:

Classroom environment is for the instructor and all students to interact with one another in a professional and intellectual manner. Students are expected to observe common classroom etiquettes. Behavior that interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior. Such behavior includes (but not restricted to)

- (i) constant late arrivals;
- (ii) early departures without proper explanation;
- (iii) chatting with your neighbors during lectures;
- (iv) eating in class;
- (v) doing things unrelated to the course in class, such as reading other books, doing assignments for other courses, or playing with your laptop.
- (vi) **not turning off your cell phone in class.**

Students with repeated disruptive behavior will be asked to leave the classroom.

General policies:

1. All students must come to my office hours (alone or in small groups) within the first two weeks of the semester. I hope this practice will encourage you to come to my office hours whenever you feel the need (things you don’t understand; papers you have a hard time writing, etc.)
2. Students are expected to read the assigned articles prior to class discussion. A list of study questions for each reading will be given out in class. Your ability to answer these

questions in class will greatly enhance your participation grade. Always bring the text to class so that we could look at certain passages for close examination.

3. For each reading assignment, I will give out a sheet of study questions the class before. It is your responsibility to obtain these study questions from me should you miss a class. There will be 22 sheets of study questions throughout the semester. You need to write down the page number and a very brief answer for each question with a mark of * and return to me on the day the assignment is due. **I do not accept late study questions whatsoever.** The grade for this set of assignment will be decided as follows:

21-22	A+ (=100)	12	C (=74)
19-20	A (=95)	11	C- (=70)
17-18	A- (=90)	10	D+ (=65)
16	B+ (=87)	9	D (=60)
15	B (= 84)	7-8	F (=40)
14	B- (=80)	below 7	0
13	C+ (=77)		

4. **Sharing study questions answers with others is considered cheating. Any student suspected of cheating will be questioned. Students caught cheating will automatically fail the course. All students must hand in the complete set of study questions on the day of the final. If you fail to submit the set of study questions, you will receive a 3-point deduction of the final grade.**
5. All essays should be double-spaced, word-processed and complete with spell check. **Essays must be submitted in class, in person and on time.** The grade will depend heavily on how much effort was put into the essays. What I wish to encourage is your own reflection on the reading materials. **A grade reduction for late essays will be made in the following manner: 10-points off for each day delayed.** I hope you will appreciate the importance of finishing an assigned project on time.
6. Attendance is highly emphasized in this class. Do not squander your three absences – there are always unexpected things that would prevent you from coming to class on a given day. If you use up your free absences, you will have to take the penalty when you do miss one more class.
7. Exams will be given in the form of essay questions taken from the study questions given out in class. You are expected to give a more complete answer in the exams than what you give on your study answer sheets.
8. **No make-up exam will be given unless you obtain permission from me at least two days in advance or if you present your special reason with acceptable documentation.**
9. Students are expected to arrive on time for exams. Late arrivals will not be given time extension.

10. **To receive a final grade for the course, students must complete all assignments.** In other words, if you get a “zero” for any of the assignments (papers, exams, study questions, participation and panel discussion), you will automatically fail the course.
11. You are encouraged to meet with me during my office hours, send e-mail messages to me, or call me if you have any question regarding the course.

Syllabus

Date	Content of discussion	Assignments for this class
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T	8/22	Introductory Remarks	None
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I. Human Knowledge: Its Grounds and Limits

R	8/24	(1) John Pollock: A Brain in a Vat	pp. 133-134
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T	8/29	(2) Sextus Empiricus: Outlines of Skepticism	pp. 135-139
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R	8/31	(3) René Descartes: <i>First Meditation</i>	pp. 147-149
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T	9/5	(4) René Descartes: <i>Second Meditation</i>	pp. 149-153
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R	9/7	(5) John Locke: A Causal Theory of Perception (from <i>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i>)	pp. 177-185
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T	9/12	(6) David Hume: Section IV – Skeptical Doubts Concerning the Operations of the Understanding	pp. 201-207
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R	9/14	David Hume: [cont'd]	pp. 201-207
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T	9/19	(7) Wesley Salmon: An Encounter with David Hume	pp. 224-242
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R	9/21	Debate [1]: Can we really know the truth about our world? Can our science guarantee truth about the world? [Essay due in class]	
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Topic: Skepticism and Knowledge

___ What are the possible reasons for skepticism about the external world? Point out the most convincing reasons given by Sextus Empiricus, Descartes, and

Hume. What would be the best defense against skepticism? Explain what would make you trust our knowledge about the world.

II. Personal Identity and Survival of Death

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| T 9/26 | (8) Richard Swinburne: A Defense of Substance Dualism
Supplement: Theodore Sider: Personal Identity | pp. 263-267
[handouts] |
| R 9/28 | (9) David Papineau: The Case for Materialism | pp. 271-276 |
| T 10/3 | (10) John Locke: The Prince and the Cobbler
Thomas Reid: Of Mr. Locke's Account of Our Personal Identity | pp. 340-343
pp. 346-348 |
| R 10/5 | (11) David Hume: The Self
Derek Parfit: Divided Minds and the Nature of Persons | pp. 349-351
pp. 351-356 |
| T 10/10 | (12) John Perry: A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality | pp. 365-383 |
| R 10/12 | Mid-term Exam | |
| T 10/17 | Debate [2]: Am I identified with my body or my "soul"?
Is it possible to have a conscious self after death? | |

III. Free Will and Determinism

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| R 10/19 | (13) Theodore Sider: Free Will and Determinism | [handouts] |
| T 10/24 | (14) Paul Holbach: The Illusion of Free Will | pp. 392-397 |
| R 10/26 | (15) W. T. Stace: The Problem of Free Will | pp. 413-418 |
| T 10/31 | (16) A. J. Ayer: Freedom and Necessity | pp. 408-413 |
| R 11/2 | Debate [3]: Are we totally determined or do we have free will? | |

IV. Philosophy of Religion

T	11/7	(17) Thomas Aquinas: The Five Ways William Paley: The Argument from Design	pp. 21-22 pp. 32-37
R	11/9	(18) Bertrand Russell: Why I Am Not a Christian	[handouts]
T	11/14	(19) B. C. Johnson: God and the Problem of Evil	pp. 85-89
R	11/16	(20) Simon Blackburn: Miracles and Testimony	pp. 118-123
T	11/21	Thanksgiving Vacation	
R	11/23	Thanksgiving Vacation	
T	11/28	(21) W. K. Clifford: The Ethics of Belief	pp. 97-101
R	11/30	Debate [4]: Can we ever prove that God exists? If we can't prove it, what are the rational reasons for believing in God?	
T	12/5	(22) Albert Camus: The Myth of Sisyphus	[handouts]
R	12/7	Last class: Review and Reflections	

Final Exam: Tuesday December 12 12:00-1:50 PM

*** All students must hand in the complete set of study questions on the day of the final.**