

## PHILOSOPHY 103: MIND AND WORLD

Version of 11.01.16 (UPDATED SCHEDULE)

<p><b>Course Number:</b> 103 <b>Section:</b> 1 <b>Time:</b> MW 2:00-3:15 <b>Location:</b> SFH 208 <b>Instructor:</b> Thomas Blanchard <b>Email:</b> tblancha@iwu.edu <b>Office Hours:</b> Tuesday 3-5 Wednesday 12-1 and 4-5 Thursday 9:30-10:30 and by appointment <b>Office Location:</b> CLA Room 128</p>
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### 1. Course Description and Objectives

The primary objectives of this course are to introduce you to the main themes of Western philosophy and to develop your ability to think by yourself about perennial philosophical issues. Some of the topics we will cover may be new to you; others will be topics you have strong opinions about. In this class you will develop your ability to elaborate and defend your views on this topic by offering logical, clearly articulated reasons that support them; you will also learn to challenge and critically assess your own views and the views of others. Various writing assignments will support the development of this skill.

This class will be concerned with topics in *metaphysics* and *epistemology*. Metaphysics is concerned with questions such as: Does God exist? What is it to be a person? Do we have free will? Epistemology is concerned with questions like: What is it to know something (by contrast to merely believing)? How can we have knowledge of the external world? We will examine such questions by looking at classical and contemporary philosophical texts.

As you will see, philosophy is *hard*. It can also be unsettling: reading, discussing and writing philosophical texts often forces us to reevaluate, refine and sometimes abandon some of our most cherished beliefs. It is important to remember that most of you are studying philosophy and writing philosophy papers for the first time. Like all new activities, it will take you some time to familiarize yourself with it. But I hope you will find it fun.

### 2. Prerequisites and General Requirements Met

There are no prerequisites for this class, and I won't assume any prior familiarity with philosophy. The course meets the IT requirement.

### 3. Books

We will use the following book:

**Perry, J., Bratman, M. and John Martin Fischer, eds. (2015). *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*. Seventh Edition. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 0190200235**

It is available at the bookstore. If you buy it used on Amazon or elsewhere, make sure that you get an edition that contains all the readings for this class.

We will also read and discuss a few texts that are not in the anthology. Those texts will be posted on Moodle.

### 4. Attendance

The official attendance policy for this class is that **attendance is mandatory**. However, I will excuse three absences without penalty. More than three absences will negatively impact your course grade, unless additional absences are due to extenuating circumstances. A fourth absence will lower your grade by three percent, a fifth absence will lower your grade by six percent, a sixth absence will lower your grade by ten percent, and seven absences or more will likely result in a failing grade.

Please try to be in class on time. Being late for class with no legitimate excuse can be very disruptive. If you are late multiple classes I might count this as one absence.

### 5. Grading Breakdown

Preparation and Participation:	10% of the grade
Quizzes	7.5% of the grade
Tiny Writing Assignments	7.5% of the grade
First Paper:	15% of the grade
Second Paper:	20% of the grade
Midterm Exam:	20% of the grade
Final Exam:	20% of the grade

Explanation of grades (from IWU's Catalog):

A, A-:	Credit for work of superior quality.
B+, B, B-:	Credit for work of good to very good quality.
C+, C:	Credit for work of acceptable but not distinguished quality.
C-:	Credit for work of marginal quality.
D:	Credit for work of poor quality.
F:	Failure.

Grading scale: 94-100 = A, 90-93 = A-, 87-89 = B+, 83-86 = B, 80-82 = B-, 77-79 = C+, 73-76 = C, 70-72 = C-, 60-69 = D, 0-59: F

The remainder of this section is an explanation of each component of the grade.

### **a) Preparation and Participation**

Active participation is especially important in philosophy, more so than in other domains. Philosophical problems are best understood by actively thinking about them. As a result philosophy is best learnt by practicing it, which involves actively participating to the class. Participation has two main components. First, it involves participating to discussions involving the class as a whole, i.e. raising and answering questions about the readings and the topic of discussion. Second, we will do various small-group activities during the class, and I will monitor your participation to these activities. (Note that if you come to my office hours to discuss readings or papers, this will also count toward your participation grade.)

To assess participation, I will adopt the following method. When you participate (by making a comment, contributing to discussion, raising a question, etc.), you will receive a poker chip. At the end of each session, you will 'cash out' the poker chips you receive, which will allow me to track participation. The maximum number of poker chips you can receive during a session is 4, although you are of course welcome to participate more than 4 times during a session – it's just that you won't receive any new poker chips after your 4 first interventions. N.B.: I am experimenting with this method for the first time and might slightly tweak it during the semester if this becomes necessary.

To be able to participate actively, you should come to class having read the assignments for the day. Some of the reading assignments will be short, but almost all of them will be very difficult and abstract. In order to understand them, you will need to read them slowly and multiple times. When reading a paper I encourage you to write a list of questions about it (objections you may have, passages that you don't understand, etc.) This will help you come to class prepared to actively discuss the reading. Also, make sure to always bring with you a physical copy of the reading for the day.

### **b) Quizzes**

Over the course of the semester, there will be several unannounced short quizzes on the readings. More specifically, for every class session for which you have to do a reading, there is a 1/2 chance that there will be a quiz on the reading during the class. The quizzes are designed to test your basic understanding of the readings. They will take place at the beginning of class sessions. There will be no make-up for quizzes, so make sure not to be late for class. At the end of the semester I will drop the two lowest quiz scores from your grade.

### **c) Tiny Writing Assignments**

I will regularly ask you to complete very short in-class or homework writing assignments. Many of these assignments will be graded on a 4 points scale.

### **d) Papers**

You will write two short papers during this class. We will discuss the process of writing a philosophy paper later on during the class. The first paper will be due on **September 28** and the second paper will be due on **November 30**.

Late papers will be penalized as follows. For each day late, I will deduct 1/3 of a letter grade from your paper grade. So an A paper would for instance become an A- paper after one day late, starting after the beginning of class on the due date.

I will happily answer questions regarding the papers before they are due. If you are interested in having me comment on a draft of a paper, please make an appointment to ensure that you are able to meet with me.

To maximize objectivity in grading, I will grade papers (and exams) anonymously. You can help me streamline this process by remembering your **student ID**.

### e) Midterm and Final Exams

There will be two in-class, closed book, closed notes exams this semester. The format of these exams will be discussed later on during the semester. The first exam will cover roughly the first half of the material, and the second exam will cover roughly the second half of the material. Please come see me as soon as possible if you know that you will be absent on an exam date. If you miss an exam and haven't made prior arrangements with me, the make-up policy will be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the quality of your excuse and documentation.

The midterm will take place on **October 12**. The date of the final exam will be announced later during the semester.

## 6. Academic Integrity

I expect you to be familiar with IWU's Statement on Plagiarism, which can be found on the course webpage. It defines plagiarism as 'the intentional or inadvertent misrepresentation as one's own, the words, ideas, research data, formulae or artistic creations of another individual or collective body, without giving credit to the originator(s) of those words, ideas, data, formulae or artistic creations.' **Plagiarism is strictly prohibited.**

## 7. Disability Accommodation

If you have a disability, please come see me at the end of this class so that we can discuss accommodations.

## 8. Classroom Etiquette

Please don't engage in non-class activities during class time, as those are disruptive to other students and to me. That means no crossword, newspaper reading, web surfing, Facebooking, texting, and so on.

Please **check your emails** frequently (outside of class!). Email will be my preferred mode of communication outside of class. You should check your IWU email account at least once a day, preferably every few hours during the day.

A note of warning: in this class we will discuss a variety of **controversial** topics. Opinions and positions may (and probably will) vary greatly between members of this class, and you are expected to listen to almost all points of view and respect others' rights to express those views. You should also be prepared to have your points of view respectfully challenged.

## 9. Schedule of Topics and Readings (UPDATED NOVEMBER 1)

N. B. Readings in the Bratman-Perry-Fischer anthology are indicated by 'BPF'; readings on Moodle are indicated by 'Moodle'.

Note that this schedule is **tentative**. If I change it I will let you know well in advance.

Date	Topics	Readings and Assignments
<b>Week 1</b>	INTRODUCTION AND GOD	
08.29	Introduction	No readings
08.31	Theism and the Ethics of Belief	Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief", section I, pp. 1-6 (Moodle)
<b>Week 2</b>	GOD	
09.05	No Class (Labor Day)	
09.07	The Cosmological Argument	<b>Aquinas</b> , 'The Existence of God', BPF p. 43 ( <i>concentrate on the top paragraph on the right column</i> ) Logical Toolkit, BPF pp. 8-11
<b>Week 3</b>	GOD	
09.12	The Argument from Design	<b>Paley</b> , 'Natural Theology', Chapter I, BPF pp. 45-7 <b>Hume</b> , 'Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion', V, BPF pp. 66-8 ( <i>make sure to read the presentation of the text on pp. 54-5 first</i> )
09.14	The Argument from Design, cont'd	
<b>Week 4</b>	GOD	
09.19	Miracles	<b>Hume</b> , 'Of Miracles' (Moodle)
09.21	First Paper workshop, The Problem of Evil	<b>Hume</b> , 'Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion', Part XI, BPF, pp 79-84
<b>Week 5</b>	GOD/KNOWLEDGE	
09.26	Pascal's Wager, Introduction to Descartes	<b>Pascal</b> , 'The Wager', BPF, pp. 51-2 <b>Descartes</b> , 'Meditations on First Philosophy I', BPF, pp. 157-159

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09.28	Descartes	No new readings, <b>First Paper Due</b>
<b>Week 6</b>	KNOWLEDGE	
10.03	Descartes	<b>Descartes</b> , 'Meditations on First Philosophy II-III', BPF, pp. 159-68
10.05	Descartes	<b>Descartes</b> , 'Meditations on First Philosophy V-VI', BPF, pp. 172-81
<b>Week 7</b>	MIDTERM WEEK	
10.10	Midterm Review	No readings
10.12	<b>Midterm Examination</b>	No readings
<b>Week 8</b>	KNOWLEDGE	
10.17	Locke	<b>Locke</b> , 'The Causal Theory of Perception' (Moodle)
10.19	Berkeley	<b>Berkeley</b> , Selections from the <i>Dialogues I</i> (Moodle)
<b>Week 9</b>	KNOWLEDGE/PERSONAL IDENTITY	
10.24	Berkeley	<b>Berkeley</b> , Selections from the <i>Dialogues II</i> (Moodle)
10.26	Persons and Souls	<b>Perry</b> , 'A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality', First Night, BPF, pp. 322-9
<b>Week 10</b>	PERSONAL IDENTITY	
10.31	Persons, Memories and Bodies	<b>Perry</b> , 'A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality', Second Night, BPF, pp. 329-36
11.02	Persons, Memories and Bodies	<b>Perry</b> , 'A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality', Second Night, BPF, pp. 329-336
<b>Week 11</b>	FREE WILL	
11.07	Persons, Memories and Brains	<b>Perry</b> , 'A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality', Third Night, BPF, pp. 337
11.09	Free Will and Determinism; Classical Compatibilism	<b>Van Inwagen</b> , 'The Power of Rational Beings', BPF, pp. 395-7 <b>Hume</b> , 'Of Liberty and Necessity', Part I,

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		BPF, pp. 407-413
<b>Week 12</b>	FREE WILL	
11.14	Incompatibilism: The Consequence Argument	<b>Van Inwagen</b> , 'The Power of Rational Beings', BPF pp. 397-406
11.16	Contemporary Compatibilism	<b>Frankfurt</b> , 'Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person', BPF, pp. 440-49
<b>Week 13</b>	FREE WILL	
11.21	Hard Incompatibilism	<b>Pereboom</b> , 'Why We Don't Have Free Will and Can Live Without It', sections 5-8 (Moodle)
11.23	No class (Thanksgiving)	
<b>Week 14</b>	THE VALUE OF PHILOSOPHY	
11.28	Second Paper Workshop	No readings
11.30	The Value of Philosophy	<b>Plato</b> , 'Apology: Defense of Socrates', BPF pp. 21-36 <b>Second Paper Due</b>
<b>Week 15</b>	THE VALUE OF PHILOSOPHY	
12.05	The Value of Philosophy	<b>Russell</b> , "The Value of Philosophy", BPF, pp. 17-20
12.07	Final Exam Review	No readings