

## Philosophy 100.1 & 100.2: Introduction to Philosophy (Spring 2017)

**Classes:** Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays

Section 1: 10:00–10:50 a.m. in North Quad (NQ) 143

Section 2: 11:00–11:50 a.m. in North Quad (NQ) 292

**Professor:** Rachel Fredericks, PhD

I prefer being called Rachel, but you may call me Prof. or Dr. Fredericks if you are more comfortable with that.

**Email Address:** [rlfredericks@bsu.edu](mailto:rlfredericks@bsu.edu)

I prefer to be contacted by email rather than telephone. I usually respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on the weekend.

**Office Hours:** Mondays & Wednesdays, 11:00 a.m. – noon, Tuesdays, 12:15 – 1:15 p.m., and by appointment (email me to set one up if you can't attend regular office hours)

Office Location: North Quad (NQ) 230

Office Phone: 765 / 285 - 1261

Office hours are a time for us to chat one on one or in small groups; you can ask me questions about course material, discuss study strategies, or just have a conversation about what is on your mind. Whether you are struggling or want an extra challenge, office hours can be very helpful, so I recommend taking advantage of them!

### Course Description

Welcome to philosophy! As philosophers, we ask “WHY” questions about anything you can imagine, and aim to give good reasons for whatever answers we come up with. We engage with some big questions and debates that have puzzled lots of people for a long time. Together, we explore questions relating to (a) existence and reality (questions in metaphysics), (b) rationality and knowledge (questions in epistemology), and (c) goodness / what we should think, feel, and do (questions in ethics). Plus, students will get to choose at least one topic for discussion. While things can get abstract, we always try to consider how our conclusions impact our everyday lives. Along the way, we practice new ways of thinking, reading, speaking, and writing.

Students new to philosophy often find it more difficult than they were expecting, but since our focus is on building skills step-by-step, it is common to improve a lot during the term. So don't get discouraged! Learning new things always takes time & practice. To succeed, you need to (a) prepare yourself for class by reading actively and critically,

(b) defend your own views with reasons out loud and in writing, and (c) make a good faith effort. If you do, you can learn a lot about yourself and develop some skills that are really useful in many different contexts at school, at work, and in your personal life!

### **Required text**

*Philosophical Problems: An Annotated Anthology* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), Laurence Bonjour and Ann Baker (Pearson Education, Inc. 2008).

Readings that are not in the book will be available online via Blackboard and are marked on the schedule with a \*. You should complete all the readings assigned before class on the day for which they are scheduled (and plan to read them again). Always bring a copy of the scheduled readings with you to class!

### **Schedule**

All groups of students are different in their interests, needs, and talents, so I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule (although I try to do that as little as possible and give as much warning as possible if and when I do).

#### INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHICAL METHODOLOGY (What Philosophers Do)

##### Week 1

- 1/9: Introduction to the Course: Syllabus\* & Ann Baker, "What is Philosophy?" pp. 1-2
- 1/11: Arguments: Ann Baker, "Introduction to Philosophical Thinking," pp. 3-7
- 1/13: Arguments: Ann Baker, "Introduction to Philosophical Thinking," pp. 7-9

##### Week 2

- 1/16: NO CLASS, in honor of the great Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- 1/18: Objections: Ann Baker, "Introduction to Philosophical Thinking," pp. 9-11
- 1/20: Responses: Ann Baker, "Introduction to Philosophical Thinking," pp. 11-13

#### EPISTEMOLOGY & ETHICS: FRIENDSHIP

##### Week 3

- 1/23: Simon Keller, "Friendship and Belief," pp. 329-335\*
- 1/25: Simon Keller, "Friendship and Belief," pp. 335-344\*
- 1/27: Simon Keller, "Friendship and Belief," pp. 344-351\*

##### Week 4

- 1/30: Sarah Stroud, "Epistemic Partiality in Friendship," pp. 498-505\*
- 2/1: Sarah Stroud, "Epistemic Partiality in Friendship," pp. 505-512\*
- 2/3: Sarah Stroud, "Epistemic Partiality in Friendship," pp. 512-524\*

Week 5

2/6: Argument recreation workshop

2/8: Jason Kawall, "Friendship and Epistemic Norms," pp. 349-355\*

2/10: Jason Kawall, "Friendship and Epistemic Norms," pp. 355-363\*

**ARGUMENT RECREATION is DUE @ noon on Saturday, February 11**

Week 6

2/13: Jason Kawall, "Friendship and Epistemic Norms," pp. 363-370\*

2/15: Katherine Hawley, "Partiality and Prejudice in Trusting," pp. 2029-2036\*

2/17: Katherine Hawley, "Partiality and Prejudice in Trusting," pp. 2036-2043\*

Week 7

2/20: Argument evaluation workshop

2/22: Katherine Hawley, "Partiality and Prejudice in Trusting," pp. 2043-2045\*

2/24: Activities TBD

**ARGUMENT EVALUATION is DUE @ noon on Saturday, February 25**

METAPHYSICS: PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

Week 8

2/27: Ann Baker & Laurence Bonjour, "Minds and Bodies," pp. 151-156

3/1: John Foster, "A Defense of Dualism," pp. 157-162

3/3: J.J.C. Smart, "Sensations and Brain Processes," pp. 162-168

3/4 – 3/12: No Classes: SPRING BREAK (enjoy yourselves!)

Week 9

3/13: Jerry Fodor, "Mind-Body Problem," (pp. 168-178)

3/15: A.M. Turing, "Are Intentional Mental States Analogous to the States of a Computer?" pp. 178-180

3/17: John Searle, "Is the Brain's Mind a Computer Program?" pp. 180-187

Week 10

3/20: Jerry Fodor, "Searle on What Only Brains Can Do," pp.187-190 & John Searle, "Author's Response," pp. 190-192

3/22: Frank Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know," pp. 198-200

3/24: Activities TBD

**PAPER 2 is DUE @ noon on Saturday, March 25**

## SOME CLASSIC TEXTS & PROBLEMS

### Week 11

3/27: Plato, *Euthyphro*, pp. 17-19

3/29: Plato, *Euthyphro*, pp. 19-21

3/31: Plato, *Euthyphro*, pp. 21-23

### Week 12

4/3: Descartes, *Meditations*, pp. 46-48

4/5: Descartes, *Meditations*, pp. 48-50

4/7: Descartes, *Meditations*, pp. 50-52

## STUDENTS' CHOICE

Week 13: For the next two weeks, we will read a few articles that you, the students, will choose by voting from a list of options that I will provide a week or two in advance.

4/10: Students' Choice: TBD

4/12: Students' Choice: TBD

4/14: Students' Choice: TBD

### Week 14

4/17: Students' Choice: TBD

4/19: Students' Choice: TBD

4/21: Students' Choice: TBD

## REFLECTION ON PHILOSOPHY

### Week 15

4/24: Bertrand Russell, "The Value of Philosophy," pp. 37-38

4/26: Bertrand Russell, "The Value of Philosophy," pp. 39-40

4/28: Bertrand Russell, "The Value of Philosophy," pp. 40-41

### Week 16

5/1: Review Session

## Final Exam

Section 1 (which normally meets at 10 a.m.): Wednesday, May 3, from 9:45 to 11:45 am in our regular location, NQ 143

Section 2 (which normally meets at 11 a.m.): Thursday, May 4, from 9:45 to 11:45 am in our regular location, NQ 292

## Assignments & Assessment

Attendance and active participation in class discussions are key to success in a class like this. Philosophy is an activity (something you *do*), not just something you watch or passively listen to. So I expect you to come to class having done the assigned readings so that you will be ready to ask questions and explain your thoughts about them. The quality and quantity of your contributions to discussion will be the primary basis for the participation part of your grade, but I will also take into account office hours, notes you write me on your attendance card, and your email exchanges with me.

Homework and small in-class assignments are a big part of your total grade. Generally, the homework that I assign instructs you to practice a certain skill as you do the reading before class, so your homework will be about material that we have not yet discussed. That may not be how you are used to doing homework, but this practice has lots of benefits. It gives students an incentive to come to class prepared, which means we have better discussion during class. Completing the work on your own helps you remember the material better than you otherwise would, which comes in handy for the final exam. It also helps you practice your critical thinking skills and makes you more independent thinkers, which is just so, so valuable. Seeing how students do on their own also helps me figure out appropriate pacing, students' interests, and other things that help me improve the course over time. I hope it goes without saying, though, that if you have questions about the homework you are working on, you can always get in touch with me for clarification. You are also welcome to talk to classmates about homework, so long as everyone turns in their own original work; talking about the material can be very useful, but everything you turn in should be written in your own words, your own voice, not someone else's.

You can only earn credit for homework and in class assignments if you turn them in on time (see below). However, I recognize that *occasionally* one forgets or has an important conflicting commitment. So I make approximately 115 points available from these small assignments, though I calculate grades as though there were only 100 points possible. So if you miss or botch a homework assignment or an in class assignment, you can still earn a high grade for homework overall. If you do an excellent job completing all of those assignments, you will effectively receive a bonus.

Unless otherwise specified, all written assignments must be submitted via Blackboard. When submitting your assignments, please submit them as MS Word attachments. Please also leave your name off the assignments that you attach, to allow me to grade anonymously. Grading anonymously is important to me because I care about fairness and I know that, like everyone, I am sometimes influenced by implicit, unconscious

bias. The good news is that anonymous grading is easy and minimizes the unfair effects of whatever bias graders have. But don't worry! Blackboard keeps track of who submitted what even if I can't see your name on your assignment while I'm grading.

Late homework will not be accepted for credit unless (a) you make arrangements with me ahead of time or (b) you experience a documented illness or other emergency beyond your control. In the latter kind of case, you need to contact me with your documentation as soon as possible to make arrangements. Late papers will be accepted, but will be penalized 5% for the first minute they are late and an additional 5% for each day that passes between the deadline and submission.

The papers you write will be short, but in philosophy, every word and phrase matters. Since philosophy papers tend to be an unfamiliar and challenging form of writing for students, I recommend paying careful attention to (a) the detailed paper assignment prompts, (b) the detailed writing guidelines and tips posted to Blackboard and discussed in class, and (c) the written feedback on your homework assignments.

The final exam is comprehensive, closed book, and closed notes. The exam has 2 sections: short-answer questions and a longer essay. You'll have many chances to practice answering both kinds of questions both during in class activities and in written assignments throughout the term. For each section of the exam, you will have some choice about which questions you want to answer.

Participation: 30 points  
Homework & in-class assignments: 100 points  
Argument recreation: 20 points  
Argument evaluation: 20 points  
Paper 2: 60 points  
Final Exam: 70 points  
Total: 300 points

Here is the schema I will use to convert points to letter grades:

A = 95% = 285 points	C = 73% = 219 points
A- = 90% = 270 points	C- = 70% = 210 points
B+ = 87% = 261 points	D+ = 67% = 201 points
B = 83% = 249 points	D = 63% = 189 points
B- = 80% = 240 points	D- = 60% = 180 points
C+ = 77% = 231 points	F < 60 % ≤ 179 points

In general, written assignments will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Structure and Organization
  - a. Does it have a clear thesis statement in the first person?
  - b. Are there clear transitions between paragraphs & sections of the assignment?
  - c. Is the assignment well organized?
2. Exposition and Interpretation
  - a. Do you give a clear, accurate, and charitable interpretation of the view(s) considered?
  - b. Do you make clear the underlying assumptions of the view(s) and their implications?
  - c. Do you support your interpretations with relevant citations to the text?
3. Argument and Critical Evaluation
  - a. Do you give rational arguments for the claims you make? Is it obvious what they are?
  - b. When critiquing a view, do you consider possible responses to that critique?
  - c. Do you show that you have thought independently about issue(s)?
4. Writing Style
  - a. Is your prose style clear and easy to understand?
  - b. Are there any recurring grammatical or spelling errors?
  - c. Do you avoid awkward and confusing sentence structures?

One key to improving your writing is getting feedback and revision suggestions on your text during the writing process. The Writing Center at Ball State offers free writing feedback sessions (online or face-to-face) to all students. They work with students on essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts. Students can make an appointment by going to [www.bsu.edu/writingcenter](http://www.bsu.edu/writingcenter), stopping by Robert Bell 295, or by calling 765-285-8370.

### **Student Conduct**

A respectful, civil environment is crucial for learning any subject, but especially so for philosophy, which involves questioning, defending, and criticizing the beliefs and practices that mean the most to us. Conduct that interferes with other students' ability to learn or my ability to teach is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. In particular, students should not interrupt other students or the professor; dominate class discussion; disparage or disrespect the ideas, beliefs, or practices of others (which does not mean that one cannot or should not respectfully provide reasons to disagree); habitually arrive late or leave early; make or receive phone calls; text; surf the internet; or use other technology that is not directly related to course goals.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

Academically honest students do not use others' ideas or words without formally acknowledging the author or source through appropriate use of quotation marks, references, and the like. Plagiarism, a form of academic *dishonesty*, is presenting someone else's work or thought as one's own original work or thought. If I discover that a student has plagiarized, cheated, or otherwise violated the academic dishonesty policy, the student will receive a score of zero for the assignment in question, and if the violation is sufficiently significant, may fail the course as whole, at my discretion.

More detailed resources relating to academic dishonesty and how to avoid it are posted on Blackboard. If, after investigating them, you have questions, please contact me *as soon as possible*. It is much better for everyone if you get help clearing up any confusion right away, rather than waiting and needing to deal with a bigger problem.

## **Disability Accommodations**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or [dsd@bsu.edu](mailto:dsd@bsu.edu).