

SYLLABUS

Philosophy 100A
Introduction to Philosophy
Fall, 2010

MW 2:30
Thomson 104
Fred Feldman

This course provides an introduction to philosophy by way of a discussion of three central philosophical problems -- the problem of free will and determinism; the "mind-body problem"; and the problem of the existence and nature of God. In each case, the focus is on careful formulation of doctrines and arguments. The goals are (i) to understand the doctrines and arguments; (ii) to develop the ability to evaluate the doctrines and arguments; and (iii) to begin to develop the ability to extract interesting arguments from philosophical texts.

Gen Ed Credit

Phil 100A is a 4 credit course. Accordingly, the workload is greater than what would be typical of a 3 credit course. In addition, Phil 100A carries AL Gen Ed credit. Students earn this credit in virtue of several components of the course. Students will read philosophical works in several different styles and from several different eras, including traditional philosophical essays, dialogues, advocacy pieces, and textbook expositions. Considerable time and effort will be devoted to learning the techniques involved in analyzing and extracting philosophical arguments from different sorts of literary contexts. Thus, the course has a strong "critical thinking" component.

Required Reading

All reading assignments are in an anthology of selected readings for the course. The anthology is called "Introduction to Philosophy", it is edited by Fred Feldman, and it is available at the Textbook Annex.

Discussion Sections

Each student is assigned to a discussion section. Discussion sections are intended primarily to give students the opportunity to raise questions about the material covered in lectures and readings, but they serve other purposes as well. Some material on which you may be tested will be presented in discussion sections, but not elsewhere. In some cases, extra handouts will be distributed in discussion sections. Important administrative information about the course may also be provided there. We try to arrange things so that very little that goes on in discussions repeats things that go on in lectures.

Handouts

Handouts are intended primarily as aids to the understanding of the lectures and readings. They do not cover all of the material on which you may be tested, and they do not contain complete accounts of the topics they do cover. Merely memorizing the handouts will not

enable you to pass the course.

Course Requirements

There will be three quizzes, given on the dates indicated below in the course calendar. Each student will be permitted to take (or take over) one quiz during final exam week. Quizzes will be based on material covered in lectures, discussions, readings, handouts, and review sessions. There will also be three written homework assignments. There will be no other papers. There is no final exam in this course.

Grading

Each quiz will be graded on a scale of 0 to 90. A preliminary correlation of number grades to letter grades will be announced when the first quiz is returned. Do not assume that our correlation is the same as that used in any other course at the University. Your final grade will be based entirely on your quiz grades and homework grades. If you take some quiz over, we will disregard your lower grade on that quiz. If possible, graded bluebooks will be returned in the first lecture following the quiz. *Please pick up your bluebook then, and be sure to retain it.*

Cheating

Cheating on quizzes will not be tolerated in this course. If you are caught cheating, we will do our best to see to it that you receive the harshest possible penalty consistent with University policies. If you are not clear on what constitutes cheating on a quiz, please see your TA.

Course Website

The course website can be found at: <http://people.umass.edu/ffeldman/phil100/>

Office Hours

Lisa Cassell	Bartlett 385	Office hours Tu 11:30 – 12:30
Casey Knight	Bartlett 377	Office hours Tu 1-2
Miles Tucker	Bartlett 365	Office hours W 12-1
Aaron Washington	Bartlett 353	Office hours Th 12-1
Fred Feldman	Bartlett 362	Office hours Fri 3:30 – 5:00

Course Calendar

Sep 8 Philosophy: Some Misconceptions

13

15 The Problem of Freedom and Determinism

20 Paul Ree - Hard Determinism
22 A. J. Ayer - Soft Determinism
27 R. M. Chisholm - Libertarianism
29 The Case of the Great Falsifier

Oct 4

*6 First Quiz - Freedom and Determinism

12 Philosophical Anthropology
13 Materialism
18
20 Some Problems for Materialism
25 Plato - Socratic Dualism
27 Descartes - Cartesian Dualism
30 Armstrong - More Problems for Dualism

Nov 1

3

*8 Second Quiz - Philosophical Anthropology

15 Philosophical Theology
17 Sandbox Cosmological Arguments
22
24 Leibnizian Cosmological Argument
29
30 St. Anselm - The Ontological Argument

Dec 1

6 John Mackie - The Problem of Evil
*8 Third Quiz - Philosophical Theology

*TBA Take Over Day