

# Phil 104: Introduction to Philosophy

December 24, 2012

**Instructor:** Carlotta Pavese.

**Time:** 9.50-11.10am, Mondays and Thursdays.

**Place:** Classroom B2, Frelinghuysen Hall.

**Website:** Sakai.

**Email:** carlotta.pavese@gmail.com.

**Office:** 3, Seminary Place. Office: 317.

**Office Hours** (where: my office): 11:10am-1pm on Mondays and 11.10am-1pm, on Thursdays

**Course Description:** This course will serve as a first introduction to some central questions, puzzles and paradoxes of philosophy. We will discuss topics in epistemology (do you know that you have hands?); philosophy of religion (is it rational to believe in God?); and ethics (what is the right thing to do?), language (how is successful communication possible?), artificial intelligence (What are the prospect for an artificial intelligence?), philosophy of mind (what is consciousness?)

**Textbook** Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1], Introduction to philosophy, Classical and Contemporary Reading.

<http://www.amazon.com/Introduction-Philosophy-Classical-Contemporary-Readings/dp/0195112040>.

## Evaluation

Class participation: 10

First paper (due February 28th): 15

Midterm (Friday 11th March): 25

Second paper (due Monday 24th April): 15

Final: 35

Suggested paper topics will be posted on Sakai three weeks prior to the due date of both papers. You may write a paper on any of the suggested topics, or on a topic of your

own choosing subject to the approval of your discussion section leader.

**Advice on Reading:** It is more important to reach a basic grasp of the overall point of a reading than to understand any particular detail. Accordingly, I advise you to do each of the readings once quickly in a single sitting and then return to the details you missed. If, on a second reading, you can't sort out some specific detail, write down what you don't understand and bring it to class for discussion. Do your best to raise your question at a point in the class where that detail is relevant to what's being discussed. It is much more likely that you will get a satisfying answer if you ask your question at the appropriate time. In all the readings, it will be helpful to ask yourself 'what is the problem or issue at stake here?' and then 'what solutions or positions is the author arguing for here?'

**Grading:** 90% 3 Exams (Exam 1: 25%, Exam 2: 30%, Exam 3: 35%). See the schedule for the exam days.

All 3 exams will require you to answer 3 short-answer essay questions. Each exam will present you with 3 pairs of questions and you will have to select one from each pair to answer; all the answers will have to be completed in-class. Prior to each exam I will post 12 study-questions on Sakai. The 6 exam questions will be among these study questions. The exams will be non-cumulative, but there is a good deal of interdependence in the course material, so it may be necessary to revisit old notes and texts in studying for an exam. The last exam will be a take home.

10% Attendance and class discussion.

**Policy on Absences:** Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website

<https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>

to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

Please note: My policy for missed classes and missed exams is the following. If you miss an exam and want to make it up, you will need a Dean's Note to excuse your absence. This is just the official University policy. In all but the most extreme cases, you will be required to make up the missed exam within 10 days. You've got up to *two* excused absences during the semester. If you need more absences, you will need a Dean's note.

**Academic Integrity:** In this course we will strictly adhere to the University Policy on Academic Integrity. If you are not familiar with it, view it at:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>

Any violation of this policy will be reported immediately to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. Violations will, at the very least, result in an F on the assignment in question,

but are also likely to lead to an F in the class, suspension and other penalties.

### **(Provisional) Schedule**

The following schedule is only provisional and most likely subject to changes as we go on. Also I have not settled on the readings for the last month of the course, yet, but they will be communicated soon.

#### **1st week:**

*When:* 19th January Thursday;

*Readings:* None.

*Topic:* We will go over the Syllabus.

#### **2nd week:**

*When:* 23rd January Monday;

*Readings:* "The Existence of God" (Saint Thomas Aquinas) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].

*Topic:* Philosophy of Religion 1 Five Arguments for the Existence of God

*When:* 26th January, Thursday;

*Readings:* "The Ontological Argument" (Saint Anselm) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].

*Topic:* Philosophy of Religion 2, The Ontological Argument.

#### **3rd week:**

*When:* 30th January, Monday;

*Readings:* "Dialogues" (David Hume); "God, Evil, and the Best of All Possible Worlds" (Gottfried Leibniz) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].

*Topic:* The Problem of Evil.

*When:* 3rd February, Thursday;

*Readings:* "The Wager" (Blaise Pascal) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].

*Topic:* Pascal's Wager.

#### **4th week:**

*When:* 4th February, Monday.

*Readings:* "Meditations on First Philosophy" (Rene Descartes); "Of Skepticism with Regard to the Senses" (David Hume) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].

*Topic:* Skepticism.

*When:* 7th February, Thursday.

*Reading:* "An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding" (David Hume); "The Problem of Induction" (W.C. Salmon) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].

*Topic:* Skepticism about induction.

**5th week:**

*When:* 9th February, Thursday;

*Reading:* "Thaetetus" (Plato) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].

*Topic:* The concept of knowledge.

*When:* 12th February, Thursday;

*Reading:* "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" (Edmund Gettier) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].

*Topic:* Knowledge and its analysis. Gettier.

**6th week:**

*When:* 16th February, Monday.

*Reading:* "Dialogue Concerning Personal Identity and Immortality" (John Perry) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].

*Topic:* Personal Identity and Immortality. Part I

*When:* 19th February, Monday.

*Reading:* "Personal Identity" (Derek Parfit) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].

*Topic:* Personal Identity and Immortality. Part II.

**7th week:**

*When:* 23rd February, Thursday;

*Reading:* Paradoxes of Logic, Set Theory, and Semantics; The Paradox of the Liar; Other Versions of the Liar; Russell's Paradox; Grelling's Paradox in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].

*Topic:* Topics in Language and Logic I, Paradoxes

*When:* 26th February, Monday;

*Reading:* My slides on Game Theory and Linguistic Conventions.

*Topic:* Topics in Language and Logic II, Conventions and Communication.

**8th week:**

*When:* 29th February, Thursday;

*Reading:* none.

*Topic:* **First Exam.**

*When:* 4th March, Monday;  
*Reading:* "Principle of Utility" (Jeremy Bentham); "Utilitarianism" (John Stuart Mill) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].  
*Topic:* Ethics, Part I: Utilitarianism and the Trolley Problem.

**9th week:**

*When:* 7th March, Monday;  
*Reading:* "Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals" (Immanuel Kant) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].  
*Topic:* Ethics, Part II: Kantian Ethics.

*When:* 10th March, Thursday;  
*Reading:* "Nicomachean Ethics" in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].  
*Topic:* Ethics, Part III: Aristotelian Ethics.

**10th week:**

*When:* 14th March, Monday;  
*Reading:* Descartes' Myth (Ryle) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].  
*Topic:* Philosophy of Mind. Part I. Dualism and behaviorism.

*When:* 17th March, Thursday;  
*Reading:* "The Nature of Mind" (Armstrong) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].  
*Topic:* Philosophy of Mind, Part II.

**11th week:**

*When:* 21st March, Monday;  
*Reading:* "Turing Machines" (Hilary Putnam); "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" (Alan Turing) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].  
*Topic:* Philosophy of mind: Part III. Artificial Intelligence.

*When:* 24th March, Thursday;  
*Reading:* No class, Spring Recess.  
*Topic:* No class.

**12th week:**

*When:* 28th March, Monday;  
*Reading:* "Minds, Brains, and Programs" (John Searle); "What is it Like to be a Bat?" (Thomas Nagel) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].  
*Topic:* Philosophy of mind. Part IV.

*When:* 31st March, Thursday;

*Reading:* "What Mary did not know" (Jackson) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].

*Topic:* Philosophy of mind. Part V.

### **13th week:**

*When:* 4th April, Monday;

*Reading:* "Of Liberty and Necessity" (Hume) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].

*Topic:* Freedom and determinism. Part I.

*When:* 7th April, Thursday;

*Reading:* "Alternate possibility and Moral responsibility" (Frankfurt) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].

*Topic:* Freedom and determinism. Part II.

### **14th week:**

*When:* 11th April, Monday;

*Reading:* "A theory of Justice" (Rawls) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].

*Topic:* Justice and Equality.

*When:* 14th April, Thursday;

*Reading:* "The Subjection of Women" (Stuart Mill) in Perry, Bratman and Fisher [1].

*Topic:* Justice and Equality.

### **15th week:**

*When:* 18th April, Monday;

*Reading:* Review.

*Topic:* Review.

*When:* 21st April, Thursday;

*Reading:* Final exam.

*Topic:* Final exam.

## **References**

- [1] PERRY, J., BRATMAN, M., AND FISHER, J. M. *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999.