

Introduction to Philosophy: Main Problems

PHIL 101.001
M/W/F 9:00 - 9:50am
Caldwell 105

Instructor

Wesley Sauret

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Office: 12A Caldwell Hall (in the basement)

Office Hours: After class every day until 10:30am. There will be additional office hours around paper deadlines and by appointment.

Course Description

We will be looking at four main problems in philosophy: (1) God's existence and the problem of evil. (2) What is the relation between the mind and the body? (3) What makes death bad for creatures like us? What does our answer to this question mean for the moral status of abortion, euthanasia, and our treatment of animals? (4) Do we have free will? How does our answer to this question impact our evaluation of whether people are morally responsible for their actions? We will be reading a selection of contemporary papers that address aspects of these questions.

Course Requirements

- Paper 1 (3-4 pg): 25% of final grade.
- Paper 2 (3-4 pg): 25% of final grade.
- Final Paper (4 pg): 25% of final grade.
- Reading Quizzes: 20% of final grade (5% each).
- Participation: 5% of final grade.

Explanation of Assessment

Your performance on the three assigned papers will determine your grade. You will have about a week to work on each paper, which, in a summer class, means you will get your first paper prompt very early. I am happy to talk about your draft during office hours (and I highly recommend coming to office hours).

You will have four quizzes throughout the semester. Each quiz will have two sections with two questions in each section and you'll pick *one* question from each section. The quizzes are there to ensure you have been keeping up with the class and, as a result, the questions are intended to be easy to answer as long as you have been reading the papers and attending the lectures.

Your participation grade is based on several things: your attendance, how much you participate in class discussions, how often you ask questions, whether you come to office hours if you're struggling in the class, etc. The grade you get will either be (a) 100%, if you participate more than the expected average, (b) the same as your average in the class, if you participate at the minimally acceptable level, or (c) 0%, if you fail to participate in the class.

Other Course Policies

Regular attendance is expected, but I will not be taking attendance. Laptops are allowed in class, but if you have a tendency to regularly check Facebook in class, please sit towards the back so you don't distract the students behind you. Papers are due at the *beginning* of class on the day they are due. Late papers will be accepted, up to three days late, but there will be a deduction of 5 points for each 24 hour period that passes after the original due date.

Course Materials

All readings will be distributed on Sakai. Below you will find the readings and the order in which we will be covering the material.

The Existence of God

1. *Cosmological Argument* – Rowe, “The Cosmological Argument”
2. *Design Argument* – Paley, “The Argument from Design”

The Mind/Body Problem

3. *Dualism* – Campbell, “Dualisms”
4. *Behaviorism* – Churchland, “Behaviorism, Materialism & Functionalism”
5. *Identity Theory* – Churchland (Continued)
6. *Functionalism* – Churchland (Continued)
7. *Philosophical Writing* – Vargas “How to Write Philosophy Papers that Don't Suck”

What Makes Death Bad?

8. *Epicurus* – Rachels, “Death and Evil”
9. *Deprivation Theory* – Nagel, “Death”
10. *Biographical Lives* – Rachels, “The Concept of a Life”
11. *Asymmetry Problem* – Brueckner & Fisher, “Why is Death Bad?”

Applied Ethics

12. *For Abortion* – Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion”
13. *Against Abortion* – Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral”
14. *Killing & Letting Die* – Rachels, “Active and Passive Euthanasia”; Nesbitt, “Is Killing No Worse than Letting Die?”
15. *Active Euthanasia* – Hill, “The Note”; Callahan, “When Self-Determination Runs Amok”
16. *Treatment of Animals* – Singer, “All Animals are Equal”
17. *Killing Animals* – Singer, “Killing Humans and Killing Animals”

Free Will & Moral Responsibility

18. *Compatibilism* – Ayer, “Freedom and Necessity”
19. *Incompatibilism* – Chisholm, “Human Freedom and the Self”
20. *Alternate Possibilities* – Frankfurt, “Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility”
21. *Desiring your Will* – Frankfurt, “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person”
22. *Valuing your Will* – Watson, “Free Agency”
23. *Sanity* – Wolf, “Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility”
24. *Four Case Argument* – Pereboom, “Determinism al Dente”

The Problem of Evil

25. *Problem of Evil* – Mackie, “Evil and Omnipotence”

26. *Free Will Theodicy* – Beebe, “Plantinga's Free Will Defense”