

PHIL 104
Introduction to Philosophy, Writing Intensive
Fall 2019

Professor Karen Bennett

kbennett@philosophy.rutgers.edu

106 Somerset St., #534

Office Hours: Monday 1:30-2:30 and by appointment

This course is an introduction to philosophy in the Western tradition. It meets three Core Curriculum requirements: WCr, WCd, and AHo.

Learning Goals

- Acquaint students with some of the important positions and arguments on a number of central questions in Western philosophy. Critically examine philosophical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production. **[AHo]**
- Effectively communicate philosophical ideas and arguments; evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly; and analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights **[WCd]**
- Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience, and respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, &/or supervisors through successive drafts & revision. **[WCr]**
- Improve students' skills at a) identifying and articulating arguments in texts, b) analyzing and criticizing those arguments, and c) explaining and defending their own philosophical views.

Course Format:

Philosophy 104 involves both lecture and discussion section. Everyone in the course will attend two lectures each week, given by Professor Bennett on Mondays and Wednesday from 2:50-4:10 in Vorhees 105. In addition, each student is assigned to a discussion section led by a teaching assistant. There are 12 discussion sections. It is important that you know which section you are signed up for, and that you attend the correct section. Check your class schedule if you are unsure.

Teaching Assistants

Nathaniel Flores	njf52@philosophy.rutgers.edu
Christopher Fruge	christopher.fruge@rutgers.edu
Zachary Kofi	zachary.kofi@rutgers.edu
Ting-An Lin	tingan.lin@rutgers.edu
Wes Skolits	wes.skolits@rutgers.edu
David Sorensen	dss170@scarletmail.rutgers.edu

Required Texts

- *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, 8th edition, edited by John Perry, Michael Bratman, and John Fischer. Available at the Rutgers bookstore.

NOTE: Page numbers refer to the 8th edition. However, almost everything is in the (much cheaper) 7th edition as well. If you buy a used copy of the 7th edition, you are responsible for figuring out the appropriate page numbers.

- Some articles available on Canvas.

Software:

Canvas: <https://rutgers.instructure.com/login/canvas>

Canvas is free for Rutgers students; login with your NetId. We will use it to access the readings and to turn in papers.

TopHat: www.tophat.com

We will use TopHat to administer in-class quizzes (and perhaps occasional polls etc.) Some sections might also use it for homework or at-home posts to discussion forums. You will be able to submit answers using Apple or Android smartphones, tablets, and laptops.

Top Hat requires a paid subscription of \$20 for the semester, which covers *all* of your Rutgers courses that use Top Hat this term. An invitation will be sent to you by email. If you don't receive this email, you can register by simply visiting <https://tophat.com/students/> and follow the instructions. This course's join code is 537215. Visit the Top Hat Overview, which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account, as well as provides a brief overview to get you up and running on the system. <https://support.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide>

<https://canvas.rutgers.edu/2019/07/05/feature-release-top-hat/>

If you need help with Top Hat at any time, please contact their Support Team by way of email (support@tophat.com), the in-app support button, or calling 1-888-663-5491.

Recommended Online Resources

The publisher's student resources for the textbook (useful for studying):

https://oup-arc.com/access/perry-bratman-fischer8e-student-resources#tag_part-01

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu>

Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://www.rep.routledge.com>

The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy: (google it; the address is too long to put here)

Website for the Philosophy Talk public radio show: <http://www.philosophytalk.org>

Note: you must cite these resources if you consult them for papers.

Evaluation

- *Discussion section attendance and participation: 15%*

This portion of your grade will be determined by the extent to which you are actively engaged with your section: contributions to class discussion are most important, but attendance and individual meetings also count. Your TA will regularly assign small things like online discussion forums, brief homework assignments, and so forth. These, and any use of Top Hat in section, also contribute to your participation grade.

- *In-lecture polls and quizzes: 25%*

There will be frequent brief quizzes in lecture using TopHat software. These will typically take place on Wednesdays. You will take the quiz on your phone, tablet, or laptop. Quizzes will be just a few questions and take roughly ten minutes. *Quizzes cannot be made up.* At the end of term, however, your lowest four scores will be dropped. This effectively gives you four “free passes” to miss class.

These quizzes will largely be based on the content of the lectures. They replace a cumulative final exam, which would otherwise be on December 20th.

Please note that 40% of your grade derives from things that require you to be physically present in lecture and section. If you are looking for a class you can skip a lot, this one is not for you.

- *Writing assignments: 60%*

You will complete four writing assignments for this course. The first is very short, purely expository, and only worth 5% of your grade. The second assignment is a philosophical dialogue, worth 15% of your grade. The final two assignments will be 5-7 page argumentative papers. These will be due in three parts: a “prewrite”, a first draft, and a final draft (The class meets Core Curriculum Requirement WCr.). The prewrite will not be graded, but simply marked as complete/incomplete; if you do not do it, your final draft will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade. The first drafts will be graded and worth 5%; the final drafts will be graded and worth 15%. (Basically, the third and fourth papers are worth 20% apiece in total.) More details on the writing assignments to come, of course.

Grading Policies

1. Extensions can be granted on papers, but you have to talk to your TA a few days in advance. If you do not make arrangements beforehand, late papers will be downgraded by 1/3 letter grade per day.
2. To pass this class, you must complete all four writing assignments and take at least 50% of the TopHat quizzes. (This is a necessary condition, not a sufficient one.) **Again, note that this means that you will fail if you skip too many lectures.**

Notes on Academic Integrity

1. Every student is required to adhere to Rutgers’ Academic Integrity Policy: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/>
It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with this policy, and what constitutes a violation of it. All work submitted must be your own, and all sources must be properly

- cited. Changing a few words from an online source does not make the material your own.
2. All papers will be submitted to Turnitin.com (via Canvas) for the detection of plagiarism. Further, all papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com service is subject to the usage policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.
 3. Students are not permitted to buy or sell any course materials, online or otherwise. This includes handouts, paper topics, homework questions, slides, etc. Such behavior constitutes academic misconduct.

Tentative Schedule of Readings

All readings are in the 8th edition of the Perry/Bratman/Fischer anthology unless they are marked with an asterisk (). Readings so marked are available in the “readings” section of the Canvas site. Note that all, or at least almost all, of the readings are also in the 7th edition.*

0. Introduction

- 9/4 Perry, Bratman, and Fischer, “Introduction,” 1-7
 Perry, Bratman, and Fischer, “Logical Toolkit,” 8-13

1. The Existence of God

- 9/9 Aquinas, “The Existence of God” (from *Summa Theologica*), just the paragraph on 43 starting “the second way derives...”
 *Russell, “Why I am Not a Christian,” just the section called ‘The First Cause Argument’.
- 9/11 Pascal, “The Wager,” 50-53
 9/16 continued
- 9/18 Paper #1 due**
 Leibniz, “God, Evil, and the Best of All Possible Worlds,” 89-90
 *Voltaire, *Candide*, chapters 1 and 28
Optional: John Perry, “Dialogue on Good, Evil, and the Existence of God,” 99-123
- 9/23 *Mackie, “Evil and Omnipotence”
 9/25 *Lewis, “Evil for Freedom’s Sake,” sections 1-3 only
 Adams, selection from “Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God,” sections 4.0, 4.1, and 4.2 only
*Optional: Antony, “For the Love of Reason,” 148-160; *Sullivan, “Uneasy Grace”*

2. Freedom of the Will

- 9/30 *van Inwagen, excerpt from “The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will”, pp. 202-205 only
 *Holbach, “The Illusion of Free Will”
- 10/2 Paper #2 due**
 *Stace, “The Problem of Free Will”
- 10/7 Frankfurt, “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person,” 491-500
 10/9 Chisholm, “Human Freedom and the Self,” 449-456
 van Inwagen, another part of “The Powers of Rational Beings”: (p. 210, “Let us look carefully...” to the end.)

3. *Ethics*

10/14 no class

10/16 **Paper #3 topics made available**

Perry, Bratman, and Fischer, "Writing Philosophy Papers," 14-16

*Bennett, "Some Helpful Hints for Writing Philosophy Papers"

*Lenman, "How to Write a Crap Philosophy Essay"

*Optional: *Pryor, "Guidelines for Writing a Philosophy Paper"*

10/21 **Paper #3 prewrite due**

*Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"

10/23 Bentham, "The Principle of Utility," 528-531

Carritt, "Some Criticisms of Utilitarianism," 549-551

10/28 **Paper #3 draft 1 due**

Smart, "Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism," 552-558

10/30 Kant, from *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 583-599

11/4 no class.

11/6 no class. **Paper 3 drafts back to students**

11/11 Kant continued

11/13 **Paper #3 final version due**

*Nagel, "Moral Luck"

11/18 **Paper #4 topics made available**

Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," 575-582

Optional: O'Neill, "Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems," 600-606

11/20 **Paper 4 prewrite due**

*Wolf, "Moral Saints"

4. *Death and the Meaning of Life*

11/25 * Philip Larkin, "Aubade" (a poem)

* Epicurus, "Letter to Menoeceus"

* Lucretius, selection from Book 3 of *On the Nature of Things*

11/27 **Paper 4 draft 1 due to Canvas. No class (Rutgers operates on a Friday schedule)**

12/2 Nagel, "Death," 790-794

12/6 **Paper 4 drafts returned to students (this is a Friday, not a lecture day)**

12/4 *Williams, "The Makropulos Case: Reflections on the Tedium of Immortality"

12/9 Wolf, "The Meanings of Lives," 778-789

Optional: Taylor, "The Meaning of Human Existence," 761-777

12/11 **Paper 4 final version due**

Nagel, "The Absurd," 753-760

Russell, "The Value of Philosophy," 17-20