

## **Philosophy 100: *Introduction to Philosophy***

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This class will be conducted online, mostly synchronously. The class meetings will be on Zoom, at the regularly scheduled time for the class. These Zoom meetings will also be recorded and made available to students in the class, for those who are for whatever reason unable to attend in real time. (The recordings will come with transcripts produced by Zoom's software. These are imperfect, but still useful for some purposes.) Discussion sections will also take place on Zoom, at their regularly scheduled times, and will also be recorded and made available to students upon request. Office hours (both for Professor Markosian and for your TA) will take place on Zoom, as well. In addition to lectures, discussion sections, and office hours, each TA will run an asynchronous discussion forum for their students. You are strongly encouraged to participate in your TA's discussion forum.

**Lectures:** Tuesday and Thursday, 11:30am-12:20pm.

**Professor Markosian's Office Hours:** Tuesday 2:00pm-3:00pm, Thursday 1:00pm-2:00pm.

**Discussion Sections:** various times on Fridays.

### **Teaching Assistants:**

- Jean Pierre (J.P.) Cordero Rojas (jcorderoroja@umass.edu). Office: South College E408. Office hours: Monday and Wednesday, 3:00pm-4:00pm.
- Shane Henckel (shenckel@umass.edu). Office: South College E406. Office hours: Monday and Tuesday, 10:00am-11:00am.
- Mathura Samaram (msamaram@umass.edu). Office: South College E318. Office hours: Thursday 1:00pm-3:00pm.

**What are office hours?** Office hours are designated times when your TA or your professor will be available to meet with students. There is no need to make an appointment if you would like to meet with your TA or your professor during these times – you can just drop in. (If you would like to meet with one of us, but prefer a time outside of our office hours, you can email to make an appointment.) It is usually a good idea to visit both your professor and your TA during their office hours at least occasionally, either to chat in general or to ask specific questions related to the class.

## Course Overview

This course is an introduction to some of the most perplexing topics that have preoccupied humans for thousands of years, as well as an introduction to a distinctive way of thinking – a way of thinking that focuses on carefully presenting and evaluating arguments. No background is assumed or required.

By the end of the course, I hope that each of you will think of yourself as a philosopher – as someone who thinks hard about philosophical questions, using philosophical methods, at least some of the time. Thinking about such questions, and using such methods, will make your life better in a wide variety of ways. Some of these ways are mundane and practical. (Thinking like a philosopher will help you with your writing, critical thinking, and communicating, which in turn will help you perform better in almost any career; and it will also help you to get better scores on the GRE, LSAT, MCAT, and GMAT.) And some of the ways in which thinking like a philosopher will make your life better are deeper and harder to measure. (Thinking like a philosopher will help you work through issues about what is meaningful and valuable, for example, and who you are, and how you should live your life.)

The course will cover selected topics in Epistemology, Philosophy of Mind, Metaphysics, Philosophical Theology, and Moral Philosophy. We will focus especially on the following questions: *What can I know about the external world? What exactly am I – do I have an immaterial soul, or am I purely physical? Do I have free will? Is there a God? What makes right actions right? Does any of this matter?*

The aim of the course will be to educate students about some of the main issues, theses, and arguments concerning these topics, so that the students may arrive at their own considered opinions on these matters.

## Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- Read complicated texts, extract the arguments contained in those texts, and articulate the best objections to those arguments.
- Develop arguments of your own for your core beliefs.
- Write clear, concise, and persuasive essays.
- Articulate and defend your own views on a wide range of philosophical topics.

## Course Requirements

- ❖ **Five Short Papers.** Your lowest paper grade is automatically dropped; each of the remaining four is worth 25% of your final grade.

## Academic Honesty

We will follow UMass's policy on academic honesty. Please consult [this web page](#) for all the details regarding this policy.

## Required Readings

- "On Arguments" (handout available on course website).
- "Two Arguments Against Materialism" (handout available on course website).
- "Two More Arguments Against Materialism" (handout available on course website).
- "Two Arguments for Materialism" (handout available on course website).
- "Two Arguments for Theism" (handout available on course website).
- "Two Arguments for Atheism" (handout available on course website).
- Driver, Julia, "[The History of Utilitarianism](#)," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Fields, Keota, "Intensional Liar," *Philosophical Topics* 45 (2017), pp. 21-32. Available on Moodle.
- Griffith, Meghan, *Free Will: The Basics* (Routledge, 2013). (This is the one and only text you will have to buy for this class.)

- Markosian, Ned, "[Do You Know That You Are Not a Brain in a Vat?](#)" *Logos and Episteme* V (2014), pp. 161-181.
- Markosian, Ned, "[Rossian Minimalism](#)," *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 4 (2009), pp. 1-16.
- Shapiro, Lisa, "[Elisabeth, Princess of Bohemia](#)," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Street, Sharon, "Does Anything Really Matter or Did We Just Evolve to Think So?" in Gideon Rosen, Alex Byrne, Joshua Cohen, and Seana Shiffrin, *The Norton Introduction to Philosophy* (Norton, 2015), pp. 685-693.
- Vogt, Katja, "[Ancient Skepticism](#)," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

## Recommended Readings

- Onscreen Document (a regularly updated Word document with arguments, definitions, etc., that are displayed during class; available on the course website).
- Cajete, Gregory, "Philosophy of Native Science," in Anne Waters (ed.), *American Indian Thought: Philosophical Essays* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2003)
- Copenhagen, Rebecca, "[Reid on Memory and Personal Identity](#)," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Fara, Delia Graff, "Shifting Sands: An Interest-Relative Theory of Vagueness," *Philosophical Topics* 28 (2000), pp. 45-81.
- Fields, Keota, *Berkeley: Ideas, Immaterialism, and Objective Presence* (Lexington Books, 2011).
- Fields, Keota, "Review of Samuel Rickless, *Berkeley's Argument for Idealism*," *Philosophical Quarterly* 64 (2013), pp. 170-172.
- Gettier, Edmund, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Analysis* 23 (1963), pp. 121-123.
- Gracia, Jorge, and Vargas, Manuel, "[Latin American Philosophy](#)," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Gyekye, Kwame, "[African Ethics](#)," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Haslanger, Sally, and Sveinsdóttir, Ásta Kristjana, "[Feminist Metaphysics](#)," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Hursthouse, Rosalind, "[Virtue Ethics](#)," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

- Levin, Janet, "[Functionalism](#)," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Lewis, David, "The Paradoxes of Time Travel," *American Philosophical Quarterly* **13** (1976), pp. 145-152.
- Markosian, Ned, "A Compatibilist Version of the Theory of Agent Causation," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* **80** (1999), pp. 257-277.
- Melton, Desirée, "The Vulnerable Self: Enabling the Recognition of Racial Inequality," in Lisa Tessman (ed.), *Feminist Ethics and Social and Political Philosophy: Theorizing the Non-Ideal* (Springer, 2009), pp. 149-164.
- Mills, Charles, *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race* (Cornell, 1998).
- Nelkin, Dana Kay, *Making Sense of Freedom and Responsibility* (Oxford University Press, 2013).
- Outlaw, Lucious T., "[Africana Philosophy](#)," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Phillips, Stephen, "[Epistemology in Classical Indian Philosophy](#)," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Tong, Rosemarie, and Williams, Nancy, "[Feminist Ethics](#)," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Vihvelin, Kadri, "[Arguments for Incompatibilism](#)," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Waters, Anne (ed.), *American Indian Thought: Philosophical Essays* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2003).
- Wong, David, "[Chinese Ethics](#)," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

## About Short Papers

Details about the individual short paper assignments can be found below.

Each short paper is due at 5pm on the relevant day. (See the schedule below for specific due dates.) **You must submit your paper on Moodle using Turnitin.** Any paper turned in after the deadline will be considered late. Late papers will be penalized 5 points (out of 100) per day. Late papers can be turned in until one week past the deadline, but will not be accepted after that. (Note: Extensions are possible. If you would like to request an extension on a paper, for any reason, you must email your TA *before* the deadline for that paper.)

## Short Paper Assignments

- ❖ **First short paper assignment:** Write a 4- or 5-page paper in which you present, explain, and evaluate The Brain in a Vat Argument. (4-5 pages is the ideal length. If your paper is shorter than 4 pages, it is probably not detailed or substantive enough. If it is longer than 5 pages, it probably either contains too much material or else needs to be edited for concision. Your paper should have normal fonts and margins. *You must submit your paper on Moodle using Turnitin.*)
  
- ❖ **Second short paper assignment:** Write a 4- or 5-page paper in which you (i) formulate and explain your favorite view about whether human people have souls, and (ii) present, explain, and evaluate what you take to be the best argument against that view. (4-5 pages is the ideal length. If your paper is shorter than 4 pages, it is probably not detailed or substantive enough. If it is longer than 5 pages, it probably either contains too much material or else needs to be edited for concision. Your paper should have normal fonts and margins. *You must submit your paper on Moodle using Turnitin.*)
  
- ❖ **Third short paper assignment:** Write a 4- or 5-page paper in which you (i) formulate and explain your favorite view in response to The Problem of Freedom and Determinism, and (ii) present, explain, and evaluate what you take to be the best argument against that view. (4-5 pages is the ideal length. If your paper is shorter than 4 pages, it is probably not detailed or substantive enough. If it is longer than 5 pages, it probably either contains too much material or else needs to be edited for concision. Your paper should have normal fonts and margins. *You must submit your paper on Moodle using Turnitin.*)
  
- ❖ **Fourth short paper assignment:** Write a 4- or 5-page paper in which you (i) formulate and explain your favorite view about whether there is a God, and (ii) present, explain, and evaluate what you take to be the best argument against that view. (4-5 pages is the ideal length. If your paper is shorter than 4 pages, it is probably not detailed or substantive enough. If it is longer than 5 pages, it probably either contains too much material or else needs to be edited for concision. Your paper should have normal fonts and margins. *You must submit your paper on Moodle using Turnitin.*)
  
- ❖ **Fifth short paper assignment:** Write a 4- or 5-page paper in which you (i) formulate and explain your favorite ethical theory, and (ii) present, explain, and evaluate what you take to be the best argument against that theory. (4-5 pages is

the ideal length. If your paper is shorter than 4 pages, it is probably not detailed or substantive enough. If it is longer than 5 pages, it probably either contains too much material or else needs to be edited for concision. Your paper should have normal fonts and margins. *You must submit your paper on Moodle using Turnitin.*)

## Schedule

Date	Topic/Written Assignment	Reading	
Aug	25 Course intro		
	27 Arguments; The BIV Argument	"On Arguments"	
	28 Discussion: Responses to The BIV Argument		
Sep	1 The Problem of Skepticism	Vogt, "Ancient Skepticism"	
	3 NM's solution to The Problem of Skepticism	Markosian, "Do You Know That You Are Not a Brain In a Vat?"	
	4 Discussion: The Problem of Skepticism		
	6 <i>First short paper due at 5pm</i>		
	8 The Mind-Body Problem		
	10 Two arguments against Materialism	"Two Arguments Against Materialism"	
	11 Discussion: Responses to the two arguments		
	15 Two more arguments against Materialism	"Two More Arguments Against Materialism"	
	17 Interactionism; The No Interaction Argument	Shapiro, "Elisabeth, Princess of Bohemia"	
	18 Discussion: Responses to the arguments		
	22 The Problem of Other Minds; A Popular Argument for Materialism	"Two Arguments for Materialism"	
	24 Puzzles and paradoxes	Fields, "Intensional Liar"	
	25 Discussion: The Mind-Body Problem		
	27 <i>Second short paper due at 5pm</i>		
	29 The Problem of Freedom and Determinism	Griffith, <i>Free Will: The Basics</i> , Ch. 1-2	
	Oct	1 Moral responsibility and alternative possibilities	Griffith, <i>Free Will: The Basics</i> , Ch. 3
		2 Discussion: The Problem of Freedom and Determinism	

	6	Compatibilist views	Griffith, <i>Free Will: The Basics</i> , Ch. 4
	8	Incompatibilist views	Griffith, <i>Free Will: The Basics</i> , Ch. 5
	9	Discussion: Responses to The Problem of Freedom and Determinism	
	13	Other views	Griffith, <i>Free Will: The Basics</i> , Ch. 6
	15	Free will and science	Griffith, <i>Free Will: The Basics</i> , Ch. 7-8
	16	Discussion: Free Will	
	18	<b><i>Third short paper due at 5pm</i></b>	
	20	Intro to Philosophical Theology; cosmological arguments	
	22	Design Arguments; ontological arguments	"Two Arguments for Theism"
	23	Discussion: Arguments for Theism	
	27	Some arguments for Atheism	"Two Arguments for Atheism"
	29	More arguments for Atheism	
	30	Discussion: Arguments for Theism and Atheism	
Nov	1	<b><i>Fourth short paper due at 5pm</i></b>	
	3	Intro to ethical theory	
	5	Utilitarianism	Driver, "The History of Utilitarianism"
	6	Discussion: Utilitarianism	
	10	Kantian ethical theories	
	12	Rossian ethical theories	Markosian, "Rossian Minimalism"
	13	Discussion: What makes right actions right?	
	17	Metaethics; Realism and Nihilism; the meaning of life	Street, "Does Anything Really Matter or Did We Just Evolve to Think So?"
	19	Course wrap-up	
	20	Discussion: The meaning of life	
	30	<b><i>Fifth short paper due at 5pm</i></b>	