

## **Philosophy 101: Introduction to Philosophy**

Fall 2017

UNC Chapel Hill

MW 11:15 a.m. – 12:05 p.m. in GS G100, with a recitation on Fridays.

Prof. L. A. Paul

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Caldwell Hall 214B

Office Hours M 12:15-1:00pm, W 12:00-1:15pm

This course is a general introduction to philosophical questions, methods, discussion, reading, and writing. There will be a heavy emphasis on learning to discuss and write about philosophical issues. Recitation is a vital component of the course.

We will explore philosophical questions about the relationship of the mind to the external world, the nature of the self, whether there is meaning and purpose to human existence, and the nature of consciousness. The course presupposes no background in philosophy, but you should be prepared to work hard and think rigorously. The readings consist of articles and selections from texts in philosophy. Primary assignments (more may be added) are two in-class essay exams, two short papers, participation and presentation in the class debate, and an open-book final exam.

**Laptops, phones, and other electronics are not permitted for use in the classroom.**

**Exceptions: you may use a phone for the daily pop quizzes, and you may use electronic devices required for disability accommodation (with confirmation from Disability Services).**

### *Teaching Assistants*

**1. Dominik Berger**

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Office hours: Mondays 10-11, Wednesdays 1:30-2:30

**2. Michaela Tiller**

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Office hours: Mondays 1:30-2:30, Tuesdays 3:00-4:00

**3. Alfredo Watkins**

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Office hours: Mondays 10-11, Fridays 12:15-1:15

**4. Joanna Lawson**

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Office hours: Mondays 10-11, Tuesdays 1-2

### *Course Readings*

The course readings will be made available on Sakai. Many of the readings come from Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere*, and I recommend that you buy this book for your own use.

In addition, I highly recommend Jim Pryor's guides on reading philosophy papers (available at <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>) and writing philosophy papers (available at <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>).

### *Course Requirements*

There will be approximately 15–25 pages of reading assigned each week (sometimes less, sometimes a bit more). Understanding philosophical texts usually requires reading them multiple times, so you should expect to read most of the assignments more than once. Doing the weekly reading should probably take most students between three and four hours of uninterrupted time per week. If you are not able to make this time commitment, you shouldn't take the course.

You will write two different short papers for this course, the first of which you will rewrite after you have gotten comments from your TA. (Thus, there are three writing assignments in total.) There are two in-class exams and a Final. You are also required to prepare for, attend, and participate in weekly Recitation meetings.

Your grade will be calculated as follows:

Paper 1 (600–700 words): .....	5%
Pop quizzes .....	10%
Paper 1 rewrite (600–800 words)..	10%
Exam 1: .....	10%
Paper 2 (1200–1400 words): .....	10%
Exam 2: .....	10%
Class Debate: .....	10%
Final Exam: .....	20%
Recitation participation: .....	15%

### *Grading*

To maximize fairness in grading, all papers will be graded anonymously, with the author's PID appearing in place of his/her name, so that we do not know the identity of the author until after the grading process is complete. In addition, the TAs and I meet to discuss each paper assignment, to make sure that our grading standards are as consistent as possible. Finally, at the end of the semester, the grades for each TA's students are normalized to make sure that nobody is unfairly helped or hurt by being assigned to one TA rather than another.

Very few undergraduates are able to write papers at higher than a C level in their first attempt. This is why the first draft of Paper 1 is worth only 5% of your grade. If you don't get the grade you're hoping for in your first attempt at philosophical writing, you will still have plenty of opportunities to talk to your TA about your writing and to improve your grade in the course.

Grade appeals: Do not waste your TA's time with frivolous appeals for higher grades. However, if you are convinced that a mistake was made, you may appeal a grade for an assignment or an exam. To appeal a grade, you must first ask your TA to review the grade and give your reasons for the appeal. Your TA will then regrade the paper from scratch (note: this means that your new grade could be lower than your original grade). If you are not satisfied with what your TA decides, you may then appeal to me. If you appeal to me, I will regrade the

assignment again from scratch. I am a much tougher grader than the TAs, so please realize that unless your TA has made a serious error, it is very likely that the grade you get from me will be dramatically lower than your original grade.

### *Outside Sources*

Your papers should be based only on the course readings, lectures, and recitation discussions. Please do not consult textual sources other than the assigned readings for your papers; in my experience, this usually leads to confusion, since different philosophers often use the same terms somewhat differently. I especially warn you against consulting Wikipedia as a reference source, as it is often incomplete, inaccurate, and confusing on philosophical topics.

### *Plagiarism*

The UNC Instrument of Student Governance defines plagiarism as “deliberate or reckless representation of another’s words, thoughts, or ideas as one’s own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise.” You are on your honor not to commit plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty, and I and the TAs are on our honor to report any suspected cases of academic dishonesty to the Honor Court.

When writing, try not to use anyone else’s words in your paper. Do not use anyone else’s words anywhere in your paper without quoting them. If you use words from lecture or the assigned readings, they must appear in quotes in your paper, and you must provide an internal citation (such as a footnote or endnote) indicating their source. You may use whichever standard citation convention that you’d like (Chicago Manual of Style, MLA, etc.), as long as you apply that convention consistently.

It is also a form of plagiarism to closely paraphrase text from an external source, changing a few of the words but imitating the sentence/paragraph structure of the external source. Text that appears in your papers outside of quotation marks must be your own words, and those words must be presented within your own organizational and sentential structure. In addition, please bear in mind that plagiarism can be committed non-deliberately; if you are reckless in your use of other people’s words or ideas, then you have committed plagiarism even if you didn’t mean to do so. If you have any questions at all about what constitutes plagiarism, please don’t hesitate to come talk to me or your TA about it.

### *Late Papers*

Papers are due **at 5pm** on the dates indicated below. You will be given one “free” late day, to be used whenever you’d like. Once your free late day has been used, late papers will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade for each calendar day (or part of a day) that they are late. (For example, a paper due on a Friday that is turned in on the following Monday by 5pm will be docked a full letter grade.) We will consider reasonable requests for extensions that are made at least a week in advance of the paper due date. We will grant unanticipated extensions within a week of the due date only in the case of a serious and genuinely unforeseen medical or personal emergency, and only when the emergency can be verified with your academic advisor.

### **Schedule**

8/23: Course Overview. *The world and our place in it.*

#### **Paper 1 prompt distributed on 8/23**

8/28: *The allegory of the cave*. Plato's *Republic* book VII, 514a-521d

8/30: Nagel, *The View from Nowhere*, "Mind" pp. 13-27.

9/6: Descartes' *Meditations*. Meditation I.

9/11: Descartes' *Meditations*. Meditation 2 and Meditation 6.

9/13: Grau, 'Bad Dreams, Evil Demons, and the Experience Machine: Philosophy and The Matrix'

9/15: **Paper 1 due at 5pm.**

9/18: Nagel, *The View from Nowhere*, "Mind and Body" pp. 28-53.

9/20: **EXAM 1**

9/25: Plato, *Apology*

9/27: Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*

10/2: Nagel, "The Absurd"

10/4: Dennett, "Where am I?"

10/6: **Paper 1 Rewrite due at 5pm**

10/9: Edelman, *Computing the Mind: How the Mind Really Works*, ch. 9, through 9.4.

10/11: Borges, "Borges and I"

10/16: Nagel, *The View from Nowhere*, "The Objective Self" pp. 54-66

10/18: Hume's *Treatise*. Book I, part III, sec. VI

10/23: [review day]

10/25: **EXAM 2**

10/30: Hempel. "Laws and their role in scientific explanation", parts I and II, pp. 245-264

#### **Paper 2 prompt distributed on 10/30**

11/1: Nagel, *The View from Nowhere*, "Knowledge" pp. 67-89.

11/6: Pascal "The Wager"

11/8: Adams "Problems of Evil"

11/13: Feldman, "Reasonable Religious Disagreements"

11/15: Parfit. "Why anything? Why This?"

11/17: **Paper 2 due at 5pm**

11/20: Nagel, "What is it like to be a Bat?"

11/22: *No class: Thanksgiving Holiday*

11/27: Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know"

11/29: Paul, "What you can't expect when you're expecting"

12/4: Class debate on transformative choice

12/6: [final exam review day]

**Final Exam: Tuesday December 12<sup>th</sup>, 12:00pm.**