

University Name | Semester Year

COURSE CODE

Introduction to Philosophy

Day Time | Classroom

INSTRUCTOR:

Juliana Lima

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Office | Office Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will learn about the methods and core questions in three of the major sub-divisions of the so-called Western philosophical tradition: epistemology (the study of knowledge), metaphysics (the study of the fundamental nature of reality), and ethics. We will begin with a metaphysical discussion of the existence of God. Then we will turn to epistemological questions: what do we know, what can we know and how can we know? We will then come back to metaphysical questions, and consider different theories about the nature of mind, personal identity, among others. Lastly, we will discuss different theories to address meta-ethical questions: what makes an action good or bad? Is there morality without God? Is morality relative? In addition, we will discuss cases in normative ethics: is abortion morally permissible? do animals have rights?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	STUDENT OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Engage critically with selected important debates, positions, and methods in Western philosophy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Explain debates and positions clearly and precisely in written and oral form.Construct thought experiments and arguments against hypotheses presented in class.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand basic concepts and distinctions in the readings and theories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply theories and concepts in new contexts. • Use introduced concepts and distinctions in your own arguments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop original ideas on selected topics in philosophy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically engage with positions and arguments put forth in readings. • Write and present clear, precise, and moderately original argument on self-chosen topic.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 20% Reading Assignments
- 10% Participation
- 20% Presentation
- 25% Midterm Take Home Exam
- 25% Final Take Home Exam – cumulative

Reading Assignments

Reading Assignments will be graded based on student engagement with the readings on Perusall. For full credit, you must annotate throughout the entire reading, and respond to at least one other student's annotation, question, or comment in readings of at least **10 weeks**, each worth 2 points. You are expected to engage with the required readings in sufficient detail for annotating, commenting, and critical discussion, and be conversant with the material so that discussion is substantive and lively. Annotations, questions, or comments should be done by **Tuesday** of the week it is assigned at **11:59pm** to count toward your grade.

Participation

Participation grade will be based on student's engagement in lecture and participation on in class activities throughout the course. Attendance will be taken but do not expect a perfect grade merely for being an organic body.

Midterm

Midterm Take Home Exam is in long essay format, with two or three questions. The questions will be posted online at the end of week 6, and it is due on week 7, DATE/TIME. You will have **one** week to complete this assignment.

Presentation

Students will be divided in groups. Each group will be assigned a case of the Applied Ethics section, and will have to present arguments in favor and against a case based on the reading, and bring considerations outside the readings. For full credit, students have to submit a short report (2-3 pages), give an in class presentation, and ask questions to other groups .

Final

inal Take Home Exam is cumulative and in short essay format. The questions will be posted online on the last day of classes, and it is due on DATE/TIME. You will have 4 days to complete this assignment.

NOTE: Things change – the Fates are fickle. Consequently, information found on this syllabus is subject to revision as we progress through the quarter: Readings and content may be added (or cut) depending on our rate of progress, and it may be necessary to amend the due date of the assignments. Revisions will be announced in lecture and posted online. It is each student's responsibility to keep informed of any changes.

MATERIALS

All readings will be available on Perusall.

- Blackburn, Simon. *Think: A Compelling Introduction to Philosophy*. 2nd edition, Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Additional readings.

Students are expected to have done the readings and *before* lecture.

COURSE SCHEDULE & READINGS

WEEK 1: Intro & Arguments

- Why Philosophy?
- Argument vs. Explanation.
- Deductive vs. Inductive.
- Responding to Arguments.
- Thought Experiments: Reddit, “AITA, that if Jurassic Park were real, I would tell my husband that he cannot go.” https://www.reddit.com/r/AmItheAsshole/comments/chzjl5/aita_that_if_jurassic_park_were_real_i_would_tell/.

WEEK 1 - 3: God

- Argument by Analogy
 - Blackburn, Intro to Chap 5 (pp. 207–210) & The Wise Architect (pp. 225–232).
- Cosmological Argument
 - Blackburn, Elephants and Tortoises (pp. 219–225).
- Ontological Argument
 - Blackburn, Anselm’s Argument: Dreamboats and Turkeys (pp. 210–219).
- The Problem of Evil & Miracles (if time permits)
 - Blackburn, The Problem of Evil (pp. 232–241).
 - Blackburn, Miracles and Testimony (pp. 241–252).

WEEK 4 - 6: Epistemology

- Skepticism
 - Blackburn, Chap 1 (pp. 29–51).
 - George E. Moore “Proof of an External World”.
- The Problem of Other Minds
 - Stephen Prior, “Other Minds and the Argument from Analogy”.
- Sources of Justification
 - Blackburn, Foundations and Webs (pp. 61–68).
- Social Epistemology
 - Thi Nguyen, “Escape the Echo Chamber”. <https://aeon.co/essays/why-its-as-hard-to-escape-an-echo-chamber-as-it-is-to-flee-a-cult>
 - Bence Nanay, “Testimony and Desires”. <https://aeon.co/essays/can-you-stop-yourself-being-infected-with-other-peoples-desires>

WEEK 7 - 9: Metaphysics

- Social Ontology
 - Josh Scherer, “A Bro And A Philosopher Debate The True Meaning Of A Sandwich” <https://firstwefeast.com/eat/2015/04/philosophy-of-meat-bread>
 - Ian Hacking, “Making Up People” <https://www.lrb.co.uk/v28/n16/ian-hacking/making-up-people>
- Mind
 - Blackburn, Chap 2 (pp. 74–115).
- Personal Identity
 - Blackburn, Chap 4 (pp. 168–194).
 - Criminal Minds, S3 E19 “Tabula Rasa”.

WEEK 10 & 12: Ethics

- Utilitarianism, Deontology, & Virtue Ethics
 - Blackburn, Practical Reasoning (pp. 395–400).
- Relativism
 - Blackburn, Relativism (pp. 403–405).
 - Reddit, “AITA for piercing my daughter’s ears?” https://www.reddit.com/r/AmItheAsshole/comments/ckbuah/aita_for_piercing_my_daughters_ears/
- Morality without God
 - Blackburn, *Being Good*, The Death of God (pp. 10-19).
 - Dalai Lama *Ethics for the New Millennium*, chapter 15 “The Role of Religion in Modern Society”.
 - Plato, Euthyphro, excerpt.

WEEK 13 & 14: Applied Ethics – Presentation

Each group should choose a topic for a presentation. Here’s a list of possible topics. If you want to present about a topic not in this list, please email me to discuss.

- Euthanasia
 - Helga Kuhse "The Case for Active Voluntary Euthanasia".
 - Fr. Robert Barry "The Case against Active Voluntary Euthanasia".
- Abortion
 - Judith Jarvis Thomson "A Defense of Abortion".
 - Don Marquis "Why Abortion is Immoral".
 - Michael Tooley "Abortion and Infanticide".

- Drugs
 - Michael Huemer "America's Unjust Drug War".
 - Peter De Marneffe "Do We Have a Right to Use Drugs?".
 - James Q. Wilson "Against the Legalization of Drugs".
- Gun Control
 - Michael Huemer "Is there a right to own a gun?".
 - Nicholas Dixon "Handguns, Violent Crime, and Self-Defense".
- Animal Rights
 - Tom Regan "The Case for Animal Rights".
 - Peter Singer "All Animals Are Equal".
 - Tibor R. Machan "Do Animals Have Rights?".
 - Nathanael Johnson "Is there a moral case for eating meat?".
 - Reddit, "AITA for keeping animal remains in a shared freezer?" https://www.reddit.com/r/AmItheAsshole/comments/d08a5y/aita_for_keeping_animal_remains_in_a_shared/.
- Immigration
 - Michael Huemer "Is There a Right to Immigrate?".
 - Stephen Macedo "The Moral Dilemma of U.S. Immigration Policy: Open Borders versus Social Justice?".
- Monogamy
 - John McMurtry "Monogamy: A Critique".
 - Bertrand Russel "Our Sexual Ethics".
- Famine
 - Peter Singer "Famine, Affluence, and Morality".
- Genetic Engineering
 - Heidi Ledford "Riding the CRISPR Wave".
 - Michael J. Sandel. "The Case Against Perfection".
 - Matt Ridley "The New Eugenics".

GRADING

The usual grading scale will apply: 0-59% F, 60-62% D-, 63-66% D, 67-69% D+, 70-72% C-, 73-76% C, 77-79% C+, 80-82% B-, 83-86% B, 87-89% B+, 90-92% A-, 93-96% A, 97-100% A+.

Paper and exams will be graded based on the following **six** evaluation criteria:

Bare minimum: is the paper prompt or question addressed at all?

Clarity: Are the explanations of technical terms and arguments clear, understandable, and accessible to someone who is not taking the class?

Correctness: Are the explanations of technical terms, theories and arguments correct? Are the theories and arguments ascribed to the right philosophers?

Originality: Are there original cases, objections, or replies?

Relevance: Are there information, theses, cases, or arguments that are irrelevant to address the prompt? Is the paper lacking explanation of a relevant theory, thesis, case, or argument?

Structure: Does the paper have a clear structure, with introduction and conclusion? Are the theses, cases, and arguments presented in an organized way?

NOTE: While there is no evaluation criterion for grammar or typos, they may affect the grade if they are severe enough to compromise understanding. So, before submitting your paper or take home exam, make sure to ask a friend to proof read besides proof reading the paper yourself. Also take note of campus resources listed below that offer assistance with essay-writing.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I take academic dishonesty in any form very seriously: I will prosecute any offenses, seeking penalties ranging up to and including expulsion from the university. The university's Academic guide to Integrity is available online: <http://judicialaffairs.sa.ucsb.edu/PDF/academicintegflyer.pdf>. It is every student's responsibility to be familiar with the university's policies. If you see anything there that you don't understand please contact me.

STUDENT SUPPORT AND CAMPUS RESOURCES

If you are facing a major medical or another major difficulty that is keeping you from doing well in the class, contact me as soon as you can. I am happy to work with you to find the best course of action and, if possible, to help you complete the course successfully. But I can't help if you don't let me know about your circumstances as soon as they arise.

**** Please, don't wait until after the final exam to let me know about your circumstances. At that point there is virtually nothing we can do to accommodate you.****

1) CAPS (Counseling & Psychological Services)

If you're dealing with depression, anxiety, or are just feeling overwhelmed, CAPS is available to help. They offer individual and group counseling, as well as relaxation rooms and other resources to make the quarter more bearable.

- tel: (805) 893-4411
- <http://counseling.sa.ucsb.edu>

2) CARE (Campus Advocacy Resources & Education)

CARE provides resources related to sexual assault, stalking, and intimate partner violence. They offer free and confidential counseling, medical and legal assistance, and help with referrals for long-term support for those who need it.

- tel: (805) 893-4613
- <http://wgse.sa.ucsb.edu/Care>

3) RCSGD (Resource Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity)

The RCSGD provides resources for gender, sexual, romantic minorities such as: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, asexual, intersex, and otherwise gender/sexual/romantic nonconforming individuals.

They also collect reports of hate incidents and maintain a list of gender neutral bathrooms on campus.

- tel: (805) 893-5847
- <http://wgse.sa.ucsb.edu/sgd/>

4) CLAS (Campus Learning Assistance Services)

CLAS offers workshops on study skills like note-taking and time management; group tutorials on math, science, and economics; assistance with essay-writing, and other free services that will help you perform well in your classes.

- <http://clas.sa.ucsb.edu>

5) **DSP** (*Disabled Students Program*)

If you have any sort of disability - physical or mental, permanent or temporary – we strongly encourage you to register with DSP. They can then notify your instructors if you need certain accommodations during classes or during tests.

A disability can be something like difficulty seeing or hearing; difficulty attending class due to physical or emotional distress; chronic anxiety or depression; or anything else that interferes with your schoolwork.

There's no shame in seeking help for these sorts of things, but unfortunately UCSB requires that instructors receive confirmation from DSP before providing accommodation. Since DSP is often busy, contact them as soon as possible if you need or expect to need their support.

- tel: (805) 893-2668
- <http://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu>