

# **Week 06 Chapter 6: Reality**

**PHIL101B Reality**

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# Preface

This is a Quarto book.

To learn more about Quarto books visit <https://quarto.org/docs/books>.

# 1 Introduction

This is a book created from markdown and executable code.

See Knuth (1984) for additional discussion of literate programming.

**Part I**

**Introduction to Logic**

## 2 Introduction

Previously, this course used John Nolt's *Logics* as its text book. While I still believe that the heavy emphasis on formal logic is important, it was not intuitive, and logic done well is intuitive. I eventually discovered Peter (smit21b?)'s *Logic Matters*. I recommended it to students as a supplementary reading and was pleased with the feedback and the improvement in their understanding. I am now relying on Smith's introductory text as the main text for this course, although I will contrast it with Nolt's more formal approach at various points.

**Focus:** The focus of this course is . . .

- Informal Logic
- Classical Propositional Logic syntax and semantics
- Natural Deduction Proofs for Propositional Logic
- Formalization Rules and General Propositions
- Predicate (Quantification Rules) Logic Semantics and Inference

**Free! Course Text:** [Smith, Peter. 2021. An Introduction to Formal Logic. Second edition, Reprinted with corrections. Logic Matters.](#)

### 2.1 Summary

In the image below, Sherlock Holmes is wearing a top hat. Therefore in Fiction  $f$ , it is true that:

- Holmes lived in Baker Street.
- Holmes lived nearer to Paddington Station than to Waterloo Station.
- Holmes was just a person, a person of flesh and blood.
- Holmes really existed.
- Someone lived for many years at 22 iB Baker Street.



Figure 2.1: 'Holmes wears a top hat'

## 3 Syllabus



Figure 3.1: ‘Holmes wears a top hat’

**Focus:** The focus of this course is . . .

- Informal Logic

- Classical Propositional Logic syntax and semantics
- Natural Deduction Proofs for Propositional Logic
- Formalization Rules and General Propositions
- Predicate (Quantification Rules) Logic Semantics and Inference

In this course, we will systematically look at arguments. We look at arguments for several reasons. One is to analyze the statements that people make. For instance, considering the photo above, what does it mean when someone says: “Holmes wears a top hat.”

For one, the statement usually does not refer to an actually existent entity, thing, or person. Perhaps there really was someone alive at one time, whose name was ‘Holmes’, and it is conceivable that this person wore a top hat. But the statement ‘Holmes wears a top hat’ usually does not refer to *that* person, but rather to the fictional character from the Author Conan Doyle novels.

Even though the statement refers to a fictional character however, it is still a true statement, but how?

We will focus on these kinds of questions in two ways. Consider the following:

1. Cups of coffee from GreatBeanz that looked and tasted just fine haven’t killed anyone in the past.
2. My present cup of GreatBeanz coffee looks and tastes just fine.

Taking sentences 1 and 2 above, it will be likely that you might conclude 3 following below.

3. This present cup of GreatBeanz coffee won’t kill me

While we do this kind of reasoning and argumentation all the time, it is not the kind of reasoning and argumentation that we will focus on. Why?

Consider the following slight change:

3. My arch nemesis has poisoned this cup of coffee with an invisible and tasteless poison.

By systematically looking at arguments, we will hope to avoid these kinds of outcomes. We do this by focusing on what is called internal cogency or logical validity. This is merely a fancy way of saying that if one accepts sentences 1 and 2, then they must accept 3.

Compare the argument above with the following one:

1. All Republican voters support capital punishment.
2. Jo is a Republican voter.

Therefore

3. Jo supports capital punishment.



Unlike the first argument, if someone accepts 1 and 2, then they must accept 3. What this means is that if they will reject 3, then it is either because they've rejected 1 or 2 or 1 and 2 are not relevant, but they cannot *logically* accept 1 and 2 while rejecting 3.

In this course, we will look at how critical thinking and reasoning will help us to evaluate the truth of statements, whether they are about fictional characters, or coffee.

Office Hours:

- When:
  - Tuesday: 1:00–3:00 PM
  - Thursday: 1:00–3:00 PM
- Where: Elizabeth Hall 104
- How to book: Drop in, email, or book via [Microsoft Bookings](#)

## 3.1 PLOs

Every course within a given department is expected to satisfy one (or more) of that program's Learning Outcomes (PLOs), as articulated in that department's Curriculum Map. Students who take a philosophy course will develop their capacity to (I.) understand and interpret philosophical texts, (II.) identify arguments, (III.) critically assess arguments, (IV.) identify philosophical traditions and methods, (IV.) and/or communicate clearly and effectively. The philosophy department's five Learning Outcomes are arranged hierarchically, so that the later Learning Outcomes presuppose some familiarity with the lower-order skills. The assignments and work within a given course are expected to develop the skills associated with that course's PLO, while strengthening the lower- order skills and setting the stage for the development of the higher- order skills. The PLO associated with this course is:

II. Argumentation: Students can identify and evaluate argument structures effectively.

Information about the philosophy department's PLOs can be found at:

<http://www.stetson.edu/artsci/philosophy/curriculummap.php>

### 3.1.1 Grading:

### 3.1.2 Assignments:

Weekly Exercise	8%
Exam 1	23%
Exam 2	23%

Exam 3	23%
Final Exam	23%

Required Text: [Smith, Peter. 2021. An Introduction to Formal Logic. Second edition, Reprinted with corrections. Logic Matters:](#)

Available Here: [https://www.logicmatters.net/resources/pdfs/IFL2\\_LM.pdf](https://www.logicmatters.net/resources/pdfs/IFL2_LM.pdf)

### 3.1.3 For grading I use the following scale:

A	93-96
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76

## 3.2 Course Schedule

Week	Unit	Topic	Pages
Week 1	1-3	What is deductive logic, validity and soundness?	1-8
Week 2	4-6	Proofs and counter examples, and logical validity	28
Week 3	7-8	Propositions, forms, and some syntax	52
Week 4	9-11	More syntax, some semantics, and form	72
Week 5	12-14	Truth functions, adequacy and tautologies	104
Week 6	15-17	Entailing tautologies, and absurdity	127

Week	Unit	Topic	Pages
Week 7	18-19	The truth-functional conditionals and natural deduction	148
Week 8	20-22	Predicate proofs: conjunction, negation, disjunction and conditionals	174
Week	Unit	Topic	Pages
Week 9	23-24	PL proofs: theorems, and metatheory	211
Week 10	25-27	Names, predicates, quantifiers, and variables	230
Week 11	28-31	QL languages, simple translations, and QL argumentation	258
Week 12		Interlude: Arguing in QL, informal QL rules, QL proofs	290
Week 13	33-35	More QL Proofs, empty domains, Q-Valuations	315
Week 14	36	Q-Validity	346
	37	QL Proofs, metatheory	354
Week 15	38	Identity	361
	39	QL=Languages	367
	40	Definite Descriptions	375
	41	QL=Proofs	382

### 3.3 Academic Accommodation

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of a course, you should meet with the course instructor to discuss ways to ensure full participation. If disability-related accommodations are necessary, you must register with Academic Success through the Accessibility Services Center located at 209 E. Bert Fish Dr. (386-822- 7127; <http://www.stetson.edu/administration/academic-success/>) and notify the course instructor

of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. The student, course instructor and Academic Success will plan how best to coordinate accommodations. Academic Integrity - DO NOT CHEAT. As a member of Stetson University, I agree to uphold the highest standards of integrity in my academic work. I promise that I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid of any kind on my tests, papers, and assignments. When using the ideas, thoughts, or words of another in my work, I will always provide clear acknowledgement of the individuals and sources on which I am relying. I will avoid using fraudulent, falsified, or fabricated evidence and/or material. I will refrain from resubmitting without authorization work for one class that was obtained from work previously submitted for academic credit in another class. I will not destroy, steal, or make inaccessible any academic resource material. By my actions and my example, I will strive to promote the ideals of honesty, responsibility, trust, fairness, and respect that are at the heart of Stetson's Honor System. Cheating violates university regulations and is a reportable offense that may result in academic suspension or dismissal from Stetson University. Every violation of the Honor System will be promptly reported to the Honor System Council for further investigation. In addition to these academic integrity standards, I expect students to treat everyone in the classroom—the instructor, fellow students, and guests—with common courtesy and respect.

### **3.4 Counseling Center Statement**

College can be extremely stressful for students, especially if this is the first time you've been away from home for an extended period of time or if there are other pressures that you are facing. For this reason, you may find it helpful to consult the University Counseling Center. Here is their contact information: Phone number: 386-822-8900 Location: The office is located in the gray house behind the Hollis Center pool, at the corner of University Avenue and Bert Fish Drive. Office hours: Weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m If you experience a mental health emergency after hours, you can simply call Public Safety (386-822-7300) and ask to speak with the on-call counselor. We are staffed with qualified professional counselors who are trained to support and guide students through difficult transitions, experiences, and feelings. Counseling is confidential and free of charge for all currently enrolled Stetson University students.

## 4 Lectures

## 5 Chapter 1: Deductive Logic

Unit	Topic	Pages
1	What is deductive logic?	1-8
2	Validity and soundness	9-19
3	Forms of inference	20

### 5.1 What is an argument?

- How can we determine the premises of an argument?
- What is an inference marker and what are some examples?
- How do we tell whether a given statement is the premise of an argument, or the conclusion?

As I mentioned previously, the most important component of this course, is being able to evaluate arguments for *internal* cogency.

But before we evaluate arguments for *internal* cogency, we must be able to recognize something as an argument.

### 5.2 Some Examples

We are going to reorganize the following statements into arguments.

1. Most doctors are caring. After all, most ordinary people are caring — and politicians are ordinary people.
2. Anyone who knows how to pole vault, even if she doesn't get a gold medal in the olympics, will at least get toned arms and abdomen. Jane knows how to pole vault, so she at least has toned arms and abdomen.
3. Peter is shorter than Paul and Jim is taller than Paul. So Peter is shorter than Jim.
4. At 12am, Fred is always either bartending, or at home. And assuming he's at home, he's building his model train set. Fred was not bartending at midnight. So he was building his model train set.
5. Kermit is green all over. Hence Kermit is not red all over.

6. Every letter is in a pigeon hole. There are more letters than there are pigeon holes. So some pigeon hole contains more than one letter.
7. Miracles cannot happen. Since, by definition, a miracle is an event incompatible with the laws of nature. And everything that happens is always consistent with the laws of nature.

There is more than one kind of internal cogency however. We will be talking about ***logical validity***. Internal cogency and logical validity are what underlie the kinds “systematic” evaluations of arguments that we will learn about in this course. Once again, there are more than one of these.

Consider the following:

1. Most doctors are caring. After all, most ordinary people are caring — and doctors are ordinary people.
  1. Most ordinary people are caring
  2. Doctors are ordinary people
  3. Most Doctors are caring
2. Anyone who knows how to pole vault, even if she doesn’t get a gold medal in the olympics, will at least have toned arms and abdomen. Jane knows how to pole vault, so she at least has toned arms and abdomen.
  1. Anyone who knows how to pole vault, even if she doesn’t get a gold medal in the olympics, will at least get toned arms and abdomen.
  2. Jane knows how to pole vault.
  3. Jane will at least have toned arms and abdomen.
3. Peter is shorter than Paul and Jim is taller than Paul. So Peter is shorter than Jim.
  1. Peter is shorter than Paul and Jim is taller than Paul.
  2. So Peter is shorter than Jim.
4. At 12am, Fred is always either bartending, or at home. And assuming he’s at home, he’s building his model train set. Fred was not bartending at midnight. So he was building his model train set.
  1. At 12am, Fred is always either bartending, or at home.
  2. Assuming he’s at home, he’s building his model train set.
  3. Fred was not bartending at midnight.
  4. So Fred was building his model train set at midnight.
5. Kermit is green all over. Hence Kermit is not red all over.
  1. Kermit is green all over.
  2. Hence Kermit is not red all over.

6. Every letter is in a pigeon hole. There are more letters than there are pigeon holes. So some pigeon hole contains more than one letter.
  1. Every letter is in a pigeon hole.
  2. There are more letters than there are pigeon holes.
  3. So some pigeon hole contains more than one letter.
7. Miracles cannot happen. Since, by definition, a miracle is an event incompatible with the laws of nature. And everything that happens is always consistent with the laws of nature.
  1. A miracle is an event that is incompatible with the laws of nature.
  2. Everything that happens is always consistent with the laws of nature.
  3. Therefore miracles cannot happen.

### 5.3 Kinds of Evaluation

- Are the premises supporting the conclusion true?
- Is the inference from the premises to the conclusion lock-tight?
- How do we determine whether the inference step is lock-tight?
- Assume the truth of the premises

### 5.4 Deduction and Induction

#### ! Important

If an inference step from premises to a conclusion is completely watertight, i.e. if the truth of the premises absolutely guarantee the truth of the conclusion, then we say that this inference step is *deductively valid*.

Equivalently, when an inference step is deductively valid, we will say that its premises deductively entail its conclusion. (smit94?)

### 5.5 Argument Patterns, or Generalizing

Lewis Carroll: No interesting poems are unpopular among people of real taste. No modern poetry is free from affectation. All your poems are on the subject of soap bubbles. No affected poetry is popular among people of real taste. Only a modern poem would be on the subject of soap bubbles. Therefore none of your poems are interesting.



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No interesting poems are unpopular among people of real taste. No modern poetry is free from affectation. All your poems are on the subject of soap bubbles. No affected poetry is popular among people of real taste. Only a modern poem would be on the subject of soap bubbles. Therefore none of your poems are interesting.

- **Conclusion:** None of your poems are interesting
- (1) No interesting poems are unpopular among people of real taste. (premiss)
- (2) No modern poetry is free from affectation. (premiss)
- (3) All your poems are on the subject of soap bubbles. (premiss)
- (4) No affected poetry is popular among people of real taste. (premiss)
- (5) Only a modern poem would be on the subject of soap bubbles. (premiss)
- (6) All your poems are modern poems. (from 3, 5)
- (7) All your poems are affected. (from 2, 6)
- (8) None of your poems are popular among people of real taste. (from 7, 4)
- (9) All interesting poems are popular among people of real taste. (from 1)
- (10) None of your poems are interesting. (from 8, 9)

## 5.6 Validity and Soundness

Covered So Far:

- Inference steps being deductively valid.
- Therefore some premises deductively entail a conclusion.
- This chapter informally explores validity and entailment

### 5.6.1 Defining Validity

An inference step is *valid* if and only if (iff) there is no possible situation in which its premises would be true and its conclusion false. Equivalently, in such a case, we will say that the inference's premises *entail* its conclusion.

## 5.7 Consistency and Equivalency

### 5.8 What is a proposition?

One or more propositions are (jointly) *inconsistent* if and only if there is no possible situation in which these propositions are all true together.

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So what is a proposition?

Ayer, A. J. Language, Truth and Logic. Vol. 47. V. Gollancz, 1936.

For, if I am right, it will also follow that any sentence, whether of the English or any other language, that is equivalent to  $s$  can be validly derived, in the language in question, from any sentence that is equivalent to  $r$ ; and it is this that my use of the word “proposition” indicates. (Page 7)

- First a sentence
- Next a statement (imperative, declarative, interrogative, exclamatory)
- Empirically Verifiable
- Therefore is always either true or false

Notice which ones can be true or false? Imperative: Go to your room!, Interrogative: Did you have dinner with the victim the night of their murder? Exclamatory: Oh darn! or Declarative?

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Some Examples

If some propositions are consistent with each other, then adding a further true proposition to them can't make them inconsistent.

- Yes?
  - No?
- 

Consider:

- Socrates is a woman.

- No women are philosophers.
- Now consider:
  - Socrates is a philosopher

Can both be true?

Either inconsistent, or one is false.

### 5.8.1 Validity, Invalidity, and Truth

#### *The Invalidity Principle*

The only combination ruled out by the definition of validity is a valid inference step's having all true premisses and yet a false conclusion. Deductive validity is about the necessary preservation of truth – and therefore a valid inference step cannot take us from actually true premisses to an actually false conclusion. (**smit94?**)

- 
- Either premises can be jointly consistent, if there is at least one situation where they can all be true together
  - There are inconsistent if there is no possible situation in which all are true together in that situation.

#### *Or premises taken with with their conclusion:*

- Can the premises of an argument be true while at the same time, denying the truth of the conclusion?
    - Yes: Inconsistent
    - No: Consistent
- 

### 5.8.2 Equivalency

Two propositions are equivalent iff they are true in exactly the same possible situations.

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### 5.8.3 Some Examples

- (1) If  $A$  entails  $C$ , and  $C$  is equivalent to  $C_0$ , then  $A$  entails  $C_0$ .
- (2) If  $A$  entails  $C$ , and  $A$  is equivalent to  $A_0$ , then  $A_0$  entails  $C$ .
- (3) If  $A$  and  $B$  entail  $C$ , and  $A$  is equivalent to  $A_0$ , then  $A_0$  and  $B$  entail  $C$ .

## 6 Ch. 3, Forms of Inference

1. Whatever Donald Trump says is true.
2. Donald Trump says that the Flying Spaghetti Monster exists.

So,

3. It is true that the Flying Spaghetti Monster exists.
- 

Note three easy consequences of our definition of soundness:

1. any sound argument has a true conclusion;
2. no pair of sound arguments can have conclusions inconsistent with each other;
3. no sound argument has inconsistent premisses.

Why do these claims hold? For the following reasons:

4. A sound argument starts from true premisses and involves a necessarily truth-preserving inference move – so it must end up with a true conclusion.
5. Since a pair of sound arguments will have a pair of true conclusions, this means that the conclusions are true together. If they actually are true together, then of course they can be true together. And if they can be true together then (by definition) the conclusions are consistent with each other.
6. Since inconsistent premisses cannot all be true together, an argument starting from those premisses cannot satisfy the first of the conditions for being sound.

### 6.1 More Forms of Inference (Examples)

# 7 Exams

## 7.0.0.0.1 Chapter 1

What are the premisses, inference markers, and conclusions of the following arguments? Which of these arguments do you suppose involve deductively valid reasoning? Why?

Some forms or patterns of inference are deductively reliable, then, meaning that every inference step which is an instance of the same pattern is valid (Smith 2021, 6).

(Just improvise, and answer the best you can!)

- (1) The Democrats will win the election. There's only a week to go. The polls put them 20 points ahead, and a lead of 20 points with only a week to go to polling day can't be overturned.
- (2) Most pelicans are corrupt. After all, most ordinary birds are corrupt – and pelicans are ordinary birds.
- (3) Anyone who is well prepared for the race, even if she doesn't come in first, will at least come in the top 10. Jane is well prepared, so she will at least come in the top ten.

## 7.0.0.0.2 Chapter 2

Which of the following claims are true and which are false? Explain why the true claims hold good, and give counterexamples to the false claims.

- (4) If an argument has false premisses and a true conclusion, then the truth of the conclusion can't really be owed to the premisses: so the argument cannot really be valid.
- (5) You can make an invalid argument valid by adding extra premisses.

### 7.0.0.0.3 Chapter 3

Which of the following patterns of inference are deductively reliable, meaning that all their instances are valid? (Here ‘F’, ‘G’ and ‘H’ hold the places for general terms.) If you suspect an inference pattern is unreliable, find an instance which has to be invalid because it has true premises and a false conclusion.

- (6) Some F are G; no G is H; so, some F are not H.

### 7.0.0.0.4 Chapter 4

Which of the following arguments are valid? Where an argument is valid, sketch an informal proof. Some of the examples are enthymemes that need repair.

- (7) Only logicians are good philosophers. No existentialists are logicians. Some existentialists are French philosophers. So, some French philosophers are not good philosophers.
- (8) No philosopher is illogical. Jones keeps making argumentative mistakes. No logical person keeps making argumentative mistakes. All existentialists are philosophers. So, Jones is not an existentialist.

### 7.0.0.0.5 Chapter 6

- (9) Only logicians are wise. Some philosophers are not logicians. All who love Aristotle are wise. Hence some of those who don’t love Aristotle are still philosophers.

### 7.0.0.0.6 Chapter 8

Give negations of the following in natural English:

- (10) It is not the case that both Jack and Jill went up the hill.

Using the provided interpretations, render the following into formalized language:

P: Peter loves Jane.

Q: Jane loves Peter.

R: Jesse loves Jane.

S: Peter is wise.

- (1) Peter doesn’t love Jane.
- (2) Peter is wise and he loves Jane.
- (3) Either Peter loves Jane or Jesse does.
- (4) Peter and Jane love each other.
- (5) Neither Peter loves Jane nor does Jesse.
- (6) It isn’t the case that Peter loves Jane nor does Jane love Peter.

- (7) Either Peter is not wise or both he and Jesse love Jane.
- (8) It isn't the case that either Peter loves Jane or Jane loves Peter.



## **Part II**

# **Introduction to Philosophy**

# 8 Introduction

## 8.1 The Cave

*Descending back into Plato's Cave:* Onyx's glowing secret cave ([silent looping ambient video from Star Citizen](#))

## 8.2

Learning Objectives

- Develop critical thinking and reasoning skills
- Improve reading, writing, and discussion abilities
- Recognize and apply philosophical methods

### 8.2.1 No Lectures

You are about to enter The Cave of Wonder and Reason. Forget who you where, here — every cave, dungeon, dream, room, forces you to answer a question philosophers have bled over for 2,500 years. *What is consciousness, What is reality?, What is knowledge?*.

### 8.2.2

Here's the deal:

You roll dice. You defend a position. Is it yours? Who cares. You make choices, are they yours? No, they belong to your avatar. You question your beliefs? No, you question your avatar's beliefs. You eat your friend.

This is not a game. It's a philosophy lab inside an experience machine.

By December, you'll have lived Socrates, Descartes, Mill, and Rawls — not just read them.

Pick one, this is your character for the rest of the course. That character's beliefs are your beliefs. In fact, its better that we don't share our personal beliefs. Make up some. Write your name on them.

Today, we begin in Room A. A voice echoes:

- “What is philosophy?”

Roll a d20. Tell me ***an*** answer.

## 9 Syllabus

### 9.1 Welcome to Introduction to Philosophy

A primary objective of this course is to teach students how to construct good arguments and how to assess the arguments of others. In order to accomplish this goal, during the first part of the semester we will read about and discuss what makes a particular argument good or bad and practice constructing good arguments. In addition, we will discuss knowledge and scientific inquiry as this will help us to understand the importance of methodological thought and speech.

A second objective is to provide an introduction to philosophy. We will read and discuss a variety of philosophical theories (I understand you may not yet know what I mean by the term *philosophical theory*) and apply these theories to one strange issue: whether or not we are simulations. We will be looking at this issue through several important philosophical questions, if we are a simulation, what is real?, if we are a simulation, how would we know?, if we are a simulation, would our values be different? We will not only look at contemporary issues about ai and sim theory, but will also look at how philosophers of the past posed and attempted to answer this question. Significantly, when we discuss ethics, metaphysics, and epistemology. In doing, we will apply what we learned about argumentation during the first part of the semester.

In this course, we will use David Chalmer's book *Reality+* to look at questions humans have been asking for thousands of years. While the primary focus of the book is look at one question in particular "Are we in a simulation?", we use this question to frame others such as those above.

### 9.2 Class Meeting Times

- Mondays and Wednesdays
- 10:30am - 11:45am

### 9.3 Course Convenor

Dr. Monty Reynolds   mreynolds1@stetson.edu

Office Hours:

- When:
  - Tuesday: 1:00–3:00 PM
  - Thursday: 1:00–3:00 PM
- Where: Elizabeth Hall 104
- How to book: Drop in, email, or book via [Microsoft Bookings](#)

### 9.4 Course Information

Introduction to Philosophy: Value, Meaning, and Humanity's Place in the Modern World

Times: 10:30-11:45 Days: Mons and Weds or Tues Thurs Where: Davis Hall 209

### 9.5 Required Texts:

Chalmers, David J.. Reality+: Virtual Worlds and the Problems of Philosophy. United Kingdom: Penguin Books Limited, 2022.

Here is an amazon link to the book: <https://www.amazon.com/Reality-Virtual-Worlds-Problems-Philosophy/dp/0393635805>

This will also be supplemented with handouts.

### 9.6 Expectations:

- Come prepared to engage with assigned readings in class, referencing specific passages as prompted by the instructor.
- Bring physical or digital copies of readings to class for annotation and short reflections.
- Submit all assignments via Canvas by the due date.
- Active participation and regular attendance are essential for success.
- Success: Active participation, timely submissions, and attendance are key.

## 9.7 Evaluated Activities

***Weekly Reflections (32 points):*** These will be done each week in class. Each reflection is worth a possible total of 8 points. There are 12 possible reflections. I will only grade 8 or your best reflections for a possible total of 32 points.

Each week on Wednesday (except Aug. 19th, August 26th, Oct 14th, Nov 25th, Dec 2nd, Dec 9th) a short weekly will be due, (just the front and back of a 3x5 note card). Weeklies will be based on the assigned readings and/or the discussion from the previous class. Each weekly is worth 7 points (maximum), and I will assign a total of 11 weeklies. I will drop the three lowest scored weeklies. Since I include in your total paper grade 11 weeklies at 10 points per weekly, the total points possible on weeklies is 110. If you should earn more than one hundred points on weeklies, all additional points count as extra credit. Finally, since the weekly is due at the beginning of class, arriving to class on time is essential. I will not accept the weekly after 5 minutes from the start of class. If you arrive late or are absent, you receive a zero for the weekly. I do give partial credit for weeklies, and just putting your name on the top is worth one point. (It would be best if you purchase a set of 3x5 note cards to right your weekly on.) The purpose of these weeklies is to help me assess how effectively I am going over the material. As such, what I am looking for is a short/ concise exposition of either the reading or of the discussion from the week before. I will let you know which when I assign the weekly on the Monday prior.

***Quizzes 1 & 2 (80 points):*** Each Quiz is worth a possible total of 10 points per category, times 4 categories equals 40 points times 2 Quizzes.

Each of the scheduled examinations will cover lectures, discussions and assigned readings from the classes that precede it. You are responsible for assigned readings without regard to whether they were covered in class. The final examination will focus primarily on the lectures, discussions and readings subsequent to the first examination, but it may cover material from the whole semester. I generally do not give makeup examinations. I believe that doing so penalizes those who diligently prepare for class.

***Critical Reflection 1 & 2 (160 points):*** Each reflective analysis is worth a possible total of 20 points per category, times 4 categories equals 80 points times 2 reflection pieces.

You will be required to write one paper, which must be type-written, double-spaced, and six to eight pages in length. This is NOT a research paper. Below are several topics, each student must choose ONE to which s/he will respond. If you wish to write a paper on a topic other than one of those suggested by me contact me after class and we can make an appointment during my office hours to discuss other topics. (I will be more than happy to approve relevant topics.) The papers you write are not opinion papers. It is standard practice among philosophers to view mere opinion to be worth less than the energy used to express it. What is worthwhile is a reasoned defense of one's opinion. Your paper should be written so as to present rational argument for the position which you hold.

Your paper should consist of two distinct parts. The first part, which should account for approximately half the length of the paper, should be a short explication of the essay you have chosen. This part should contain a statement of the author's position, a statement of your own position (tell me whether you agree or disagree with the author) and an explanation of the author's supporting arguments. The second half of the paper should consist of your own evaluation or critique of the essay. In this part of the paper you should tell me WHY you agree or disagree with the author. If you agree with the author you should tell me what argument(s) are convincing. Then tell me what argument(s) might be proffered by one who disagrees with the author and how the author might respond. If you disagree with the author, you should provide criticism of the author's essay and attempt to explain how the author might respond to the criticism. Hence, whether you agree or disagree with the author, you should provide arguments against the author and responses thereto. Finally, you should explain why you believe your position is the best position. You must NOT use outside sources for this essay. I will provide a more detailed account in class.

### **9.7.1 D&D Campaigns (96 points total)**

#### **9.7.1.1 Overview & Purpose**

Your grade in this area is based on preparation and active participation during D&D-style class meetings. The format uses a simplified, philosophy-focused adaptation of Dungeons & Dragons to encourage students to talk through, debate, and critically engage with the philosophical issues in the assigned readings — not just summarize or repeat them.

The core idea: Turn abstract philosophical texts into immersive, narrative “quests” or “dungeons” where the reading provides the backdrop (e.g., a moral dilemma in a kingdom, a metaphysical riddle from an adversarial entity, or an epistemological challenge). This creates lively discussion, risk, uncertainty, and stakes via dice rolls — mirroring real philosophical debate.

#### **9.7.1.2 Key Differences from Traditional D&D**

This is not full tabletop RPG gameplay (no complex combat, character stats, or long campaigns). It is a structured, turn-based discussion tool designed to make philosophy feel urgent, personal, and collaborative. Overall Assignment Setup

Students will be evaluated based on a total of 640 points, with the final grade determined by the percentage of points earned. The components are as follows:

#### 9.7.1.2.1 Attendance (5% of final grade, 32 points):

- Based on unexcused absences throughout the semester.

Grading Scale (equal increments of 8 points):

0–1	unexcused absences:	32 points
2	unexcused absences:	24 points
3–4	unexcused absences:	16 points
5–6	unexcused absences:	8 points
6	unexcused absences:	0 points

#### 9.7.2 Reading Schedule

*Adjust all dates by one for Tuesday Thursday Course*

*Weeklies Due Every Monday Starting Jan 19*

Wed Jan 14, handouts

Mon Jan 19 MLK Day, no classes

Wed Jan 21, Chapter 2, Simulation Hypothesis

Mon Jan 26, Chapter 3, Knowledge

Wed Jan 28, The external world, ch. 4

Mon Feb 2, ch. 5, Possible realities, bostrom and Moravec

Wed Feb 4, ch. 6, What is Reality?

Mon Feb 9, ch. 7, Is God a hacker in the universe up?

Wed Feb 11, ch. 8 Information, 2nd DND Adventure, Student Led

Mon Feb 16, ch. 9, On Bits

Wed Feb 18, ch. 10, Reality and Virtual Reality

Mon Feb 23, ch. 11, Illusion Machines

Wed Feb 25, Quiz 1

Mon Mar 02, Spring Break

Wed Mar 4, Spring Break

Mon Mar 9, ch. 13 ch. 12, 3rd DND Adventure, Student Led

Wed Mar 11, ch. 14, Mind and body Realism inside a virtual universe



Mon Mar 16, ch. 15, 4th DND Adventure, Student Led  
Wed Mar 18, ch. 16, The extended mind hypothesis  
Mon Mar 23, ch. 17 Critical Reflection Due  
Wed Mar 25, ch. 18, Virtual ethics and intentionality  
Mon Mar 30, ch. 19, Social Ontology inside virtual worlds  
Wed Apr 1, ch. 20, 5th DND Adventure on Sense and Reference, Student Led  
Mon Apr 6, ch. 21, Cause and effect inside virtual systems  
Wed Apr 8, ch. 22, Mathematical, physical and cultural structuralism  
Mon Apr 13, ch. 23, Virtual Eden?  
Wed Apr 15, ch. 24, Brains in a Vat  
Mon Apr 20, TBD  
Wed Apr 22, TBD  
Mon Apr 27, TBD  
Wed Apr 29, last day of classes, Final Quiz  
Paper Due on Day of Final Quiz (Submit on Canvas)

## 10 Lectures

# 11 Introductions

## **12 Games That Go Too Far**

# **13 What is the simulation hypothesis**

## **13.1 Possible Worlds and Thought Experiments**

## **13.2 Simulations in Science Fiction**

## **13.3 The Simulation Hypothesis**

## **13.4 Can you prove a negative?**

## **13.5 Can you prove a positive?**

## **13.6 Simulation Hypothesis, a scientific hypothesis**

## **13.7 Simulation and virtual worlds**

# 14 The Problem of the External World

## 14.1 The (*very silly*) Evolutionary Argument from Naturalism (EAAN)

- Philosophical Naturalism (N):
  - There are no supernatural beings (i.e., God, angels, demons, ghosts)
- Contemporary Evolutionary Theory (E)
  - Human beings have evolved in conformity with current evolutionary doctrine
- Naturalism and Evolutionary theory are at odds with one another.
  - I.e., if philosophical naturalism is true, then contemporary evolutionary theory can't be true.
  - If Contemporary evolutionary theory is true, then naturalism cannot be true.

Therefore, either E is true, or N is true, but not both.

## 14.2 Reliability of Cognitive Faculties

- Memory
- Perception
- Reason

We often ground a good majority of our beliefs in these faculties and more.

As such, these faculties are reliable if the majority of our beliefs that are grounded in them are true.

---

However,  
according to E:

- human life developed from aboriginal unicellular life
  - natural selection
  - genetic drift
  - genetic variation (random genetic mutation)
- Natural selection discards most mutations
  - Some mutations have adaptive value
  - some do not
- Through such processes, most if not all organic life as developed

- 
- Through such processes, our cognitive faculties too, have evolved
  - But natural selection is not interested in truth but rather adaptive behavior, the four Fs:
    - Feeding,
    - Fleeing,
    - Fighting
    - Reproducing
  - It is possible that some other function has proved more adaptive
  - Therefore we cannot be sure we can trust our faculties to be reliable

---

For instance, here is Charles Darwin on the matter:

the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man's mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would any one trust in the convictions of a monkey's mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind? [Letter to William Graham, Down, July 3, 1881, in *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin Including an Autobiographical Chapter*, ed. Francis Darwin (London: John Murray, Albermarle Street, 1887), I:315-316.]

---

Here is Patricia Churchland:

Boiled down to essentials, a nervous system enables the organism to succeed in the four F's: feeding, fleeing, fighting and reproducing. The principle chore of nervous systems is the get the body parts where they should be in order that the organism may survive . . . Improvements in sensorimotor control confer an evolutionary advantage: a fancier style of representing is advantageous so long as it is geared to the organism's way of life and enhances the organism's chances of survival. Truth, whatever that is, definitely takes the hindmost. [Churchland, "Epistemology in the Age of Neuroscience," *Journal of Philosophy* 84 (October 1987): 548]

### **14.3 Descartes**

Certainly, up to now whatever I have accepted as fully true I have learned either from or by means of the senses: but I have discovered that they sometimes deceive us, and prudence dictataes that we should never fully trust those who have deceived us even once.

### **14.4 Berkeley**

### **14.5 G.E. Moore**

### **14.6 Alvin Plantinga**



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### **15.5 G.E. Moore**

### **15.6 Alvin Plantinga**

## 16 Sims

- From the inside, *SimUniverse* will be indistinguishable from the universe it is a simulation of.
- Simulation of universe contains 10 billion people, one for each person in the actual universe.
- Say that it is a very popular program, then millions if not billions may have *SimUniverse* on their devices.
- Therefore, there will be many more sims than non sims.

# 17 What is happening in this Chapter?!

## 17.1 Questions Philosophers Ask

- What is Real?
  - How do we know it is real?
  - Why should we care?
- 

- Metaphysics
  - Epistemology
  - Value Theory
- 

But notice that it is not just about providing answers to questions. Sometimes it is how we provide an answer that is even more interesting.

---

There are two very important terms here:

- If so, then we are *probably sims*
  - It will *never* happen
- 

One is a special kind of possibility, while the other entails a necessity.

---

The Argument:

1. At least one in ten nonsim populations will each create a thousand sim populations.
2. If at least one in ten nonsim populations will each create a thousand sim populations, then at least 99 percent of intelligent beings are sims.
3. If at least 99 percent of intelligent beings are sims, we are *probably* sims.
4. Therefore, we are *probably* sims.

## 17.2 Nick Bostrom

At least one of the following propositions is true (a proposition is a statement that is either true or false)

1. The human species is very likely to go extinct before reaching a “posthuman” stage;
2. Any posthuman civilization is extremely unlikely to run a significant number of simulations of their evolutionary history (or variations thereof);
3. We are almost certainly living in a computer simulation.

---

1 and 2 are sim blockers:

1. Nonsims (humans) likely to go extinct before creating nonsims.
2. Nonsims likely to choose not to create sims.

## 18 Strong vs. Weak Verificationism

By now, as before, you may be criticizing the following argument:

1. We normally rely on our senses for evidence
  2. But Bostrom's argument does not rely on his senses
  3. How then does he arrive at his conclusion?
- 

And you are probably used to the following inference patterns:

1. Some experience, there is water falling on my face.
  2. Some belief / conclusion, it is raining today.
- 

So your counter looks like this:

- 
1. 1 by 1 nonsim sim populations?
  2. SimUniverses populated by intelligent sims?
  3. It certainly looks like 1 and 2 are super empirical (beyond sense experience).
- 

Here, Ayer agrees with you:

---

But this also means:

1. We need a new criterion of meaning
2. A formal syntax

Philosophy of logic is devoted to the investigation, analysis and reflection on issues arising in logic, while philosophical logic concerns questions about reference, truth, quantification, existence, entailment, predication, identity, modality, and necessity. A typical example of philosophical logic is the application of formal logical techniques to philosophical problems. [PhilPapers Logic Entry](#)

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Here are those words again:

But it is verifiable in the weak sense, if it is *possible* for experience to render it *probable*.



# 19 Summary of Chapter 5

## 19.1 Simulation Argument

1. Simulation technology is likely to be so ubiquitous that most beings in the universe (or most beings with experiences like ours) are sims.
2. Therefore, we are probably sims.

## 19.2 Three Objections:

- It will never happen
- We're special, have special features that cannot be simulated
- We live in a distinctive world

## 19.3 The Argument

1. At least one in ten nonsim populations will each create a thousand sim populations.
  1. It will never happen objections
2. If at least one in ten nonsim populations will each create a thousand sim populations, then at least 99 percent of intelligent beings are sims.
3. If at least 99 percent of intelligent beings are sims, we are probably sims.
  1. are we special?
4. Therefore, we are probably sims.

## 19.4 Premise 1 Objections

- Intelligent sims are impossible
- Sims take too much computing power
- Nonsims will die out before creating sims
- Nonsims will choose not to create sims
- More nonsims than sims will be created

## 19.5 Premise 3, Are we special?

Let's say that a sim sign is a feature that raises the probability that a creature is a sim. More precisely, it is a feature that a sim is more likely to have than a nonsim.

Sim Signs: feature sims are more likely to have than nonsims

- Sims can't be conscious
- Simulators will avoid creating conscious sims
- Sims won't have minds like ours
- Sims won't experience large universes

---

Stepping back: The potential nonsim signs we've considered, such as consciousness and a large world, may decrease the probability that we're in a simulation. At the same time, we need to weigh these against potential sim signs, such as the fact that we seem to be early in the universe, which may increase the probability that we're in a simulation.

## 20 Bostrom's Argument

1. If there are no sim blockers, most humanlike beings are sims.
2. If most humanlike beings are sims, we are probably sims.
3. So: If there are no sim blockers, we are probably sims.

### 20.1 Premise 1

Only on the assumption that there are no sim blockers, then *most* humanlike beings are sims.

- Does anything *prevent* the creation of many humanlike sims?

### 20.2 Premise 2, the Indifference Principle

1. If there are many beings with the same sort of experience as me, then I am equally likely to be any of those beings.
2. Therefore if 90 percent of beings with experiences like mine are sims, then I should be 90 percent confident that we are sims.
3. Simblockers: However, if conscious sims are impossible, then humanlike sims are impossible.
4. and if simulations with apparently large universes are rare, then humanlike sims are rare.
5. Therefore, either there are sim blockers or we are sims.

# 21 Chapter 6: Reality

Consider simblockers

- Sims can't be conscious
- Simulators will avoid creating conscious sims
- Sims won't have minds like ours
- Sims won't experience large universes

## 21.1 What is Real?

Chalmer's View:

- Virtual Realism: virtual reality is genuine reality, . . . virtual objects are real and not an illusion.
- Simulation Realism: objects in simulation around us are real and not illusion.
- Virtual digitilism: objects in virtual reality are digital objects, structures of binary information.

## 21.2 Defining Real

- Reality: Everything that exists
  - Reality: World or Worlds
  - Reality: a Property
- 

### 21.2.1 Reality+

- Reality contains many realities
- Each of these realities are real

Or more mundanely: the cosmos (everything that exists) contains many worlds (physical and virtual spaces), and the objects in those worlds are real.

## 22 The Really Real

- Reality as existence
- Reality as causal power
- Reality as mind independence
- Reality as non-illusoriness
- Reality as genuineness

## 23 Ch 7, Feb 7: Is God a Hacker in the next Universe Up?

### 23.1 Is God a Hacker?

---

#### 23.1.1 What is God?

- Creator
  - All Powerful
  - All Knowing
  - All Good
- 

#### 23.1.2 What about the Hacker?

- ☐ Creator?
  - ☐ Powerful?
  - ☐ Knows Stuff?
  - ☐ Good?
- 

Important Distinction:

- Local vs. Cosmic
- Local Knowledge vs. Global Knowledge
- Local Power vs. Global Power

## 23.2 Proofs for the Existence of God

---

### 23.2.1 Ontological Argument

This is the a priori argument : prior to considering the existence of the physical universe. This is reasoning without bringing in any consideration of the existence of the universe or any part of it. This is an argument considering the idea of god alone.

The argument is considered to be one of the most intriguing ever devised. It took over 400 years for Philosophers to realize what its actual flaws were. As an “a priori” argument, the Ontological Argument tries to “prove” the existence of God by establishing the necessity of God’s existence through an explanation of the concept of existence or necessary being .

---

VIEW: [Ontological Argument](#)

VIEW: [Ontological Argument and Anselm: Crash Course Philosophy #9](#)

---

Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury first set forth the Ontological Argument in the eleventh century. This argument is the primary locus for such philosophical problems as whether existence is a property and whether or not the notion of necessary existence is intelligible. It is also the only one of the traditional arguments that clearly leads to the necessary properties of God, such as Omnipotence, Omniscience, etc. Anselm’s argument may be conceived as a “reductio ad absurdum” argument. In such an argument, one begins with a supposition, which is the contrary to what one is attempting to prove. Coupling the supposition with various existing certain or self-evident assumption will yield a contradiction in the end. This contradiction is what is used to demonstrate that the contrary of the original supposition is true.

---

Two Forms:

Form 1:

Premises:

(1.a.) Anselm- the supreme being- that being greater than which none can be conceived (gcb)

(1.b.) the gcb must be conceived of as existing in reality and not just in the mind or else the gcb is not that being greater than which none can be conceived.

Suppose (S) that the greatest conceivable being (GCB) exists in the mind alone and not in reality(gcb1).

Then the greatest conceivable being would not be the greatest conceivable being because one could think of a being like (gcb1) but think of the gcb as existing in reality (gcb2) and not just in the mind.

So, gcb1 would not be the GCB but gcb2 would be.

Conclusion:

Thus to think of the GCB is to think of the gcb2, i.e. a being that exists in reality and not just in the mind.

---

Form 2: God as Necessary Being

Premises:

- (a) God is either a necessary being or a contingent being.
- (b) There is nothing contradictory about god being a necessary being
- (c) So, it is possible that god exists as a necessary being.
- (d) So if it is possible that God is a necessary being then God exists.
- (e) Because God is not a contingent being.

Conclusion:

God must exist as a necessary being.

Notes on the Ontological arguments of Anselm and Descartes

Anselm begins by defining the most central term in his argument - God. Without asserting that God exists, Anselm asks what is it that we mean when we refer to the idea of "God." When we speak of a God, Anselm implies, we are speaking of the most supreme being. That



is, let “god” = “something than which nothing greater can be thought.” Anselm’s definition of God might sound confusing upon first hearing it, but he is simply restating our intuitive understanding of what is meant by the concept “God.” Thus, for the purpose of this argument let “God” = “a being than which nothing greater can be conceived.”

Within your understanding, then, you possess the concept of God. As a non-believer, you might argue that you have a concept of unicorn (after all, it is the shared concept that allows us to discuss such a thing) but the concept is simply an idea of a thing. After all, we understand what a unicorn is but we do not believe that they exist. Anselm would agree.

---

Two key points have been made thus far:

- (1) When we speak of God (whether we are asserting God is or God is not), we are contemplating an entity whom can be defined as “a being which nothing greater can be conceived.”;
- (2) When we speak of God (either as believer or non-believer), we have an intra-mental understanding of that concept, i.e. the idea is within our understanding.

Anselm continues by examining the difference between that which exists in the mind and that which exists both in the mind and outside of the mind as well. What is being asked here is: Is it greater to exist in the mind alone or in the mind and in reality (or outside of the mind)? Anselm asks you to consider the painter, e.g. define which is greater: the reality of a painting as it exists in the mind of an artist, or that same painting existing in the mind of that same artist and as a physical piece of art. Anselm contends that the painting, existing both within the mind of the artist and as a real piece of art, is greater than the mere intra-mental conception of the work. Let me offer a real-world example: If someone were to offer you a dollar, but you had to choose between the dollar that exists within their mind or the dollar that exists both in their mind and in reality, which dollar would you choose? Are you sure...

---

At this point, we have a third key point established:

- (3) It is greater to exist in the mind and in reality, then to exist in the mind alone.

Have you figured out where Anselm is going with this argument?

- (A) If God is that than greater which cannot be conceived (established in #1 above);
- (B) And since it is greater to exist in the mind and in reality than in the mind alone (established in #3 above);
- (C) Then God must exist both in the mind (established in #2 above) and in reality;

- (D) In short, God must be. God is not merely an intra-mental concept but an extra-mental reality as well.

But why? Because if God is truly that than greater which cannot be conceived, it follows that God must exist both in the mind and in reality. If God did not exist in reality as well as our understanding, then we could conceive of a greater being i.e. a being that does exist extramentally and intramentally. But, by definition, there can be no greater being. Thus, there must be a corresponding extra-mental reality to our intra-mental conception of God. God's existence outside of our understanding is logically necessary.

Sometimes, Anselm's argument is presented as a Reductio Ad Absurdum (RAA). In an RAA, you reduce to absurdity the antithesis of your view. Since the antithesis is absurd, your view must be correct. Anselm's argument would look something like this:

- 
1. Either [God exists] or [God does not exist].
  2. Assume [God does not exist] (the antithesis of Anselm's position)
  3. If [God does not exist] (but exists only as an intra-mental concept), then that being which nothing greater which can be conceived, is a being which a greater being can be conceived. This is a logical impossibility (remember criterion #3);
  4. Therefore, [God does not exist] is incorrect;

Conclusion:

5. Therefore [God exists].
- 

### 23.2.2 Clarifications:

- The argument is not that "If you believe that god exists then god exists".
- That would be too ridiculous to ask anyone to accept that if you believe that X exists and is real then X exists and is real.
- The ontological argument does not ask a person to assume that there is a deity or even a GCB.

It asks anyone at all to simply THINK of the deity as the GREATEST CONCEIVABLE BEING and then it indicates that a being that exists in reality (outside of the mind) is greater than one that is just in the mind (imagination). So, the conclusion is that if you think of the GCB you must THINK that the GCB exists not just in your thinking (mind) but in reality (outside of your mind) as well.

It is greater to think of a being existing outside of the mind as well as in the mind so if you think of the GCB you must THINK THAT the GCB exists not just inside of the mind (imagination) but outside of the mind as well (in reality).

Look at it this way: Anselm invites people to think about a certain conception of the deity, i.e., that of the GCB. What Anselm did was to place into the concept itself the idea that the being must exist outside of the mind and in the realm of the real and not just inside the mind in the realm of imagination. So you THINK of the GCB and what are you doing when you do that? You must think that the GCB exists outside of the mind and in the realm of the real and not just inside the mind in the realm of imagination. Why must you think that? Because if you did not think that, then you would not be thinking of the GCB as defined by Anselm.

It is like this: Think of a triangle. If you do you must think of a three sided figure lying on a plane with three angles adding up to 180 degrees. Why? Because if you are not thinking of a three sided figure lying on a plane with three angles adding up to 180 degrees then you are not thinking of a triangle. So IF you are to THINK of a triangle you must THINK of a three sided figure lying on a plane with three angles adding up to 180 degrees.

If you are to THINK of a GCB you must THINK that the being must exist outside of the mind and in the realm of the real and not just inside the mind in the realm of imagination. Why? Because if you are not thinking that the being must exist outside of the mind and in the realm of the real and not just inside the mind in the realm of imagination then you are not thinking of the GCB.

In all of this it is only thinking. Anselm proved what must be thought about the GCB given how the GCB was defined and not whether the GCB actually exists.

---

A variation of this argument by Alvin Plantinga exists. It is known as the Modal Version of the Ontological Argument:

1. To say that there is possibly a God is to say that there is a possible world in which God exists.
2. To say that God necessarily exists is to say that God exists in every possible world.
3. God is necessarily perfect (i.e. maximally excellent)
4. Since God is necessarily perfect, he is perfect in every possible world.

5. If God is perfect in every possible world, he must exist in every possible world, therefore God exists.
  6. God is also maximally great. To be maximally great is to be perfect in every possible world.
  7. Therefore: “it is possible that there is a God,” means that there is a possible which contains God, that God is maximally great, and the God exists in every possible world and is consequently necessary.
  8. God’s existence is at least possible.
  9. Therefore: as per item seven, God exists.
- 

Rene Descartes, 1596 - 1650, is also credited with formulating a version of the ontological argument. One possible presentation of the Cartesian argument is as follows:

1. If there is a God it is a perfect being;
  2. A perfect being possesses all possible perfections;
  3. Existence is a perfection;
  4. Therefore, God necessarily possesses the quality of existence. Simply, God exists.
- 

The actual texts:

[Anselm’s Philosophy](#)

Anselm’s Argument

[Monologium](#)

[Proslogium](#)

[Guanilo’s Response and Anselm’s response to Guanilo](#)

---

PROBLEMS:

The problem with the ontological argument is NOT

- 1) that some people refuse to think of the GCB or

- 2) that some people have a resistance to a belief in a deity
- 3) that some people just refuse to accept the deity

NO NO NO the problem with the Argument is that it has FLAWS. It has a LOGICAL MISTAKE in it.

What is that error in the argument???

### **23.3 PROBLEM:**

Conclusion of the argument is : Thus, to think of the GCB is to think of the gcb2, i.e. a being that exists in reality and not just in the mind

- Immanuel Kant noticed that to think of the GCB is to think of the gcb2, i.e. a being that exists in reality and not just in the mind
- BUT to think of the gcb2 as a being that exists in reality and not just in the mind, does not prove that the gcb2 does actually exist in reality ONLY that a person MUST THINK that the gcb2 does actually exist in reality
- But for Kant and many after him , the notion of “Existence” is not a predicate: You cannot include it within the idea of the thing itself. You cannot think anything into existence by including existence as a property of that thing.

## 24 Counter Arguments to Anselm:

### 24.1 I. The Most Perfect Island

Gaunilon, a contemporary of Anselm, had two major criticisms of the ontological argument.

- First: If by “God” we do mean “that than greater which can not be conceived,” then the concept is meaningless for us. We can not understand, in any meaningful way, what exactly is meant by such words. The reality behind the term is completely transcendent to the human knower;
- Second: Even if we grant that the concept of God as “that than greater which can not be conceived” exists in the understanding, there is no reason to believe that the concept necessitates the extra-mental reality of God. After all, I can imagine the most perfect island, glorious in every detail, but there is nothing about my understanding of the island that forces us to admit the island exists.

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### 24.2 II. Existence is not a predicate

Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804), offered what many believe to be a damning critique of Anselm’s ontological argument.

- Let us return to our discussion of unicorns and God.
- Anselm has argued that there exists a difference between the concept of “unicorn” as it exists intra-mentally and extra-mentally.
- If we claim that the “unicorn” is, we are somehow adding to the concept. We are endowing the concept with an additional predicate, i.e. the quality that it is.

The point of Anselm’s argument is that the predicate of existence can be demonstrated for the concept of “God.”

Kant does not agree with Anselm’s treatment of existence as a predicate. The concept of “unicorn” is not changed in any way if we claim that it is. Nor is the concept damaged if we claim that unicorns are not. According to Kant, “...we do not make the least addition to the

thing when we further declare that this thing is.” If existence is not a predicate, then Anselm’s argument has not demonstrated any meaningful information.

Kant thought that, while the concept of a supreme being was useful, it was only an idea, which in and of itself could not help us in our determining the correctness of the concept. While it was a possibility, he felt that the “a priori” stance of the argument it would be necessary to buttress it with experience.

For Kant what Anselm did was to prove that humans **MUST THINK THAT** a deity exists in reality and not just in the mind as an idea as the GCB but that does not mean that the GCB actually does exist in reality. The idea of the GCB exists and the idea of the GCB as an actual being does exist but the reality or actuality of the GCB is not established based on the thoughts alone.

### **24.3 Think of three situations:**

1. You go home and look at the top of your dresser. You could use some money and as you look there you imagine seeing ten ten dollar bills.
2. You go home and look at the top of your dresser. You could use some money and as you look there you see ten MONOPOLY ten dollar bills.
3. You go home and look at the top of your dresser. You could use some money and as you look there you seeing ten real ten dollar bills.

Which of the three is the greatest or best situation? #3 is.

But just thinking about #3 does not actually add any money to your total amount.

This is Kant’s point.

Thinking about the GCB logically entails THINKING that the GCB must exist in reality and not just in the imagination. But thinking about the GCB as existing in reality and not just in the imagination does not prove that the GCB actually does exist in reality and not just in the imagination. It is just an idea about what exists.

### **24.4 III. The Greatest Conceivable EVIL Being.**

As an “a priori” argument, the Ontological Argument tries to “prove” the existence of God by establishing the necessity of God’s existence through an explanation of the concept of existence or necessary being. As this criticism of the Ontological Argument shows, the same arguments used to prove an all-powerful god, could be used to prove an all-powerful devil. Since there could not exist two all-powerful beings (one’s power must be subordinate to the other), this is an example of one of the weaknesses in this type of theorizing. Furthermore, the concept

of necessary existence, by using Anselm's second argument, allows us to "define" other things into existence.

The argument could prove the existence of that being more EVIL than which no other can be conceived just as easily as it supposedly proves the existence of the being that is the greatest conceivable being.

Think of a being that is the most evil being that can be conceived. That being must be conceived of as existing in reality and not just in the mind or it wouldn't be the most evil being which can be conceived for a being that does not exist in reality is not evil at all.

## 24.5 IV. Empiricist Critique

Aquinas, 1225 - 1274, once declared the official philosopher of the Catholic Church, built his objection to the ontological argument on epistemological grounds.

- Epistemology is the study of knowledge. It is a branch of philosophy that seeks to answer such questions as: What is knowledge?; What is truth?; How does knowing occur?; et cetera. Aquinas is known as an empiricist. Empiricists claim that knowledge comes from sense experience. Aquinas wrote: "Nothing is in the intellect which was not first in the senses."
- Within Thomas' empiricism, we can not reason or infer the existence of God from a studying of the definition of God. We can know God only indirectly, through our experiencing of God as Cause to that which we experience in the natural world. We can not assail the heavens with our reason; we can only know God as the Necessary Cause of all that we observe.
- Alvin Plantinga offers a counter argument to the counter arguments that at least establishes the rational acceptability of theism as it appears to support the idea that it is possible that the greatest conceivable being does exist.

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### 24.5.1 Other Philosophers and their Critiques:

- (a) René Descartes, from *The Philosophy of Descartes in Extracts from His Writings*. H. A. P. Torrey. New York, 1892. P. 161 et seq.
- (b) Benedict Spinoza, from *The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza*. Translated by R.H.M.Elwes. London, 1848. Vol. II., P. 51 et seq.
- (c) John Locke, from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. London: Ward, Lock, Co. P. 529 et seq.



- (d) Gottfried W. Leibniz, from *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding*. Translated by A.G. Langley. New York, 1896. P. 502 et seq.
- (e) Immanuel Kant, from *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by F. Max Muller. New York, 1896. P-483 et seq.
- (f) Georg W.F. Hegel, from *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Translated by E. S. Haldane and F.H. Simson. London, 1896. Vol. III., p. 62 et seq.
- (g) J. A. Dorner from *A System of Christian Doctrine*. Translated by A. Cave and J. S. Banks, Edinburgh, 1880. Vol. I., p. 216 et seq
- (h) Lotze, *Microcosmus*. Translated by E. Hamilton and E. E. C. Jones. Edinburgh, 1887. Vol. II., p. 669 et seq.
- (i) Robert Flint, from *Theism*. New York, 1893. Seventh edition. P. 278 et seq.

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View also [Debunking the Teleological, Cosmological, and Ontological Arguments for the Existence of God](#)

[Read the critiques of the Ontological Argument](#)

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### 24.5.2 Concluding Summary:

1. What it does prove:
  - (a) Anselm proves that if you think of the GCB you must THINK that it exists.
  - (b) Descartes proves that if you conceive of an ALL PERFECT being you must CONCEIVE (THINK) of that being as existing.
2. Kant points out that even though you must THINK that it exists does not mean that it does exist. Existence is not something we can know from the mere idea itself. It is not known as a predicate of a subject. Independent confirmation through experience is needed.
3. The argument does give some support to those who are already believers. It has variations that establish the possibility of the existence of such a being.
4. The argument will not convert the non-believer into a believer.

### 24.5.3 Outcome Assessment

This argument or proof does not establish the actual existence of a supernatural deity. It attempts to define a being into existence and that is not rationally legitimate. While the argument can not be used to convert a non-believer to a believer, the faults in the argument do not prove that there is no god. The Burden of Proof demands that the positive claim that there is a supernatural deity be established by reason and evidence and this argument does not meet that standard. The believer in god can use the argument to establish the mere logical possibility that there is a supernatural deity or at least that it is not irrational to believe in the possibility that there is such a being. The argument does not establish any degree of probability at all.

---

OUTCOME:

The Argument:

Premises

- Suppose (S) that the greatest conceivable being (GCB) exists in the mind alone and not in reality(gcb1).
  - Then the greatest conceivable being would not be the greatest conceivable being because one could think of a being like (gcb1) but think of the gcb as existing in reality (gcb2) and not just in the mind.
  - So, gcb1 would not be the GCB but gcb2 would be.
  - Thus to think of the GCB is to think of the gcb2, i.e. a being that exists in reality and not just in the mind.
- 

### 24.5.4 Conclusion: The GCB ( Deity) exists

Problem with argument:

1. \_\_\_\_\_Premises are false
2. \_\_\_\_\_Premises are irrelevant
3. \_\_\_\_\_Premises Contain the Conclusion –Circular Reasoning
4. \_\_\_X\_\_\_Premises are inadequate to support the conclusion
5. \_\_\_\_\_Alternative arguments exist with equal or greater support

- 
- This argument or proof has flaws in it and would not convince a rational person to accept its conclusion.
  - This is not because someone who does not believe in a deity will simply refuse to accept based on emotions or past history but because it is not rationally compelling of acceptance of its conclusion.
- 

It would be a mistake in thinking, a violation of logic and a fallacy to think that because this argument or attempt to prove that there is a deity of some type does not work or has flaws that the opposite conclusion must be true, namely that there is no deity of any type. The error is known as the fallacy “argumentum ad ignoratio” or the appeal to ignorance. It is the mistake in thinking that if an argument cannot prove a proposition or claim P is true then P must be false. OR if you cannot prove that P is false then P must be true. It is a mistake to think that way., a logical error.

Proceed to the next section.

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## 25 Assignments

***Weekly Reflections (32 points):*** These will be done each week in class. Each reflection is worth a possible total of 8 points. There are 12 possible reflections. I will only grade 8 or your best reflections for a possible total of 32 points.

Each week on Wednesday (except Aug. 19th, August 26th, Oct 14th, Nov 25th, Dec 2nd, Dec 9th) a short weekly will be due, (just the front and back of a 3x5 note card). Weeklies will be based on the assigned readings and/or the discussion from the previous class. Each weekly is worth 7 points (maximum), and I will assign a total of 11 weeklies. I will drop the three lowest scored weeklies. Since I include in your total paper grade 11 weeklies at 10 points per weekly, the total points possible on weeklies is 110. If you should earn more than one hundred points on weeklies, all additional points count as extra credit. Finally, since the weekly is due at the beginning of class, arriving to class on time is essential. I will not accept the weekly after 5 minutes from the start of class. If you arrive late or are absent, you receive a zero for the weekly. I do give partial credit for weeklies, and just putting your name on the top is worth one point. (It would be best if you purchase a set of 3x5 note cards to right your weekly on.) The purpose of these weeklies is to help me assess how effectively I am going over the material. As such, what I am looking for is a short/ concise exposition of either the reading or of the discussion from the week before. I will let you know which when I assign the weekly on the Monday prior.

***Quizzes 1 & 2 (80 points):*** Each Quiz is worth a possible total of 10 points per category, times 4 categories equals 40 points times 2 Quizzes.

Each of the scheduled examinations will cover lectures, discussions and assigned readings from the classes that precede it. You are responsible for assigned readings without regard to whether they were covered in class. The final examination will focus primarily on the lectures, discussions and readings subsequent to the first examination, but it may cover material from the whole semester. I generally do not give makeup examinations. I believe that doing so penalizes those who diligently prepare for class.

***Critical Reflection 1 & 2 (160 points):*** Each reflective analysis is worth a possible total of 20 points per category, times 4 categories equals 80 points times 2 reflection pieces.

You will be required to write one paper, which must be type-written, double-spaced, and six to eight pages in length. This is NOT a research paper. Below are several topics, each student must choose ONE to which s/he will respond. If you wish to write a paper on a topic other than one of those suggested by me contact me after class and we can make an appointment during

my office hours to discuss other topics. (I will be more than happy to approve relevant topics.) The papers you write are not opinion papers. It is standard practice among philosophers to view mere opinion to be worth less than the energy used to express it. What is worthwhile is a reasoned defense of one's opinion. Your paper should be written so as to present rational argument for the position which you hold.

Your paper should consist of two distinct parts. The first part, which should account for approximately half the length of the paper, should be a short explication of the essay you have chosen. This part should contain a statement of the author's position, a statement of your own position (tell me whether you agree or disagree with the author) and an explanation of the author's supporting arguments. The second half of the paper should consist of your own evaluation or critique of the essay. In this part of the paper you should tell me WHY you agree or disagree with the author. If you agree with the author you should tell me what argument(s) are convincing. Then tell me what argument(s) might be proffered by one who disagrees with the author and how the author might respond. If you disagree with the author, you should provide criticism of the author's essay and attempt to explain how the author might respond to the criticism. Hence, whether you agree or disagree with the author, you should provide arguments against the author and responses thereto. Finally, you should explain why you believe your position is the best position. You must NOT use outside sources for this essay. I will provide a more detailed account in class.

## **25.0.1 D&D Campaigns (96 points total)**

### **25.0.1.1 Overview & Purpose**

Your grade in this area is based on preparation and active participation during D&D-style class meetings. The format uses a simplified, philosophy-focused adaptation of Dungeons & Dragons to encourage students to talk through, debate, and critically engage with the philosophical issues in the assigned readings — not just summarize or repeat them.

The core idea: Turn abstract philosophical texts into immersive, narrative “quests” or “dungeons” where the reading provides the backdrop (e.g., a moral dilemma in a kingdom, a metaphysical riddle from an adversarial entity, or an epistemological challenge). This creates lively discussion, risk, uncertainty, and stakes via dice rolls — mirroring real philosophical debate.

### **25.0.1.2 Key Differences from Traditional D&D**

This is not full tabletop RPG gameplay (no complex combat, character stats, or long campaigns). It is a structured, turn-based discussion tool designed to make philosophy feel urgent, personal, and collaborative. Overall Assignment Setup

**Part III**

**Philosophy of Law**

# 26 Syllabus

## 26.1 Course Description

We will examine theories which attempt to provide answers to such questions as: What is a law? What makes a law valid or binding? Does one always have a moral obligation to obey the law? What gives society the right to punish people whose actions are harmful only to the individual, him/herself (paternalism)? Does society have the right to harm those who break the law (criminal punishment)? Should attempted crimes be punished less severely than completed crimes? We will not spend much time discussing specific public policy issues such as: Whether raising the drinking age saves lives, whether smoking marijuana is a victimless crime (whether it harms others), or whether the death penalty is a deterrent. We will not discuss what the law is; instead, we will discuss what the law ought to be.

### 26.1.1 Course Brief

#### Focus:

1. Developing critical reasoning skills.
2. Discovering some of the fundamental philosophical ideas in law.

**Text:** Feinberg, Joel, and Jules L. Coleman. 2008. *Philosophy of Law* / [Edited by] Joel Feinberg, Jules Coleman. 8th ed. Thomson/Wadsworth.

#### Learning Objectives

- What is a law?
- What makes a law valid or binding?
- Do we have a moral obligation to obey the law?
- What gives society the right to punish people whose actions are harmful only to the individual, him/herself (paternalism)?
- Does society have the right to harm those who break the law (criminal punishment)?
- Should attempted crimes be punished less severely than completed crimes?

What is not covered

Public policy issues such as:

- Whether raising the drinking age saves lives
- Whether smoking marijuana is a victimless crime (whether it harms others)
- Whether the death penalty is a deterrent.

We do not discuss what the law is; instead, we will discuss what the law ought to be.

## **26.2 The Speluncean Explorers**

*The Speluncean Explorers*



## 26.3 Course Convenor



**Reynolds** Dr. Monty Reynolds Stetson University [mreynolds1@stetson.edu](mailto:mreynolds1@stetson.edu)

Office Hours:

- When:

- Tuesday: 1:00–3:00 PM
- Thursday: 1:00–3:00 PM
- Where: Elizabeth Hall 104
- How to book: Drop in, email, or book via [Microsoft Bookings](#)

## 26.4 Course Information

### 26.4.1 Required Texts:

Feinberg, Joel, and Jules L. Coleman. 2008. *Philosophy of Law* / Edited by Joel Feinberg, Jules Coleman. 8th ed. Thomson/Wadsworth.

Required: Handouts

### 26.4.2 Expectations:

Come prepared to engage with assigned readings in class, referencing specific passages as prompted by the instructor.

Bring physical or digital copies of readings to class for annotation and short reflections.

Submit all assignments via Canvas by the due date.

Active participation and regular attendance are essential for success.

### 26.4.3 Late Assignment Policy

Penalty: 10% deduction per day late.

Makeup Process: Email the instructor within 48 hours to arrange an extension. No credit if not submitted by agreed date.

### 26.4.4 Success: Active participation, timely submissions, and attendance are key.

## 26.5 Grading Calculation

**Weekly Reflections:** Each reflection is worth a possible total of 8 points. There are 12 possible reflections. I will only grade 8 or your best reflections.

**Reflective Analysis 1 & 2 (160 points):** Each reflective analysis is worth a possible total of 20 points per category, times 4 categories equals 80 points times 2 reflection pieces.

**Essay 1 & 2 (80 points):** Each Quiz is worth a possible total of 10 points per category, times 4 categories equals 40 points times 2 Quizzes.

## **26.5.1 D&D Campaigns (96 points total)**

### **26.5.1.1 Overview & Purpose**

Your grade in this area is based on preparation and active participation during D&D-style class meetings. The format uses a simplified, philosophy-focused adaptation of Dungeons & Dragons to encourage students to talk through, debate, and critically engage with the philosophical issues in the assigned readings — not just summarize or repeat them.

The core idea: Turn abstract philosophical texts into immersive, narrative “quests” or “dungeons” where the reading provides the backdrop (e.g., a moral dilemma in a kingdom, a metaphysical riddle from an adversarial entity, or an epistemological challenge). This creates lively discussion, risk, uncertainty, and stakes via dice rolls — mirroring real philosophical debate.

### **26.5.1.2 Key Differences from Traditional D&D**

This is not full tabletop RPG gameplay (no complex combat, character stats, or long campaigns). It is a structured, turn-based discussion tool designed to make philosophy feel urgent, personal, and collaborative. Overall Assignment Setup

Students will be evaluated based on a total of 640 points, with the final grade determined by the percentage of points earned. The components are as follows:

### **26.5.1.3 For more detailed information regarding grades, [see the rubric here](#)**

### **26.5.1.4 For more detailed information regarding the DND Adventures, [see the DND addendum here](#)**

## **26.5.2 Attendance (5% of final grade, 32 points):**

- Based on unexcused absences throughout the semester.

Grading Scale (equal increments of 8 points):

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0–1	unexcused absences:	32 points
2	unexcused absences:	24 points
3–4	unexcused absences:	16 points
5–6	unexcused absences:	8 points

6	unexcused absences: 0 points
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## 26.6 Course Schedule

Here is the syllabus formatted as a clean Markdown table using only the vertical line | as the separator (with a properly spanned title row):

Day	Date	Discussion
Tuesday	January 13	Introduction to Philosophy of Law and Organization of Class
Thursday	January 15	Fuller, "The Case of the Speluncean Explorers" (Handout - Canvas)
Tuesday	January 20	Kretzmann, "Lex Iniusta Non Est Lex: Laws on Trial" (Handout – Canvas)
Thursday	January 22	Bentham, "The Principles of Morals and Legislation" (Handout, pages 224-248 -D2L)
Tuesday	January 27	Bentham (Continued)
Thursday	January 29	Hart, "Law as the Union of Primary and Secondary Rules" (crc, 53)
Tuesday	February 3	Hart (Continued)
Thursday	February 5	Dworkin, "The Model of Rules" (148)
Tuesday	February 10	Dworkin, "Integrity in Law" (169)
Thursday	February 12	Holmes, "The Path of the Law" (197); Frank, "Legal Realism" (205)
Tuesday	February 17	Critical Legal Studies (Handout – D2L)
Thursday	February 19	Plato, Crito (Handout – D2L)
Tuesday	February 24	Crito (Continued)
Thursday	February 26	Quiz 1

Day	Date	Discussion
Tuesday	March 3	Spring Break
Thursday	March 5	Spring Break
Tuesday	March 10	Hart, "Postscript: Responsibility and Retribution" (317)
Thursday	March 12	Duff, "Choice, Character, and Action" (328)
Tuesday	March 17	Parker, "Blame, Punishment and the Role of Result" (Handout – D2L)
Thursday	March 19	Spring Break
Tuesday	March 24	Spring Break
Thursday	March 26	Self Defense (Handout – D2L)
Tuesday	March 31	Self Defense (Continued)
Thursday	April 2	Excuse, Justification, Subjective/Objective Liability (Handout – D2L)
Tuesday	April 7	Mill, "On Liberty" (258)
Thursday	April 9	Dworkin, "Paternalism" (271); Griswold v. Connecticut (summary on www)
Tuesday	April 14	Devlin, "Morals and the Criminal Law" (283)
Thursday	April 16	"The Moral Significance of Terrorism" (Handout – D2L)
Tuesday	April 21	Dershowitz, "Should the Ticking Bomb Terrorist be Tortured" (Paper Due at End of Class)
Thursday	April 23	Bork, "The Original Understanding" (Handout – D2L)
Tuesday	April 28	Bork (Continued), last day of classes
Thursday	April 30	Final exams, final paper due, TBD
Tuesday	May 3	Final exams TBD

## 26.7 Grading Calculation

Total Points: 640 points, distributed as above.

- Formula: Raw scores summed across sheets; final percentage =  $\text{SUM}(\text{all assignment points})/640 * 100$ .

### *Letter Grade:*

Final grade uses the following scale (no rounding):

Letter Grade	Percentage
A+	97–100%
A	93–96%
A-	90–92%
B+	87–89%
B	83–86%
B-	80–82%
C+	77–79%
C	73–76%
C-	70–72%
D+	67–69%
D	63–66%
D-	60–62%
F	<60%

**26.7.1 Example: Perfect scores =  $32 + 160 + 160 + 80 + 80 + 96 + 32 = 640$  points (100%, A+).**

## 26.8 University Supports and Policies

# 27 Lectures

## 27.1 Week 1

## 27.2 Week 2

## 27.3 Week 3

## 27.4 Week 4

## 27.5 Week 5

## 27.6 Oliver Wendell Holmes

- The study of law is the study of predicting what to expect in the court of law
- And knowing what the court's expectations are to avoid punishment
- We want to be able to make predictions

### 27.6.1 Duties and Obligations

- Legal Duty is the prediction of what would happen in the court of law.

a legal duty is nothing but a prediction that if a man does or omits certain things he will be made to suffer in this way or that way by judgment of the court; and so of a legal right. [3]

- Law is the guise through which we develop our moral judgments.
  - Encoded with moral language.
  - Uses rights and duties with malice and intent (moral agency).
- But the power of enforcement is not coextensive with any system of morals.
- Rather the study of law is about prediction:

The prophecies of what courts will do in fact, and nothing more pretentious, are what I mean by the law.

- Certain actions are correlated with certain consequences.

### 27.6.2 Two Accounts of Malevolent Motive

- Traditional: The defendant being exonerated because he did not possess malice (moral sense).
- Modern: The defendant is not exonerated because he caused harm (legal sense).

Signifies the tendency of his conduct under known circumstances was very plainly to cause the plaintiff harm [12].

## 27.7 Lecture Notes – Oliver Wendell Holmes and Jerome Frank, Legal Realism

- American Legal Realism is a critical position in legal theory inspired by the work of John Chipman Gray and Oliver Wendell Holmes.

o A bit of background on Holmes: he was a legal scholar and US Supreme Court Justice. He was also a founding member, with William James, Charles Sanders Peirce and Chauncy Wright, of the Metaphysical Club, which was a group that met at Harvard in 1872. It was in this club that the position that developed into American Pragmatism was first developed. (Also the subject of a wonderful book by Louis Menand.)

These early pragmatists were metaphysical quietists. Committed to the idea that if something doesn't make a difference in practice, then it's not worth talking about. Differences/distinctions that don't make a difference in practice are no differences/distinctions at all.

Peirce's pragmatic maxim: • "Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of those effects is the whole of our conception of the object." (EP1: 132)

James called his pragmatism "radical empiricism" • 'the only things that shall be debatable among philosophers shall be things definable in terms drawn from experience' We can see these ideas imprinted on Holmes's thought about "the law." • "The prophecies of what the courts will do in fact, and nothing more pretentious, are what I mean by the law." • The law is nothing more than its practical effects, and those are affected on others by the courts. • Holmes argues for this position on an empirical basis rather than on conceptual grounds, as Hart, Austin, and the Natural Lawyers defended their positions.



- He sought to understand both how law shows up in the experience of those who it affects and how judges actually arrived at their decisions.

o How do those who are governed actually experience the law?

They experience it as an imposition of public force:

- “You can see very plainly that a bad man has as much reason as a good one for wishing to avoid an encounter with the public force, and therefore you can see the practical importance of the distinction between morality and law. A man who cares nothing for an ethical rule which is believed and practised by his neighbors is likely nevertheless to care a good deal to avoid being made to pay money, and will want to keep out of jail if he can.”

- Holmes, then, maintains the separability thesis, but he does so on empirical grounds

o He is not a cynic, however...his purpose is to contend that if one wants to study and practice the law, one must look at it from a business-like perspective, and this means seeing it as distinct from law.

- Though law is, he says, “the witness and external deposit of our moral lives.”

So, then, we can make our inquiry more precise by asking how the bad man experiences the law.

- He wants to know what he can get away with, what he can do without incurring the imposition of public force. • “But what does it mean to a bad man? Mainly, and in the first place, a prophecy that if he does certain things he will be subjected to disagreeable consequences by way of imprisonment or compulsory payment of money.”

- The bad man is concerned with law as a prediction of likely consequences, and since those consequences are determined by the court, he is concerned with law merely as a prediction of how the courts will decide.

o Holmes examples: contract

- How would Hart respond to this understanding of law as a prediction of what the courts will decide???

In the making of such predictions (and in the deciding of cases) we do well to not confuse the moral use of terms and their legal use:

- Example of Malice

o In morality, malice requires ill intent

o In law, it need not, though it may.

“I think that the law regards the infliction of temporal damage by a responsible person as actionable, if under the circumstances known to him the danger of his act is manifest according to common experience, or according to his own experience if it is more than common, except in cases where upon special grounds of policy the law refuses to protect the plaintiff or grants

a privilege to the defendant. I think that commonly malice, intent, and negligence mean only that the danger was manifest to a greater or less degree, under the circumstances known to the actor, although in some cases of privilege malice may mean an actual malevolent motive, and such a motive may take away a permission knowingly to inflict harm, which otherwise would be granted on this or that ground of dominant public good.” • Example of Contracts: o In morals, contracts or promises are dependent on the internal state of the persons’ minds.

o In law, contracts are purely formal. Whatever the court determines one to be contractually obligated to on the basis of the executed contract is what one is obligated to no matter the internal state of one’s mind.

o How do (and should) judges decide cases?

We tend to think that judges apply the law, but legal realists think that judges are mostly in the business of making law.

Why?

- the class of available legal materials is insufficient to logically entail a unique legal outcome in most cases worth litigating at the appellate level (the Local Indeterminacy Thesis);
- in such cases, judges make new law in deciding legal disputes through the exercise of a lawmaking discretion (the Discretion Thesis); and
- judicial decisions in indeterminate cases are influenced by the judge’s political and moral convictions, not by legal considerations.

Examine this passage (p 466)

- Behind the logical form lies a judgment as to the relative worth and importance of competing legislative grounds, often an inarticulate and unconscious judgment, it is true, and yet the very root and nerve of the whole proceeding. You can give any conclusion a logical form. You always can imply a condition in a contract. But why do you imply it? It is because of some belief as to the practice of the community or of a class, or because of some opinion as to policy, or, in short, because of some attitude of yours upon a matter not capable of exact quantitative measurement, and therefore not capable of founding exact logical conclusions. Such matters really are battle grounds where the means do not exist for determinations that shall be good for all time, and where the decision can do no more than embody the preference of a given body in a given time and place. We do not realize how large a part of our law is open to reconsideration upon a slight change in the habit of the public mind.

Judges, Holmes thinks, ought to be more explicit about these hidden drivers of their decisions, and ought to be clear that they make decisions with social advantage in mind.

This would allow for a re-examination of history and tradition in the law.

- Turn to p. 470.

- Example of whether we can know that the criminal law does more good than harm in present circumstances.

## **27.8 Week 6**

## 28 Assignment Rules

***Critical Reflection 1 & 2 (160 points):*** Each reflective analysis is worth a possible total of 20 points per category, times 4 categories equals 80 points times 2 reflection pieces.

You will be required to write one paper, which must be type-written, double-spaced, and six to eight pages in length. This is NOT a research paper. Below are several topics, each student must choose ONE to which s/he will respond. If you wish to write a paper on a topic other than one of those suggested by me contact me after class and we can make an appointment during my office hours to discuss other topics. (I will be more than happy to approve relevant topics.) The papers you write are not opinion papers. It is standard practice among philosophers to view mere opinion to be worth less than the energy used to express it. What is worthwhile is a reasoned defense of one's opinion. Your paper should be written so as to present rational argument for the position which you hold.

Your paper should consist of two distinct parts. The first part, which should account for approximately half the length of the paper, should be a short explication of the essay you have chosen. This part should contain a statement of the author's position, a statement of your own position (tell me whether you agree or disagree with the author) and an explanation of the author's supporting arguments. The second half of the paper should consist of your own evaluation or critique of the essay. In this part of the paper you should tell me WHY you agree or disagree with the author. If you agree with the author you should tell me what argument(s) are convincing. Then tell me what argument(s) might be proffered by one who disagrees with the author and how the author might respond. If you disagree with the author, you should provide criticism of the author's essay and attempt to explain how the author might respond to the criticism. Hence, whether you agree or disagree with the author, you should provide arguments against the author and responses thereto. Finally, you should explain why you believe your position is the best position. You must NOT use outside sources for this essay. I will provide a more detailed account in class.

### 28.0.1 D&D Campaigns (96 points total)

#### 28.0.1.1 Overview & Purpose

Your grade in this area is based on preparation and active participation during D&D-style class meetings. The format uses a simplified, philosophy-focused adaptation of Dungeons

& Dragons to encourage students to talk through, debate, and critically engage with the philosophical issues in the assigned readings — not just summarize or repeat them.

The core idea: Turn abstract philosophical texts into immersive, narrative “quests” or “dungeons” where the reading provides the backdrop (e.g., a moral dilemma in a kingdom, a metaphysical riddle from an adversarial entity, or an epistemological challenge). This creates lively discussion, risk, uncertainty, and stakes via dice rolls — mirroring real philosophical debate.

#### **28.0.1.2 Key Differences from Traditional D&D**

This is not full tabletop RPG gameplay (no complex combat, character stats, or long campaigns). It is a structured, turn-based discussion tool designed to make philosophy feel urgent, personal, and collaborative. Overall Assignment Setup

### **28.1 D&D Campaign Rules**

- Group Structure: By Week 2, students form small groups of 5 members each (via random assignment).
- Rotating Dungeon Master (DM) Role: Each group member serves as DM once during the semester (one full session/day).

This distributes prep work fairly.

The DM “owns” that day’s reading/topic and facilitates the session. A ready-made D&D-style adventure outline (framing the text’s core issues narratively) will be provided to the DM.

The DM may use the provided example scenario or adapt it to create a unique situation that forces questioning of taken-for-granted beliefs.

The DM begins by rolling a d20 to help determine positions or difficulty.

#### **28.1.1 Session Play Through**

##### **28.1.1.1 DM Preparation & Introduction**

The DM presents a brief summary of the assigned text. They then narrate the adventure setup: The group is a party of adventurers facing sequential challenges drawn directly from the reading’s key concepts, arguments, objections, or thought experiments.

#### **28.1.1.2 Examples:**

- You’ve created a conscious simulated population → debate obligations to them.
- You’ve fallen in love with someone in an MMO known only as their character → is this true love?
- Simulation argument scenario (e.g., billions of non-sims imply billions of sims; successful simUniverse program implies many more sims than non-sims → motivate and debate each premise narratively).

#### **28.1.1.3 Class-Wide Polling (for Key Reasons/Premises)**

For multi-premise topics (e.g., simulation argument’s three reasons), the full class takes quick polls: For each reason, more people agree or disagree? This identifies the “intuitive” (majority) vs. “least likely” (minority) position.

#### **28.1.1.4 Turn-Based Challenges & Dice Rolls**

- The DM reads/presents each challenge/encounter in sequence.
- Group members respond in turns (going around the table):
- Ask a clarifying question (probe the text/concept).
- Offer a suggestion/solution (propose a philosophical position, argument, counter, edge case, or objection from the reading).

#### **28.1.1.5 Dice Mechanic (simple d20, no modifiers):**

- DM sets/rolls a difficulty (e.g., rolls 10).
- Responding student rolls d20.
- Higher than DM roll (“win”): Defend/attack the intuitive position (majority poll view).
- Lower than DM roll (“lose”): Defend the least likely position (minority poll view).

#### **28.1.1.6 The student states their position/argument.**

- Subsequent group members build on, counter, or add considerations to prior responses — creating back-and-forth dialogue.
- Dice add chance, excitement, and stakes (you might have to argue against your own intuition).

#### **28.1.1.7 Resolution & Debrief**

- DM adjudicates collective outcomes: What positions seem plausible? Which arguments prevailed?
- Session ends with group/class reflection:
- How did the “adventure” illuminate the reading?
- What arguments won/lost?
- How does this apply to real philosophy?
- Did anyone’s view change?

#### **28.1.1.8 Tracking & Submission (Tally Sheet)**

Everyone maintains their own tally sheet/adventure sheet (linked in course materials). You will use this sheet to record the key positions taken for each reason/premise/challenge (defend or object/critique). By session end, the sheet should show one position per group member per major point. You will then upload a photo/scan of your completed tally sheet to Canvas after each session (under the assignment module). Please keep the physical/digital sheet for the entire semester — it tracks your cumulative participation.

#### **28.1.2 Grading Notes**

96 points total for the component.

- Assessed via preparation (e.g., coming ready to engage) and quality/quantity of contributions during sessions (tracked partly via tally sheets).
- Focus: Genuine critical reflection, referencing peers’ ideas, challenging assumptions, and engaging the text — not “winning” arguments or perfect rolls.

This format transforms passive reading into active, communal philosophical practice. Questions? Ask in class, office hours, or via email — let’s make these sessions philosophically epic.

## 29 Summary

In summary, this book has no content whatsoever.



# References

- Knuth, Donald E. 1984. “Literate Programming.” *Comput. J.* 27 (2): 97–111. <https://doi.org/10.1093/comjnl/27.2.97>.
- Smith, Peter. 2021. *An Introduction to Formal Logic*. Second edition, reprinted with corrections. Monee, IL: Logic Matters.