

PHI 1000 – Introduction to Philosophy

Spring 2021, Wednesday and Friday 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM

Professor: Danny Weltman | danny.weltman@ashoka.edu.in | **Office Hours:** Online via appointment

About This Course: Topic and Goals

In this course, you will be introduced to academic philosophy through an investigation of a few of the key issues that philosophers have investigated over the years.

Below are the **goals** for this course. For more detail see the course goals and learning outcomes handout.

- Learn a bit about what philosophy, as a field of academia, has studied
- Form some initial thoughts about some of the key questions and topics in philosophy
- Investigate the philosophy of personal identity in some depth
- Get practice with reading, writing, talking about, and thinking about philosophy in an academic setting

Course Content

We will begin with some short articles on various topics. The rest of the topics we study will be chosen by your votes. Due to the difficulties of online instruction, class attendance is not mandatory, but you are expected to attend class if you are able to, because in-class discussion is invaluable. We meet online at <https://meet.google.com/nzp-vbay-unt>. All course materials are available on the course website at <https://canvas.instructure.com/courses/2492326>.

Assignments and Grading

There are 4 kinds of assignments in this class: **reading quizzes**, **Perusall annotations**, **four sentence papers**, and **500 word papers**. Late papers will lose 10% of their grade for each day they are turned in late, up to a maximum of 50% off. The late penalty is calculated per hour (0.42% lost per hour). Your grade also depends in part on **discussion participation**.

Reading Quizzes (10% of your grade) are to help you focus on the important parts of the reading and to get instant feedback on whether you have understood the reading. There is one quiz per reading. The lowest 6 reading quiz scores will be dropped.

Perusall Annotation Assignments (10% of your grade) allow you to collaboratively read the readings by using the Perusall website. Canvas has a document detailing examples of annotations you can make on Perusall and explaining the grading system. The lowest 6 Perusall annotation assignment scores will be dropped.

Four Sentence Papers (15% of your grade) are the first way you will practice writing philosophy. They will introduce you to summaries and arguments. There are 4 due. The lowest scoring paper will be ignored.

500 Word Papers (45% of your grade) are your opportunity to get more practice writing concisely about philosophy. They should summarize a point from one of the readings, and then offer a **question**, an **extension of the idea or argument**, or a **critique of the idea or argument**. There are 4 due. The lowest scoring paper will be ignored.

Discussion Participation (15% of your grade) is required. You can earn discussion participation credit by participating in class discussions, by watching recordings of class discussions and posting a discussion response post on Canvas, and by posting discussion questions and replies on Canvas.

Grade Breakdown:

- 10% - Reading Quizzes (26, 6 lowest ignored)
- 10% - Perusall Annotations (26, 6 lowest ignored)
- 15% - Four Sentence Papers (4, lowest 1 ignored)
- 45% - 500 Word Papers (4, lowest 1 ignored)
- 15% - Discussion Participation

Class Grade Rubric:

100-94% = A	<77-74% = C
<94-90% = A-	<74-70% = C-
<90-87% = B+	<70-67% = D+
<87-84% = B	<67-64% = D
<84-80% = B-	<64-60% = D-
<80-77% = C+	<60-0% = F

Disabilities

If you have disabilities which require some form of accommodation, contact me ahead of time.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Any time you use **words, phrases, ideas**, or **anything else** in your writing that you did not think up on your own, you must **cite** your source the best of your ability. Words and phrases from others must be enclosed in quotation marks to show that you did not write them yourself. Failure to cite a source is **plagiarism** and it's not okay. Plagiarism may result in a zero on the assignment or in other point reductions. You should not need to use (or cite) outside sources for this class, but if you do use them, you must cite them. It is perfectly okay to use points made by your classmates (or anyone else), *as long as you cite them to the best of your ability*. The one exception is that you do not need to cite me on your writing assignments in this class, unless you want to.

Office Hours, Email Communication, and Due Date Extensions

If you have questions or comments about the course it is best to talk during office hours. I do not have scheduled office hours. If you would like to meet, you can either email me to set up a time to meet, or book an appointment in the open appointment slots via the link on Canvas. I am available to meet outside those slots, so email me if those slots do not work. If you contact me via email, please include "PHI 1000" in the subject line so that I know you are emailing about this course. I will typically not offer extensions on assignment due dates. All of the assignment due dates are available in advance, so if you anticipate not having enough time to do the assignment right before it is due, you should do the assignment earlier. You are expected to work ahead when you have time, rather than to fall behind when you become busy.

Resources

My website has resources on reading, writing, and researching at dannyweltman.com/resources.html. These resources include a glossary for unfamiliar words or phrases, some of which occur in some of the readings for this course. I encourage you to examine these resources.

Colloquia

Periodically the Philosophy department hosts colloquium talks by visiting philosophers (sometimes in conjunction with the Politics, Philosophy, and Economics program). In a colloquium talk, a philosopher presents some of their research and then the audience asks questions. Attending colloquium talks is a great way to introduce yourself to all sorts of topics in philosophy. You will receive announcements about upcoming colloquia in your email, and I encourage you to come to some of the talks this semester, and for the rest of your time here at Ashoka.

Initial Schedule

Each day's reading has an accompanying reading quiz and Perusall annotation assignment, both of which are due 8 AM that day. You should aim to complete them earlier than 8 AM, ideally. You have 24 hours after the due date to add replies to comments that others have written on Perusall.

Jan 20: Carroll, "What the Tortoise Said to Achilles"

Jan 22: Churchland, "Are Mental States Irreducible to Neurobiological States?"

Four sentence paper #1 on Carroll or Churchland due Feb 1 at midnight

Jan 27: Intemann, "Science and Values: Are Value Judgments Always Irrelevant to the Justification of Scientific Claims?"

Jan 29: Midgley, "On Trying Out One's New Sword"

Four sentence paper #2 on Intemann or Midgley due Feb 8 at midnight

Feb 3: Driver, "Caesar's Wife: On the Moral Significance of Appearing Good"

Feb 5: Sorensen, "Permission to Cheat"

Four sentence paper #3 on Driver or Sorensen due Feb 15 at midnight

Feb 10: Deveraux, "Moral Judgments and Works of Art: The Case of Narrative Literature"

Feb 12: Sen, "Elements of a Theory of Human Rights"

Four sentence paper #4 on Deveraux or Sen due Feb 22 at midnight

The rest of the schedule will be determined via voting on topics.

Possible Topics

The readings listed below for each topic may vary to some degree once we pick our final topics, so as to accommodate enthusiasm for topics and a sensible reading and assignment schedule.

AI Consciousness: Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs"; Boden, "Escaping from the Chinese Room"; Churchland and Churchland, "Could a Machine Think?"; Ben-Yami, "A Note on the Chinese Room"

Ancient Greek Philosophy: Plato, *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Symposium*

Can Art Lie?: Cooke, "When Art Can't Lie"; Dixon, "Lies in Art"

Classical Chinese Philosophy: Selections from Kǒngzǐ, Mòzǐ, and Xúnzǐ

Classical Islamic Philosophy: Ibn Rušd, *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*

Communism: Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," *Critique of the Gotha Program* Part I and Parts II-IV and Appendix, "The British Rule in India," "Future Results of the British Rule in India"; Engels, "The Principles of Communism"

COVID-19: Arunachalam and Halwai, “An analysis of the ethics of lockdown in India”; Li, Jecker, and Chung, “Reopening Economies during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Reasoning about Value Tradeoffs”; Venkatapuram, “How Should We Allocate Health and Social Resources During a Pandemic?”

Death: Rosenbaum, “How to Be Dead and Not Care”; Suits, “Why Death Is Not Bad for the One Who Died”; Kamm, “Why is Death Bad and Worse than Pre-Natal Non-Existence?”; Timmerman, “A dilemma for Epicureanism”

Early Modern European Philosophy: Hume, “The Standard of Taste” and “Suicide”; Descartes, “Meditations”; selections from Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia’s correspondence with Descartes

Eating Animals: Norcross, “Puppies, Pigs, and People”; Callicott, “The Environmental Omnivore’s Dilemma”; Driver, “Individual Consumption and Moral Complicity”; Levy, “Vegetarianism: Toward Ideological Impurity”; Narain, “Why I Would Not Advocate Vegetarianism”

Existentialism: Sartre, “Existentialism is a Humanism”; Beauvoir, “Introduction to an Ethics of Ambiguity” and “What is Existentialism?”

Free Will: Frankfurt, “Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility”; Ginet, “In Defense of the Principle of Alternative Possibilities”; Frankfurt, “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person”; Ekstrom, “Toward a plausible event-causal indeterminist account of free will”; Strawson, “The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility”

Gender: Barnes, “The Metaphysics of Gender”; Haslanger, “The Sex/Gender Distinction and the Social Construction of Reality”; Mikkola, “Gender Essentialism and Anti-Essentialism”; Mikkola, “Elizabeth Spelman, Gender Realism, and Women”; Stoljar, “Different Women, Gender, and the Realism-Nominalism Debate”

Hellenistic Greek Philosophy: Epicurus, “Letter to Menoeceus” and “The Principal Doctrines”; Selections of Stoic writings; Selections of Skeptic writings

Indian and Buddhist Philosophy: Selections from *Questions of King Milinda*; Selections from Śāṅkara’s *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra-upaskāra*; Selections from Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*

Multiculturalism and Sexism: Okin, “Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?”; Selected replies

Personal Identity: Blackmore, “The Self”; Parfit, “Personal Identity”; Williams, “The Self and the Future”; Schechtman, “The Narrative Self”; Swinburne, “Personal Identity: the Dualist Theory”

Patriotism and Nationalism: Nathanson, “In Defense of Moderate Patriotism”; Gomberg, “Patriotism is Like Racism”; Hurka, “The Justification of National Partiality”; Lichtenberg, “Nationalism, For and (Mainly) Against”

Scientific Realism: Putnam, “What is ‘Realism’?”; van Fraassen, “Arguments concerning scientific realism” and “To save the phenomena”; Psillos, “In defence of scientific realism” and “Constructive empiricism scrutinised”

Terrorism: Wellman, “On Terrorism Itself”; Held, “Legitimate Authority in Non-state Groups Using Violence”; Jaggar, “What Is Terrorism, Why Is It Wrong, and Could It Ever Be Morally Permissible?”; Medina,

“Unconditional vs. Conditional Critics of Terrorist Violence”; McPherson, “Is Terrorism Distinctively Wrong?”; Glasgow, “A Straightforward Analysis of Terrorism”

The Annihilation of Caste: Dhanda, “Philosophical Foundations of Anti-Casteism”; Ambedkar, “The Annihilation of Caste”; Gandhi, “A Vindication of Caste”; Ambedkar, “A Reply to the Mahatma”

The Riddles of Induction: Hume, selections from the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*; Goodman, “The New Riddle of Induction”