

Phi 151 Introduction to Philosophy
Fall 2013

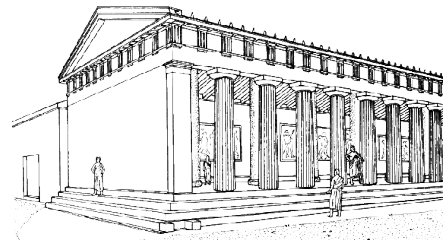
Instructor: Dr. Guy Gallagher

Ph. 207-764-0652

guy.gallagher@maine.edu

Required Text: *Fifty Readings Plus: An Introduction to Philosophy*, 2nd Edition, by Donald Abel

Recommended reading: On-line *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* for almost any author we study.



The Stoa

Some pertinent quotes

... knowledge must continually be renewed by ceaseless effort, if it is not to be lost. It resembles a statue of marble which stands in the desert and is continually threatened with burial by the shifting sand. The hands of service must ever be at work, in order that the marble continue to lastingly shine in the sun. To these serving hands mine shall also belong. (**Albert Einstein**, 1950)

I don't know anything that gives me greater pleasure, or profit either, than talking or listening to philosophy. But when it comes to ordinary conversation, such as the stuff you talk about financiers and the money market, well, I find it pretty tiresome personally, and I feel sorry that my friends should think they're being very busy when they're really doing absolutely nothing. Of course, I know your idea of me: you think I'm just a poor unfortunate, and I shouldn't wonder if you're right. But then I don't THINK that you're unfortunate - I know you are. (**Plato**)

Time is not an empirical concept. For neither co-existence nor succession would be perceived by us, if the representation of time did not exist as a foundation a priori. (**Immanuel Kant**, 1781)

Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind. These passions, like great winds, have blown me hither and thither, in a wayward course, over a deep ocean of anguish, reaching to the very verge of despair. ... This has been my life. I have found it worth living, and would gladly live it again if the chance were offered me. (1967, I, 3–4)

(**Bertrand Russell**)

“Life is never made unbearable by circumstances but only by lack of meaning and purpose.”

(**Victor Frankl**)

Suppose we've chosen the wrong God? Every time we go to church we're just making Him madder and madder. (**Homer Simpson**)

General Course Catalog Description: This course is a general introduction to philosophy and philosophical reasoning. However, this course is not constructed as a “great hits” approach to philosophy and its practitioners: rather, we will examine how philosophy is both a response to “practical” situations and may be used to help us to engage, understand, and (most importantly) *change* the world that produces those situations. We will survey a variety of philosophical matters, such as what we really know and how we know it, the nature of mind and its relationship to matter, the nature of religion and the existence of God, the foundations of ethics and justice, personal identity, and free will. We will study both historical and contemporary philosophical writings.

General Education Curriculum Objectives:

- a) Students will be able to use written and oral communication as a means to engage in critical inquiry by exploring ideas, challenging assumptions, and reflecting on composing processes. Students will be able to clearly and accurately identify and evaluate problems and arguments.
- b) Students will be able to identify general and/or disciplinary-specific modes of inquiry.
- c) Students will be able to accurately interpret evidence/findings, especially positions different from their own.
- d) Students will better understand their own society through the study of different world intellectual, social, political, economic, or cultural perspectives and practices.

General Goals of *this* class

Provide a forum for students to:

- encounter the major contributions of the principal philosophers in the western tradition
- develop critical faculties and increase intellectual flexibility
- build a vocabulary for discussing abstract concepts
- develop the writing and oral communication skills required for discussing philosophical issues
- free their minds from the strictures of time, place, and ambient values
- enhance their creativity
- undertake the quest for truth wherever that may take them
- challenge current epistemic fads
- participate in a fellowship of thoughtful people interested in important issues
- assimilate facts, ideas, and attitudes which may remain with them well after the class is finished
- build confidence in their own intellectual constructs
- open up to the possibilities of growth that lie beyond the here-and-now
- reawaken in themselves the excitement felt by their primitive ancestors when they first looked out onto a world of signs which they could not fully interpret

Objectives of *this* class

To meet the objectives of this class, students must be able to

- associate philosophers with their ideas
- demonstrate orally and in writing that they understand the major concepts of these thinkers and the ramifications of the concepts
- apply the notions they are learning to important issues facing humanity today
- discuss logically and respectfully the issues brought up in round table format and in other students' reaction papers
- demonstrate that they understand, when significant, the connection between the philosophers and the lives they lived as well as their times
- be able to compare and contrast the philosophers and their intellectual contributions
- react intelligently to philosophical ideas, relating them to their own present understanding of the world

Expectations

It is expected that students will:

- react to each other's ideas in class
- utilize new concepts and vocabulary when discussing issues raised by the course
- be active participants in all class activities
- hand in assignments on time and make a serious effort to meet the objectives of the course
- be intellectually honest in all of their exchanges
- engage in discussions with complete respect for the views of their fellow students
- refrain from preaching

It is hoped that students will also

- develop a sense of the arc of Western thought.
- become conduits of important ideas to others outside the class.
- develop a personal philosophy which will make their lives on this planet more meaningful

Components of the course

Autobiography (See handout)

Outside-of-class reading and analysis of articles in the text

9 reaction papers for the articles you choose to expand upon

For help, consult: <http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/acadwrite/reaction.html>

In-class reading and discussion

3 written responses to other students' reaction papers

1 position paper (5 pages) to be submitted two weeks before the end of class

For help, consult: http://www.ehow.com/how_2106307_write-position-paper.html

1 performance. This could be a debate, teaching a particular segment of the course, doing a piece of art work which illustrates concepts dealt with in class, doing a role play, leading a discussion, etc.

Bibliography

Books

- Beauchamp, Tom L. and Alexander Rosenberg, 1981. *Hume and the Problem of Causation*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Brown, Stuart, 1984. *Leibniz*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Dawkins, Richard, 1976, *The Selfish Gene*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press
- Eadmer, R.W., 1962, *The Life of St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury*, London, New York, T. Nelson,
- Frankl, Victor, 2006, *Man's Search for Meaning*, Boston, Beacon Press
- Sartre, J-P, 1964, *The words*, Translated from the French by Bernard Frechtman, New York, G. Braziller
- Strawson, Galen, 2011, *Locke on Personal Identity*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- Kitcher, P., (ed.), 1998, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason: Critical Essays*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield
- Russell, B *My Philosophical Development* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1959)

Articles

- Carriero, John. 2008. "Cartesian Circle and the Foundations of Knowledge," in *Companion to Descartes*, ed. Janet Broughton and John Carriero. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell. Article in Book
- Gillispie, Neal C., 1990. "Divine Design and the Industrial Revolution: William Paley's Abortive Reform of Natural Theology," *Isis*, 81: 213–229.

Other Resources

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy is an excellent source of information about almost any author we are studying.

- www.articlemyriad.com/rise-secularism-medieval-europe
On the rise of secularism in medieval Europe during the time of St. Thomas Aquinas
- philpapers.org/rec/WILAAT-2
On St. Augustine and the Platonists
- <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/berkeley/>
Good introduction to Plato, his life and ideas
- <http://old.richarddawkins.net/articles/3492>
Series of lectures by Richard Dawkins at Stanford University
- <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-anti-realism/moral-error-theory.html>
Mackie's arguments for the moral error theory

Hegel for Beginners

Evaluation (approximate weights)

Reaction papers (9)	36%
Class participation and board activities	17%
Responses (3) to others' reaction papers	12%
Position paper (1)	15%
Performance (1)	4%
Quizzes (4)	16%

COURSE CALENDAR

Tuesday, September 3, 2013 Introductions Description of the course	Thursday, September 5 Plato and Russell Russell's contribution to Philosophy
Tuesday 10 Anselm and Aquinas Lives and times of two apologists Their opposite starting points	Thursday 12 Paley and Dawkins Before Charles Darwin and after... Teleology or Evolution?
17 Augustine Mackie and Hicks The problem of evil in the universe	19 Written evaluation In-class theme
24 Performance Day Dawkins debate	26 Pascal and James The reasonableness of faith
Tuesday, October 1 Theories of Knowledge: Epistemology Plato	Thursday, October 3 Locke Hume
8 Kant and Jagger	10 Chalmers and Dennett Philosophy of mind
15 NO CLASSES	17 Written evaluation and In-class theme

22 Performance	24 Hospers?
29 James and Taylor on determinism	31 Aristotle and Aquinas
Tuesday, November 5 Kant	Thursday November 7 Written evaluation In-class theme
12 Performance (relating to the last 7 authors)j	14 Existentialism Kierkegaard and Sartre
19 Camus	21 Begin Global Issues First G I (See some options below)
26 Second G I	28 Thanksgiving vacation
Tuesday, December 3 Third G I Give out the topic for the in-class theme and the rubric for the evaluation	Thursday, December 5 Written evaluation and in-class theme
10 Performance	12 Wrap-up
EXAM WEEK	EXAM WEEK

Possible themes for classes on global issues

The scandal of world economic inequality
 Inequality of the sexes
 The future of the LGBT community
 Religious intolerance on a global scale
 Islam and Christianity: Any compromise?
 These United States: plutocracy or democracy?
 World population control
 And others we may develop together