

PHIL 1: SHORT INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

University of California, Santa Barbara | Spring 2009

I. CONTACT INFO

LECTURE INFORMATION

Time: MWF 9:00am–9:50am

Location: North Hall 1006

Web page:

www.uweb.ucsb.edu/~jdmay/tch/crs/093s-phil1.htm

Twitter: http://twitter.com/may_class

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Joshua May

Office: South Hall, room 5720

Email: jdmay@umail.ucsb.edu

Website: www.uweb.ucsb.edu/~jdmay/

Office Hours: Wed. 2-4pm

TA INFORMATION

- Matt Griffin mjgriffin@umail.ucsb.edu Office hours: Mon. & Fri. 12-1 (SH 5432-R)

- Steve Huizenga huizenga@umail.ucsb.edu Office hours: Fri. 11-12 and 1-2 (SH 5432-T)

DISCUSSION SECTIONS

<u>Day</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Building</u>	<u>Room #</u>	<u>TA</u>
Mondays	1:00-1:50	ARTS	1247	Matt
Wednesdays	12:00-12:50	Bio Sciences Instruction Facility	1217	Matt
Fridays	10:00-10:50	Theater & Dance	2600	Steve
Fridays	12:00-12:50	Phelps	144	Steve

Map of UCSB: <http://www.aw.id.ucsb.edu/maps/ucsbmap.html>

II. BASIC COURSE INFO

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, students will be introduced to the discipline of philosophy (of the western, analytic, academic sort). The introduction will be to both the characteristic *methods* and *works* in the discipline. We will do this by understanding (and, to some extent, evaluating) work in some of the major fields of philosophy: *metaphysics*, *epistemology*, and *ethics*.

The main topics we'll cover in the course are:

1. *God*: Is there a God?
2. *Mind*: What is the relationship between mind and body? Is a mind a physical thing?
3. *Free Will*: Can we have free will or be responsible for anything if everything is determined?
4. *Ethics*: What should I do? Why should I be moral? Am I being immoral right now?
5. *Knowledge & Belief*: What should I believe? Do I really know anything?

The material covered in the course will include selections from both current and historically important philosophers but will focus on *contemporary* philosophers.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- (1) *Knowledge, Nature, and Norms: An Introduction to Philosophy*, 1st ed. (Wadsworth, 2009) by Mark Timmons & David Shoemaker. ISBN-13: 978-0-495-09722-8
- (2) Additional readings will be provided on E-reserves (ERes): <http://eres.library.ucsb.edu/eres/>

TWITTER UPDATES

There is a Twitter page for this class (http://twitter.com/may_class). You can either simply view the web page or you can use a Twitter account to “following” it. Twitter will be our primary way of sending out important updates about the class, especially time-sensitive ones. For example, if I or one of your TAs becomes sick and has to cancel a lecture or section, you can receive a text message from Twitter that will let you know you don't have to come to class that day.

COURSE FORMAT

We will be discussing material primarily from the text and supplemental readings. However, we **may not cover everything in the assigned reading**, and quite often **material will be brought up in lecture that is not in the readings**. So it is crucial that you come to class.

LECTURE SLIDES

I will be using PowerPoint slides in lecture, and the slides will be available on the course web page. This should help those to catch up who miss class for legitimate reasons. I'm also doing this so students don't have to take such copious notes during class. So **don't write down everything on the lecture slides**. You'll be able to print them out later. Just take notes on what I'm saying to supplement the slides. I'll do my best to make the slides available before lecture, preferably the night before. So the best plan for each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday would be to wake up, turn on your computer, and print the slides. Then bring them to class and write your additional notes on them (and on extra note paper if needed).

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Attendance	(in section)	5% of grade	(Section Day)	[weekly]
2. Short Paper #1	(3 pages)	20% of grade	(Due: Fri. 4/17)	[3 rd week]
3. Mid-Term	(in class)	20% of grade	(Date: Fri. 5/1)	[5 th week]
4. Short Paper #2	(3 pages)	25% of grade	(Due: Fri. 5/22)	[8 th week]
5. Final Exam	(in class)	30% of grade	(Date: Wed. 6/10, 8-11am)	[11 th week]

Note: These due dates are pretty firm, but they are subject to minor changes.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend all class meetings (lectures and sections). Attendance will *not* be tracked in lecture, but even just a few absences will likely adversely affect your performance on assignments. In discussion section, however, your **TAs will take attendance**. There will be approximately 10 meetings of your section throughout the quarter. (There will be one fewer for the Monday section due to the holiday; their attendance will be calculated using a total of 9 meetings). You will receive full credit for attendance so long as you attend 7 out of 10 (6 out of 9 for the Monday section); you will receive half credit if you attend 5 out of 10 (4 out of 9 for the Monday people); if you fail to attend at least 5 meetings (4 for Monday people), you will receive no credit for this assignment. (Note: You **do not need to notify your TA** if you're going to be absent.) It's up to your TA whether to count tardiness as an absence.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

There will be **no rescheduled exams**. Furthermore, there is a late policy for turning in late papers as follows: You will receive **1/3 of a letter grade** lower for each *day* (not class meeting) you are late, including each day on the weekend. (So, for example, if you turn in a paper a day late and you would get an "A," then you will receive an "A-" for the paper.

However, of course, if you have special circumstances, exceptions may be made. But you must let me know **as soon as such special circumstances arise**; otherwise I may not be able to work something out with you.

GRADES

You should be here primarily to *learn*, not to get a grade. Expect to be graded on your observable intellectual performance, not on the basis of *effort* or *need*. But **don't fret** too much about grades. Unless you are going onto graduate school or some similar form of even higher education, no one will look at your grades after you graduate. Most employers just care that you got the degree. Grades are mainly for you, to let you know how much understanding of the material you displayed.

CHEATING

Don't cheat (this includes *plagiarism*). I warn against this every quarter, and still nearly every quarter at least one person gets busted! **I take this extremely seriously**: I will prosecute any offenses, seeking penalties that can range up to expulsion from the university. At a minimum, cheating will result in **failing the course**.

Believe me, **it's just not worth it** to cheat. The amount of effort you'd put into cheating and then lying and covering up your lying about not cheating once you've been caught is probably about how much work is required to get a "C" on the assignment by doing it yourself. But if you cheat, you'll fail the entire course.

Furthermore, it's **your responsibility** to make sure your work does not violate university policies about plagiarism and other academic cheating. If you need any help in understanding these standards or are in any doubt about whether your work for this course violates them, check with me. For your convenience, here is the link to UCSB's page on academic dishonesty:

<http://hep.ucsb.edu/people/hnn/conduct/disq.html>

Note that if you cut something from a web document and paste it into your paper, you are plagiarizing (even if you mix up the wording a bit). The paper you will be asked to write is not a research paper. Just read the material required for class and take your time thinking it through. There is no need to look at anything else (including things on the Internet); but if you do, you must diligently cite and quote all consulted sources.

EXTRA CREDIT & MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS

All students are expected to meet the same standards to pass the course. So there will be **no extra credit** assignments. (The same goes for make-up assignments; in general, you will not be able to make up missed assignments. However, of course, if you have a serious emergency, exceptions *might* be made.)

IV. STUDENT SUPPORT

GENERAL HELP

If you have questions about the material in the course, the best method is likely to communicate with your TA first. He or she is your primary resource for help. But, of course, I am also available for help.

Talking to me (or your TA) about the material, especially in preparation for an upcoming assignment, is **not just for those who fear failing the course**; it's also for those who want to secure an "A" (or whatever your goal is).

OFFICE HOURS

I encourage you all to talk with me (or your TA) outside of class in office hours. If you are unable to make the regular time slot, contact me (preferably via email) about setting up an appointment to meet at a mutually convenient time. I'm glad to talk to you about philosophy (whether specific to the class or not), and you don't need a specific question formulated to come talk.

EMAIL

I'm available to contact by email. I can even answer relatively short and specific questions via email. If you have a more detailed and lengthy question, come to my office hours.

WEB PAGE

The web page for this class has some links that may prove useful in the course. (Note: The rest of my website also has some information and external links to several resources for philosophy. However, browse at your own risk. What is particularly useful for this course will be provided on the web page for this course.)

PAPER DRAFTS

It's a good idea to talk to your TA about your papers before you turn them in. TAs should be willing to meet with you for this. However, it is up to your TA whether he or she wants to read drafts of your papers in advance. You are welcome to bring in drafts to your TA's office hours to discuss them, but **your TA needn't read through entire drafts**; that could place an unreasonable burden on him or her.

IF YOU FACE MAJOR DIFFICULTIES

If for any reason you face major difficulties—medical or otherwise—get in touch with me **as soon as possible**. I'm happy to work with you to find the best course of action and, if possible, to help you complete the course successfully.

V. READINGS

There is **no set reading schedule**, and this list is subject to change. You'll need to keep coming to class to know where we are on this list and whether any changes have been made.

Students are expected to do the assigned reading. You should do the assigned readings before class. But keep in mind that you are not expected to have figured it all out before you walk in the door; that's what we're going to try to do in class. But if you don't do the reading before class, don't give up on it; you should at least do it sometime soon after that class meeting. I've

deliberately chosen readings that are relatively short and highly accessible even for students new to philosophy.

There is a holiday on **Monday May 25th (Memorial Day)**. There will be no lecture or sections that day.

Unit 1: Introduction / Preliminaries

Topic 1. What Is Philosophy?

- Sinnott-Armstrong (2009) "What is Philosophy?" (**ERes/web**) [2.5 pages]
- Portions of KNN (2009) Ch. 1, "Introduction":
What is Philosophy? (pp. 1-3) [3 pages]

Topic 2. Critical Thinking: Arguments and Evaluation

- Portions of KNN (2009) Ch. 1, "Introduction":
What Are Philosophical Arguments? (pp. 4-6) [2 pages]
How Does One Evaluate Arguments? (pp. 6-9) [4 pages]

Unit 2: Metaphysics

Topic 1. Is There a God?

Sub-Topic A. Intro to the God Question

- Portions of KNN (2009) Introduction to Ch. 5:
Motivation, Types of Reasons, For & Against (pp. 206-211) [6 pages]

Sub-Topic B. For God: The Argument from Design

- Paley (1802) "The Teleological Argument" (pp. 223-228) [6 pages]

Sub-Topic C. Against God: The Problem of Evil

- Dostoevsky (1880) "Rebellion" (pp. 213-216) [3 pages]
- Sinnott-Armstrong (2004) "The Problem of Evil" (**ERes**) [16 pages]
(first 6 pages for argument; final 10 pages for objections & replies)

Topic 2. The Mind-Body Problem

Sub-Topic A. Intro to the Mind-Body Problem

- Bisson (1990) "They're Made Out of Meat" (pp. 77-78) [2 pages]
- All of KNN (2009) Introduction to Ch. 3:
Motivation, Mind-Body Problem, & Some Theories (pp. 67-76) [9 pages]

Sub-Topic B. Consciousness and the Mind-Body Problem

- Chalmers (1995) "The Puzzle of Conscious Experience" (pp. 128-137) [9 pages]

Topic 3. Free Will, Determinism, and Responsibility

Sub-Topic A. Intro to Free Will & Responsibility

- Portions of KNN (2009) Introduction to Ch. 4:
Motivation (pp. 138-142) [5 pages]

Sub-Topic B. The Threat of Determinism

- Portions of KNN (2009) Introduction to Ch. 4:
Determinism, Doing Otherwise, etc. (pp. 142-147) [6 pages]
- Stace (1952) "The Problem of Free Will" (pp. 175-180) [6 pages]
(skip last couple of pages on moral responsibility)

Sub-Topic C. Moral Responsibility

- Nagel (1979) "Moral Luck" (**Eres**) [~10 pages]

Unit 3: Ethics

Topic 1. Basic Concepts & Some Applied Ethics

- Portions of KNN (2009) Introduction to Ch. 7:
Motivation & Basic Concepts (pp. 313-315) [2 pages]
- Singer (1999) "The Singer Solution to World Poverty" (**ERes**) [5 pages]

Topic 2. Some Normative & Meta-Ethical Theories

- Portions of KNN (2009) Introduction to Ch. 7:
Central Aims & Seven Ethical Theories (pp. 315-319) [4 pages]
How to Evaluate an Ethical Theory (pp. 319-321) [2 pages]
- Plato (~380 B.C.E.) "The Ring of Gyges" (pp. 322-324) [3 pages]

Unit 4: Epistemology

Topic 1. The Nature of Knowledge

- Portions of KNN (2009) Introduction to Ch. 6:
Motivation, Epistemology, Three Kinds of Knowledge (pp. 270-273) [3 pages]
What is Knowledge? (pp. 275-278) [4 pages]

Topic 2. Skepticism

- Portions of KNN (2009) Introduction to Ch. 6:
Skepticism versus Non-Skepticism (pp. 273-275) [3 pages]
Is Knowledge Possible? (pp. 278-280) [3 pages]
- Unger (1975) "A Defense of Skepticism" (pp. 295-300) [6 pages]

Topic 3. The Norms of Belief

- ~~— Portions of KNN (2009) Ch. 1, "Introduction":
The Ethics of Belief (pp. 280-281) [2 pages]~~
- ~~— Clifford (1877) "The Ethics of Belief" (pp. 301-305) [5 pages]~~

Unit 5: Misc. / Concluding Remarks

Topic 1. Experimental Philosophy

- Appiah (2007) "The New New Philosophy" (**ERes**) [4 pages]
- Knobe (2003) "Intentional Action and Side Effects in Ordinary Language" (**ERes**) [4 pages]