

Introduction to Philosophy
UIC, Spring 2009, Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-1:45,
BSB

Instructor: Aleks Zarnitsyn
Email: azarni2@uic.edu
Office: 1424 University Hall
Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:00-10:00; Thursdays 9:00-10:00 ; and by appointment
Course Reference Number:

Course Description

This course is a general introduction to philosophy and its methods. We will work through a number of philosophical texts that deal with some of the following topics: the existence of god, the nature of the mind, and free will, and others. Reading, thinking and writing about these topics with the hope of acquiring a taste for clarity, precision and good argumentation should prove valuable in the fields other than philosophy.

Text

Nils CH. Rahut, ed., *Readings on the Ultimate Questions*, 2nd ed.
Some additional readings will be distributed in class or posted on-line.

Assignments and Grading

Students must complete all the required assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade. No exceptions.

Quizzes: Quizzes are worth 25% of your overall grade. Quizzes will be given most meetings. At the end of the term, I will drop four of your lowest quiz grades; your combined quiz grade will be an average of the remaining number of quizzes. You must receive a passing grade on at least half of the quizzes in order to pass the course. Missed quizzes cannot be made up. Quizzes will be based on the material from assigned readings and lectures. Quizzes may consist of true/false, short answer, or multiple choice questions.

Paper: One 4-6 page paper, on one of the topics that I will supply, worth 25% of your overall grade. You will have two to three weeks to work on the paper. The assignment includes submitting a mandatory detailed outline of the paper a week before the due date. If time allows, I might want to meet with you to discuss your outline before you start writing the actual paper.

Mid-term Exam: There will one midterm exam, worth 25% of your overall grade.

Final Exam: The final exam is worth 25% of your overall grade. The date of the final exam will be announced in class.

Additional Policies

Make-up Policy for Exams: You must contact me at least two days prior to the exam and make arrangements to take it at some other time. Failure to do so will result in a zero (0) for the exam. Failure to show up for the scheduled make-up exam will result in a zero (0) for the exam.

Late Papers: In some circumstances, you may request an extension on your paper deadline. If you do not get an extension, late assignments will be downgraded by 1/3 of a letter grade per day.

Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism in any form is a violation of UIC standards; I will refer suspected cases over to the campus disciplinary committee.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access and participation in this course must be registered with the Office of Disability Services [(312 413 2183 or (312) 413 0123]. Any such students should introduce themselves to me no later than by the end of the second week.

Tentative Schedule of Readings and Lectures

Note on Reading: I will expect you to have read the assigned readings before class devoted to that unit. Some (if not all) readings will require multiple readings. Unless otherwise specified, all readings are from Rauhut's volume.

Week 1 Introduction and The Problem of Evil

13 January: Introduction; Optional: Kant "What is Enlightenment?"

15 January: Mackie "Evil and Omnipotence"

Week 2 The Problem of Evil and Cosmological Argument

20 January: Swinburne "Why God Allows Evil"

22 January: Aquinas "The Five Ways"; Taylor "The Cosmological Argument"

Week 3 The Design Argument

27 January: Paley "The Argument from Design" (get a copy from me)

29 January: Coyne The Faith that Dare Not Speak Its Name (on-line)

Week 4 Pascal and Belief without Evidence?

3 February: Pascal "The Wager" (get a copy from me)

5 February: Clifford "The Ethics of Belief"

Week 5 Belief without Evidence? and wrap up

10 February: James "The Will to Believe"

12 February: Rachels "Must God's Commands Conform to Moral Standards?" and wrap up

Week 6 Philosophy of Mind: Introduction to the Problem

17 February: Singer, excerpts from Animal Liberation; Russell "The Argument from Analogy for Other Minds"

19 February: Descartes, Dualism (reading?)

Week 7

24 February: Churchland "A Critique of Dualism"

26 February: Armstrong

Week 8

3 March: Review for the Mid-Term Exam

5 March: Mid-Term

Week 9 Free Will

10 March: Milgram "Behavioral Study of Obedience" (get a copy from me)

12 March: Optional: van Inwagen?

Week 10

17 March: Chisholm "Human Freedom and the Self" ?

19 March: Stace "Compatibilism"

Week 11 Spring Break

Week 12

31 March: Frankfurt "Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility"

Paper Topics Assigned

2 April:

Week 13

7 April

Paper Outline Due

9 April

Week 14

14 April

Paper Due

16 April

Week 15

21 April

23 April

Week 16

28 April

30 April