

Introduction to Philosophy

Philosophy 101-F — Fall 2016

Instructor: Felipe G. A. Moreira

Time: Monday – Wednesday – Friday 1:25PM – 2:15PM

Room: Memorial 213

E-mail: f.alvesmoreira@miami.edu

Office Hours: After class in front of Memorial 213, and by appointment.

Course Site: <https://www.courses.miami.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>

Class Description

Is there a God? If yes, how can we know God and should we act in accordance with God's will? Should philosophers-king rule our state? Are there abstract objects, such as properties like Beauty? Can the question "is there a god" be answered? Is suicide morally right? What is the relation between our minds and bodies (or brains)? To be moral is to maximize utility? Is there a moral law? Can skepticism be answered? Do we know our minds better than anything else? Is empirical knowledge more certain than a priori knowledge? Is metaphysical knowledge possible? Are Christians sick? Does the nothing "nothings"? Are metaphysical statements meaningless? What is like to see the color red? Is it possible to know what is like to have children before actually having them? These are a few of the questions that will be discussed in this class. The approach developed will be historical. We will read ancient, medieval, modern as well as contemporary philosophers.

Schedule

P.S₁: Come to class having read the text for that date.

P.S₂: I reserve the right to make changes to topics and dates of reading assignments.

Introduction

August 22: Outline of the Course

August 24, 26 and 29:

Osama Bin Laden's "To the Americans," and George W. Bush's "September 20th, 2001 Speech"

August 31, September 2 and 7:

Vaughn's "Plato: The Really Real," and Plato's *Republic* (Book VII)

September 5: *No Class*

September 9, 12 and 14: Vaughn's "Anselm," and Pascal's "Wager"

September 16 and 19: Smullyan's "An Unfortunate Dualist"

September 21, 23 and 26 and 28: Kurt Cobain's "Suicide Note," and Munson's "Utilitarianism," "Kant's Ethics" and "Theories without Principles"

September 30, October 3, 5, 7, 10 and 12: Vaughn's "Descartes: Doubt and Certainty", and Descartes' *Meditations*

October 14, 17 and 19: Vaughn's "Hume," and Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Chapters 1 through 6)

Fall Recess: October 20-23

October 24, 26 and 28: Clifford's "The Ethics of Belief"

October 21, November 2 and 4: Vaughn's "Nietzsche," and Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* ("Zarathustra's Prologue")

November 7, 9, 11: Vaughn's "Heidegger," Melchert's "The Logical Positivists," Heidegger's "What is Metaphysics?," and Carnap's "The Elimination of Metaphysics Through the Logical Analysis of Language"

November 14, 16 and 18: Jackson's "What Mary didn't Know," and Montero's "Post-physicalism"

Thanksgiving Recess: November 19 and 27

November 28, 30 and December 2: Paul's "What You Can't Expect When You're Expecting"

Conclusion

December 5: Review

Class Goals

To promote interest in philosophical questions.

To give students an overview of the history of philosophy.

To introduce students to a variety of areas and issues in philosophy.

To help students to improve their critical thinking and writing skills.

Blackboard

Students must be able to access Blackboard: I will send e-mails through it and all texts will be posted there. Let me know as soon as possible if you are having problems to access Blackboard.

Requirements

Class participation: 20%

In Class Quizzes (basic questions about the week's readings): 20 %

1st Paper: 30%. Due Date: **October 17 (changed due to the hurricane)**

2nd Paper: 30%. Due Date: **December 9**

Papers should have at least 1500 words.

If you want to earn writing credits for this class, you should also submit a draft of your paper at least one week before the paper's due date. Drafts must have at least 500 words. I will comment on your drafts and you should revise them in accordance with my comments before submitting your papers. All drafts and papers should be submitted on Blackboard.

1st Draft's Due Date: **October 3**

2nd Draft's Due Date: **December 2**

Grading

There will be no curve, and the following grading scale will apply:

F: 0-59%

D-: 60-62% D: 63-66% D+: 67-69%

C-: 70-72% C: 73-76% C+: 77-79%

B-: 80-82% B: 83-86% B+: 87-89%

A-: 90-92% A: 93-100%.

Late assignments

Make every attempt to complete your work by the due date. If you see that you cannot complete an assignment on time, please notify me **before the deadline** in class or by e-mail with an explanation. The only accepted excuses are: (i) illness for which you have a doctor's note, (ii) a university sponsored activity taking place at the time an assignment is due, or (iii) death or family crisis, with proper documentation provided.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. All work must be your own. Quotations from other sources must be acknowledged. Close and extensive paraphrasing should not be used. You may and are encouraged to talk with others and discuss the material with them in preparing to write your own work. Yet, the finished product should be clearly attributable to you and you alone. See the *University of Miami Honor Code* for more information on what constitutes cheating and plagiarism — and how it might be dealt with suspension from the University. Moreover, **note that Blackboard's safe assignment makes it very easy for teachers to identify plagiarism.**

Attendance

I will allow you **five** unexcused absences. **After that, you will lose 1% of your final grade per absence. If you have more than 50% absences, you will fail the course.** The only accepted excuses for missing a class are the following: (i) illness for which you have a doctor's note, (ii) a university sponsored activity taking place at the time an assignment is due, (iii) death or family crisis, with proper documentation provided; or (iv) religious holiday. The policy of the university regarding religious holidays is that students must inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester of any classes they will have to miss owing to a religious holiday. Otherwise, such absences will count as unexcused. Moreover, **it is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet every class.**

Class Behavior

Students are expected to show up to class on time and to remain awake for the entire lecture. If you frequently sleep in class, are late and leave the class before its end with no apparent justification, this will affect your attendance and participation grade. You should bring the readings to class. **Phones and electronic equipment (tablets, computers, etc.) should not be used in class. If students are seeing using them, this will affect their participation grades.**