
SYLLABUS

Phil 001 – Knowledge and Reality

Course Description

We all live with some basic underlining assumptions of how the world works. Philosophy, in a broad sense, is the search for truth and knowledge about these assumptions. Hence, we are all philosophers whenever we ask questions that expand our knowledge or challenge our assumptions.

This course will encourage students to challenge their assumptions through an investigation of the nature of reality (metaphysics) and the philosophy of knowledge (epistemology). In particular, throughout the course students will review several philosophical arguments and participate in class discussions that address the following five major questions: *What is real? Who, or what, am I? How do I know anything? Do I have any choices? If choices exist, how should I choose to live my life?*

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will have accomplished the following:

1. Explored what philosophers have said on the meaning of philosophy as love of wisdom.
2. Identified and articulated philosophical problems pertaining to the nature of knowledge and reality.
3. Compared approaches and attempted solutions to these problems from a variety of philosophical traditions.
4. Reviewed the practical applications of epistemology and metaphysics to a person's quality of living.

Instructor Information

Javy Galindo

Winter, 2015

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Phone: (408) 357-0504

Office Hours: Tues 3:30-4:00pm, in room L13. Wed 3:20-3:50pm in MLC110. Or by appointment.

Course Website: <http://www.javygalindo.com/phil001>

Course Expectations and Requirements

Attendance

- Students may miss a total of *two* class meetings without penalty during the term. There will be a half letter grade deduction assessed at the end of the term if the student misses three meetings, and a fourth absence will result in a full letter grade deduction. A fifth absence may result in dismissal from the course. (Students are highly encouraged to speak to the instructor after his or her fifth absence.)

- It is a student's responsibility to obtain any information or assignments they may have missed while absent.
- Attendance may be taken at the beginning of class, and after the mid-class break on a daily basis. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that his/her name has been recorded accurately on daily attendance sheets.
- Students are expected to come to class *on time* and stay for the duration of the class meeting. Any combination of three late arrivals or early departures will be considered equivalent to one absence on the attendance record.
- Students who arrive late or leave early must do so respectfully, causing minimal distraction to the rest of the class.

Classroom Policies

- All homework will be due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will not be accepted. Exceptions may be made for extenuating circumstances for partial credit. No assignments will be accepted that is more than one week late, regardless of circumstances.
- Students are expected to be in class on time and may miss assignments and graded activities if they arrive late.
- Place all phones and pagers to vibrate. Using electronic devices such as laptops, mobile phones, and pagers is not permitted during class time without instructor approval. Students who use electronic devices without prior permission from the instructor may be asked to leave.
- Be respectful to others in the class and behave in a professional manner. Students who the instructor deems as being disrespectful to the class may be immediately dropped from the course.

Grading

- There are no make-up exams or make-up quizzes. Exceptions may be made for extenuating circumstances for partial credit. The lowest of the four quiz scores will be dropped when calculating the student's final grade. All quizzes require a Scantron: either #2052 (Brown) or #882-E (Green).
- With the exception of the final essay assignment, homework will be graded on a pass/fail/zero system: 100% for passing assignments, 50% for failing assignments, and zero points if the assignment is not turned in on time.
- Class discussions will frequently feature small-group work. It is expected that students will participate actively in these groups in a respectful manner. Students not fully engaged in small-group work may be asked to leave.
- Academic honesty is imperative in all written work. Plagiarism, the use of unauthorized electronic devices during quizzes, and other violations will automatically result failing grade in the course, and will be reported to the Dean of Academics. Students who are unsure about standards for academic honesty should consult with me.

- **Final Exam** **20%**
- **Take-Home Exam: Final Essay** **20%**
- **Midterm Exam** **20%**
- **Top 3 Quizzes** **15%**
- **GRP Work & Top 3 HW Assignments** **15%**
- **Participation** **10%**

Letter Grade	Percentage Range
A+	96.5-100
A	92.5-96.4
A-	89.5-92.4
B+	86.5-89.4
B	82.5-86.4
B-	79.5-82.4
C+	76.5-79.4
C	69.5-76.4
D+	66.5-69.4
D	62.5-66.4
D-	59.5-62.4
F	0-59.4

Required Textbook

Rauhut, Nils Ch. Ultimate Questions: Thinking About Philosophy (3rd edition). Pearson, 2011.

Please ensure that you are using the **3rd** edition of this text. If the bookstore is out of copies, I recommend searching online vendors such as www.amazon.com or www.half.com for reasonably priced used copies.

Other required readings will be handed out in class or distributed to students electronically via the course website: <http://www.javvygalindo.com/phil001>

Recommended Textbook

Rauhut, Nils Ch. Readings on Ultimate Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy (3rd edition) Pearson, 2010.

**The following course schedule is an approximate schedule and subject to change.*

*Course Schedule	
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics: Introductions, The Unexamined Life, Knowledge, Skepticism (questioning reality). • 1/5 – None due today. • 1/7 – Finish Reading <u>Plato’s Cave Allegory</u>, <u>Butterfly Dream</u>, and <u>Descartes’ Meditations I&2</u> (online handouts). Optional: Read pgs 1-10, 42-57, in textbook to help understand the Descartes material.
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics: Personal Identity, How to Write a Philosophical Paper • 1/12 – Prepare for Quiz #1 (bring scantron and #2 pencil). Finish reading <u>Where am I? (Part I)</u>. Begin reading Chapter 5. • 1/14 – Finish reading Ch. 5 and the following online handouts: <u>Parfit on Personal Identity</u> and <u>Parfit: Divided Minds</u>.
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics: Materialism & Idealism • 1/19 – No Class. Holiday. • 1/21 – Complete HW #1, Finish reading the following handouts: Bishop Berkeley’s <u>Three Dialogues</u>.

Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics: Dualism and the Mind/Body Problem, In-Class Film Screening. • 1/26 – Prepare for Quiz #2 (bring Scantron and #2 pencil). Finish reading <u>Made out of Meat</u> and begin reading chapter 6 (pg 126-139). • 1/28 - Finish reading handout: <u>Argument for Dualism</u>. Finish reading pgs 126-139 and begin reading the rest of chapter 6.
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics: Mind Body Problem, Functionalism, In-class Film Screening. • 2/2 - Complete HW #2 as assigned. Finish reading chapter 6. • 2/4 – Finish reading handout: <u>The Simulation Argument</u>.
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics: Midterm, Eliminative Materialism, Epistemology (Empiricism) • 2/9 – Prepare for Midterm Exam (bring blue book) • 2/11 – Begin reading chapter 3, and finish reading handout: <u>President Clinton Takes the Stand</u>
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics: Epistemology (Rationalism and Kant’s Compromise) • 2/16 – No Class. Holiday. • 2/18 – Complete HW #3 as assigned. Finish handouts and Ch. 3.
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics: Epistemology (The Theories of Truth) • 2/23 – Prepare for Quiz #3. Finish reading assigned handouts. • 2/25 – Finish reading handouts.
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics: The Nature of Time, The Problem of Free Will, In-class Film Screening • 3/2 – Complete HW #4 as assigned. Finish reading handouts. • 3/4 – Complete reading handouts. Begin reading Ch. 4.
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics: The Problem of Free-Will, Morality & Personal Responsibility, In-class Film Screening • 3/9 - Prepare for Quiz #4. Finish reading handout & Ch. 4. • 3/11 – Finish reading handout & Ch. 8.
Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics: Eastern Philosophy • 3/16 – Complete Take-home Exam (electronic copy due). Begin reading handout. • 3/18 – Finish reading handout.
Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics: Developing a Personal Philosophy of Life, Final Exam • 3/23 – Finish reading handouts. Begin preparing for Final Exam. • 3/24 – Final Exam 1:45-3:45pm. (Bring blue/green book)