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**PHILOSOPHY 101**

**INSTRUCTOR:** COLENA SESANKER  
**MEETING TIMES:** MWF 1:00-1:50 KTRCC C101  
**CONTACT INFO:** csesanker@trcc.commnet.edu

**TEXT:** REASON AND RESPONSIBILITY 15<sup>th</sup> edition Feinberg & Shafer-Landau, ISBN# 9780495094920 +  
VARIOUS PROVIDED TEXTS

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is designed as an introduction to various problems and methods of western analytic philosophy. We will apply these methods of evaluation to the following topics: The problem of evil, the rationality of belief in God, the problem of free will, the relationship between the mind and the brain, the possibility of perception of and genuine knowledge of the External World, causation and questions of selfhood and personal identity. Many of these questions will be familiar to you and the conclusions reached in this class will, most likely, further evolve after the end of the term.

**OBJECTIVES:**

To further refine of your own world view.  
To evaluate standard formulations of philosophical problems and some answers to these puzzles posed by historical thinkers.  
Most importantly, to master a method of approaching such problems which, ultimately, will make you a more precise and critical thinker.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

3 position papers (10% each),  
6 Quizzes (8% each)  
Final Exam Essay (10%)  
Participation (12%: 1% per week)  
Weekly attendance, collaboration with classmates, use of discussion board in blackboard etc.

**MISSED ASSIGNMENTS:**

If there are special circumstances which make it necessary for a student to make up an assignment at a time other than the date scheduled, please be sure to contact me by email or in person *before* the missed assignment so that special arrangements can be made. Make-up writing assignments must be completed within a week of the originally scheduled date. A doctor's note or excuse of equivalent importance must be provided in order to be allowed a make-up exam.

**SCHEDULE** (further modification likely)

**TOPIC 1** Jan 23- Feb 6 class meets as scheduled MWF 1-1:50  
**Introduction: What is Philosophy? & Problem of Induction**  
**An introduction to the problems and methods of Western Philosophy, Introduction to Arguments**  
Handout  
**What is Causation?**  
Wesley Salmon "An Encounter with David Hume"

QUIZ#1 Due Feb 13<sup>th</sup> at noon. (available in Blackboard on Feb 6<sup>th</sup> at 2pm)

**TOPIC 2** Feb 9-Feb20. **What is free will? Do we have it?**  
 Feb 13<sup>th</sup> and Feb 20<sup>th</sup>- discussion.

**Determinism and Free Will:** Paul Holbach "The Illusion of Free Will"

**Compatibilism:** A.J. Ayer "Freedom and Necessity"

**Freedom:** Robert Kane "Free Will: An Ancient Dispute, New Themes"  
 Susan Wolf "Sanity and the Metaphysics of responsibility"

Assignments:

- discussion posts required by noon on Feb 13<sup>th</sup> and Feb 20<sup>th</sup>.  
 Feb 13<sup>th</sup>: on Hard Determinism and Compatibilism (Holbach and Ayer)  
 Feb 20<sup>th</sup>: on Deep Self compatibilism and Libertarianism (Wolf and Kane)
- Quiz #2 due Friday Feb 27<sup>th</sup> at noon (available from Feb 20<sup>th</sup> at 2pm)
- Position paper due March 4<sup>th</sup>

**TOPIC 3** Feb 23-Mar 13: **Attempts to Prove the Existence of God**

Feb 27, Mar 6 and Mar 13<sup>th</sup> - discussion

**Ontological Proof** Anselm of Canterbury: The Ontological Argument  
**Cosmological Proof** Samuel Clarke: A Modern Formulation of the Cosmological Argument  
**Teleological Proof** William Paley: The Argument from Design

Assignments:

- Discussion posts required by noon on Feb 27<sup>th</sup>, Mar 6<sup>th</sup> and Mar 13<sup>th</sup>  
 Feb 27<sup>th</sup>: on the Ontological Proof  
 Mar 6<sup>th</sup>: on the Cosmological proof  
 Mar 13<sup>th</sup>: on the Teleological Proof
- Quiz #3 due Friday Mar 27<sup>th</sup> (after spring break)

**\*\*\*SPRING BREAK MARCH 15-22\*\*\***

**TOPIC 4** Mar 23- April 3: **The Problem of Evil and The Ethics of Belief**

Mar 27 - discussion [*college closed on April 3<sup>rd</sup> for Spring Recess*]

**The Problem of Evil** Fyodor Dostoevsky "Rebellion"  
 B.C. Johnson "God and the Problem of Evil"  
 Richard Swinburne "Why God Allows Evil"

**The Ethics of Belief** W.K. Clifford "The Ethics of Belief"  
 William James "The Will To Believe"

Assignments:

- Discussion posts required by noon on Mar 27 and April 3  
 Mar 27: on the Problem of Evil  
 April 3: on The Ethics of belief
- Quiz # 4 due on April 10<sup>th</sup> at noon (available on April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 2pm)
- Position paper due Wed April 15<sup>th</sup>

**TOPIC 5** April 6<sup>th</sup>- 17<sup>st</sup> **The Real World and our Knowledge of it**

April 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> : discussion

**Realism** Rene Descartes Meditations on first Philosophy. Meditations 1-3

## Denying realism

John Locke The causal theory of perception  
George Berkeley Of the Principle of Human Knowledge  
G.E. Moore Proof of an External World

### Assignments:

- Discussion forum posts due on April 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> by noon  
April 10: Realism (direct and indirect)  
April 17: Idealism, Anti-Realism and Moore's skeptical solution
- Quiz #5 due on April 24<sup>th</sup> at noon (will be available from April 17<sup>th</sup> 2pm)

## TOPIC 6

April 20<sup>th</sup> - May 8<sup>st</sup>

## The Mind, Body and Self

class discussion on April 24 and May 1

### Read at least two of the following:

If you're interested in Dualism:

Brie Gertler "in Defense of Mind-Body Dualism"

If you're interested in the Qualia Problem:

Frank Jackson "The Qualia Problem"

If you're interested in Eliminative Materialism:

Paul Churchland "Functionalism and Eliminative Materialism"

(especially the section on Eliminative Materialism beginning on p.339)

If you're interested in the Chinese Room and Functionalism:

John Searle "Minds, Brains and Programs"

To think about puzzles concerning identity:

Daniel Dennett "Where am I?" (handout provided)

### Assignments:

- Discussion posts required by noon on April 24 and May 1
- Quiz #6 due on May 15<sup>th</sup> (available from May 1 at 2pm)
- Position Paper 3 due on May 18th

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- Final Wrap Up Paper due
  - Presentation on your topic of choice expected on May 8<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup>

## LAST CLASS MEETINGS

Currently scheduled to meet on May 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> for the last two weeks of classes, but more meetings (on Mon or Wed 1-1:50) may be scheduled if necessary.

May 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>: short presentations (about 5 mins each) on topic of final wrap-up papers.

May 18<sup>th</sup>: last position paper due. Submit via blackboard