

Philosophy 101L/Y
Prof. Paul Muench (pronounced “Minch”)
T.A.:

University of Montana
Fall 2019

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Introduction to Philosophy

Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 10-10:50 a.m., LA 11

Course Objectives

This course will introduce you to some of the questions that philosophers have traditionally asked (questions about what we know and how we know it, about what is real, about what is valuable, and about how one should live) and to some of the answers they have proposed. It will also introduce you to some of the skills and methods used in philosophical inquiry, skills and methods that may be useful in other sorts of inquiries as well. These include the ability to analyze and criticize arguments; the ability to articulate one’s own views and to support them with reasoned arguments; and the ability to read a text carefully, sympathetically, and critically.

This course satisfies general education requirements for Group L (Literary and Artistic Studies) and Group Y (Democracy and Citizenship).

Course Requirements

1. Exam #1 (Monday, September 23) 25%
2. Exam #2 (Wednesday, October 16) 25%
3. Exam #3 (Friday, November 8) 25%
4. Exam #4 (Thursday, December 12) 25%

Readings

Books

These books are required and can be purchased at the UM bookstore (it may also be worth checking the prices at www.amazon.com or www.bookfinder.com); they are on two-hour reserve in Mansfield Library.

1. Simon Blackburn, *Think* (Oxford, 1999; ISBN 978-0192854254)
2. Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll’s House* (Dover, 1992 [1879]; ISBN 978-0486270623)
3. Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates* (Hackett, 2000 [429-347 B.C.E.]; ISBN 978-0872205543)

Additional Required Readings

I will make available additional required readings in Moodle.

Moodle

This course has a Moodle page (<https://moodle.umt.edu>). For more information on how to access Moodle, login and then select Moodle 101 for Students (<https://moodle.umt.edu/enrol/index.php?id=979>).

Email

Any email that I send to the class will be sent to your university email address via Moodle. It is your responsibility to check your email on a regular basis.

Accommodation for Disabilities

Whenever possible, and in accordance with civil rights laws, the University of Montana will attempt to provide reasonable modifications to courses for students with disabilities who request and require them. Please feel free to set up a time with me to discuss any modifications to this course you may require. For more information, contact Disability Services for Students, located in the Lommasson Center, room 154 (<http://www.umt.edu/dss>).

Attendance, Participation, Class Etiquette

Attendance and Participation: Your attendance and participation are crucial for the success of this class and will play a significant role in determining whether or not our time together proves to be intellectually fulfilling. As many of you probably know, it is a university requirement that you attend all class meetings for courses in which you are enrolled (See “Class Attendance/Absence Policy,” <http://catalog.umt.edu/academics/policies-procedures>). In my experience, students also get the most out of those classes that they regularly attend.

Etiquette: As a courtesy to me and to your fellow students, during class please do not (1) talk to a classmate while I or others are speaking; (2) consult other reading materials (such as newspapers, crossword puzzles, etc.) or play computer games; or (3) use your cell phone. Cell phones should be turned off or placed on vibrate—and should not be taken out during class. If you know that you will have to leave class early, please sit near an exit so you can minimize the disruption.

Exams

This course has four exams (each worth 25% of your final grade):

- (1) Exam #1: Monday, September 23;
- (2) Exam #2: Wednesday, October 16;
- (3) Exam #3: Friday, November 8
- (3) Exam #4: Thursday, December 12 (8-10 a.m., LA 11)

Missed exams cannot normally be made up.

Exams will be multiple choice. For each exam, please bring a skinny red Scantron answer sheet and a #2 pencil. Answer sheets can be purchased at multiple places on campus, including the bookstore.

The Art of Reading

Reading, like writing, is an art that can only be acquired through extensive and intensive practice. In general, you should plan to read each assignment for this course two times before you come to class: (i) read it through once to get a sense of the overall shape of the discussion and what the chief issues and questions seem to be; (ii) read it a second time, going more slowly and with an eye to how the different parts hang together. As Thoreau put it, “To read well, that is, to read true books in a true spirit, is a noble exercise, and one that will task the reader more than any exercise which the customs of the day esteem. It requires a training such as the athletes underwent, the steady intention almost of the whole life to this object. Books must be read as deliberately and reservedly as they were written” (“Reading,” *Walden*).

Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty

I will not tolerate cheating or plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty in this course. In addition to being a violation of the University of Montana Student Conduct Code (<http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/community-standards/default.php>), cheating harms your fellow students by giving you an unfair advantage, and harms you since you thereby fail to take yourself seriously. In general, the first instance of cheating or other forms of academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade (“F”) for the course and will also be subject to University sanction.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

(Subject to change with advance notice)

Week 1

M 8/26 **Introduction; What is Philosophy?**
Blackburn, *Think*, 1-13

W 8/28 **What is Philosophy?** (cont.)
Blackburn, *Think*, 1-13

I. Knowledge

F 8/30 **Doubt and the Evil Demon**
Blackburn, *Think*, 15-21

Week 2

M 9/2 **No Class (Labor Day)**

W 9/4 **Reading Philosophy: Motivations, Questions**
Blackburn, *Think*, 22-28

F 9/6 **Who am I? Clear and Distinct Ideas**
Blackburn, *Think*, 28-33

Week 3

M 9/9 **Overcoming Skepticism; Objections**
Blackburn, *Think*, 34-40; 47-48

II. Mind

W 9/11 **Mind-Body Dualism, Zombies, Mutants**
Blackburn, *Think*, 49-58

F 9/13 **Mind-Body Connection: Brute Fact or Rational?**
Blackburn, *Think*, 58-65

Week 4

M 9/16 **Analysis; Psycho-Physical Identity**
Blackburn, *Think*, 65-72

W 9/18 **Catch Up/Review**

F 9/20 **No Class**

Week 5

M 9/23 **Exam #1**

III. Free Will

W 9/25 **The Dilemma of Determinism**
Blackburn, *Think*, 81-91

F 9/27 **Compatibilism**
Blackburn, *Think*, 91-97

Week 6

M 9/30 **Puppets, Martians, Obsessions**
Blackburn, *Think*, 97-105

W 10/2 **Objectification, Flexibility, Dignity**
Blackburn, *Think*, 107-110; 117-119

IV. The Self

F 10/4 **Souls, Oak Trees, Ship of Theseus**
Blackburn, *Think*, 120-127

Week 7

M 10/7

Personal Identity

Blackburn, *Think*, 128-135

W 10/9

Self as Bundle, as Organizing Principle

Blackburn, *Think*, 135-140

F 10/11

Delusions of Imagination, Soul Scrambling

Blackburn, *Think*, 140-148

Week 8

M 10/14

Catch Up/Review

W 10/16

Exam #2

F 10/18

No Class

V. The Life and Death of Socrates

Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*=TDS

Week 9

M 10/21

Socrates' Defense

(1) Plato, *Euthyphro*, 2a-5d (in TDS)

(2) Plato, *Apology*, 17a-24b (in TDS)

W 10/23

Legal Charges

Plato, *Apology*, 24b-28b (in TDS)

F 10/25

Fear of Death

Plato, *Apology*, 28b-35d (in TDS)

Week 10

M 10/28

What Punishment Did Socrates Deserve?

Plato, *Apology*, 35e-42a (in TDS)

W 10/30

Why Does Socrates Adhere to the Verdict?

Plato, *Crito*, 43a-50a (in TDS)

F 11/1

Socrates in Conversation with the Laws of Athens

Plato, *Crito*, 50a-54e (in TDS)

Week 11

M 11/4

The Death of Socrates

(1) Plato, "Socrates' Death Scene," *Phaedo*, 114d-118a (in *TDS*)

(2) Kierkegaard, "Socrates' Last Words" (**Moodle**)

(3) Nietzsche, "The Dying Socrates" (**Moodle**)

W 11/6

Catch Up/Review

F 11/8

Exam #3

Week 12

M 11/11

No Class (Veterans Day)

VI. Friendship, Marriage, and the Problems of Life

W 11/13

Lives of Quiet Desperation

Thoreau, "Economy," *Walden* excerpt (**Moodle**)

F 11/15

Solving the Problems of Life

Thoreau, "Economy" (cont.), *Walden* excerpt (**Moodle**)

Week 13

M 11/18

What is Friendship?

Aristotle, "Friendship," *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 8 (1155a-1163a34) (**Moodle**)

W 11/20

Why Do Friendships End? What is it to Be a Friend to Oneself?

How Many Friends Should We Have?

Aristotle, "Friendship," *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 9 (1163a35-1172a15)

(**Moodle**)

F 11/22

What is Marriage?

(1) Tolstoy, "Alyosha the Pot" (**Moodle**)

(2) Milton, Selections from *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (**Moodle**)

Week 14

M 11/25

What Are the Costs of Inequality in a Marriage?

Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, Act I, 1-28

W 11/27

No Class (Thanksgiving Break)

F 11/29

No Class (Thanksgiving Break)

Week 15

M 12/2

Fantasy and Real Life

Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, Act II, 29-50

W 12/4

What are a Woman's Duties to Herself?

(1) Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, Act III, 51-72

(2) Ibsen, "Alternative, 'Conciliatory' Ending to *A Doll's House*" (**Moodle**)

F 12/6

Conclusion

Week 16

R 12/12

Exam #4

8-10 a.m., LA 11