

# INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

PHIL 2010 | FALL 2013 | CRN 88605/83597

TUE & THU, 4.00PM-5.15PM

ADERHOLD LEARNING CENTER 312

twitter: @2010gsu4

# Prof. Nicole A Vincent

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-4pm

## DESCRIPTION

This course offers an introduction to philosophy by exploring a range of questions from epistemology, metaphysics and ethics including:

- What is *knowledge* and can we really know anything?
- Are we *responsible* for what we do if everything we do is *caused* by prior events?
- What is the *mind*, where is it, and what is its relation to the *brain* or body?
- People often disagree about what is *right* and *wrong*. So is morality just relative?
- Is *liberty* sacrificed, or promoted, when governments use taxes to promote *equality*?

These questions are interesting and important. That's why philosophers explore them. You may have views about them already. I hope this course offers you an opportunity to develop those views through reflection and discussion.

## OBJECTIVES

I also hope that through classroom discussion, lectures and readings you will:

- learn *what* some philosophers have said about these topics;
- learn *why* they have said those things;
- learn the *skills* of philosophical analysis and argumentation;
- develop a broader and deeper interest in philosophy; and
- become prepared for more advanced courses in philosophy.

## MATERIALS

There is no textbook. The course readings will be available on <http://desire2learn.gsu.edu/> The week-by-week **reading list on page 2** shows what you must read to prepare for class. Some weeks I set one article per lecture, other weeks one article for two lectures. **Read all assigned material before class.** Lectures and discussions are designed only to clarify and supplement the texts. **As you read the set material, stop and think, jot down notes, and if you don't understand or disagree with something, raise this as a question in class.**

**PRE-REQUISITES:** None

## WEEK-BY-WEEK READING SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Component / Readings
1	Aug 27	<b>Introduction and Course Overview</b>
	Aug 29	Descartes, René (1641) <i>Meditations on First Philosophy (1st &amp; 2nd meditations)</i> <a href="http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/de.html">http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/de.html</a>
2	Sep 3	Gettier, Edmund (1963) <i>Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?</i> <i>Analysis</i> , 23(6):121-123. <a href="http://www.jstor.org/stable/3326922">http://www.jstor.org/stable/3326922</a>
	Sep 5	Dancy, Jonathan (1993) "Chapter 1: Scepticism." <i>An Introduction to Contemporary Epistemology</i> , Blackwell, pp 7-22.
3	Sep 10	Taylor, Richard (1963) "Freedom and Determinism", <i>Metaphysics</i> , Prentice-Hall.
	Sep 12	Ayer, Alfred J. (1954) <i>Freedom and Necessity</i> . <a href="http://web.nmsu.edu/~jvessel/Freedom%20and%20Necessity.pdf">http://web.nmsu.edu/~jvessel/Freedom%20and%20Necessity.pdf</a>
4	Sep 17	Eagleman, David (2011) "The Brain on Trial", <i>The Atlantic</i> . <a href="http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/07/the-brain-on-trial/308520/">http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/07/the-brain-on-trial/308520/</a>
	Sep 19	...see above...
5	Sep 24	Roskies, Adina (2006) "Neuroscientific challenges to free will and responsibility" <i>Trends in Cognitive Science</i> , 10(9):419-423. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2006.07.011">http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2006.07.011</a>
	Sep 26	<b>CLASS TEST 1: Worth 20% of final grade</b>
6	Oct 1	Nagel, Thomas (1987) "The Mind-Body Problem", <i>What does it all mean?</i> , pp 27-37.
	Oct 3	
7	Oct 8	Campbell, Keith (1984) "Dualisms", <i>Body and Mind</i> , pp 41-58.
	Oct 10	
8	Oct 15	Place, Ullin T. (1956) "Is Consciousness a Brain Process?", <i>British Journal of Psychology</i> , 44-50. <a href="http://people.ucsc.edu/~jbowin/Ancient/place1956.pdf">http://people.ucsc.edu/~jbowin/Ancient/place1956.pdf</a>
	Oct 17	
9	Oct 22	Searle, John (1980) "Minds, brains and programs", <i>The Behavioral and Brain Sciences</i> , 3(3):417-424. Also at: <a href="http://l3d.cs.colorado.edu/~ctg/classes/lib/cogsci/searle.pdf">http://l3d.cs.colorado.edu/~ctg/classes/lib/cogsci/searle.pdf</a>
	Oct 24	
10	Oct 29	Olson, Eric T. (2010) "Personal Identity", <i>Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy</i> , <a href="http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-personal/">http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-personal/</a>
	Oct 31	<b>CLASS TEST 2: Worth 25% of final grade</b>
11	Nov 5	Rachels, James (1999) "The challenge of cultural relativism", <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i> , 1999, pp 20-36.
	Nov 7	
12	Nov 12	Sinnott-Armstrong, Walter (2011) "Consequentialism", <i>Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy</i> , <a href="http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consequentialism/">http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consequentialism/</a>
	Nov 14	
13	Nov 19	Driver, Julia (2007) "Kantian Ethics", <i>Ethics: the fundamentals</i> , pp 80-101.
	Nov 21	
<b>Thanksgiving Break: Nov 25-30</b>		
14	Dec 3	Norman, Richard (1987) "Freedom versus Equality?" by Richard Norman, <i>Free and Equal</i> , pp 131-154.
	Dec 5	
<b>FINAL EXAM: Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 4.15pm-6.45pm. Worth 30% of final grade.</b>		

## ASSESSMENT

To give *you* feedback on how well you are doing throughout the semester, and to keep *my* finger on the pulse of how well the class is doing, this course uses progressive assessment (see the four "Components" below on left, and explanations further below):

Components	Value	Grading Scale	B-	80-82%
Class Quizzes (your best 10)	25	A+ 99-100%	C+	77-79%
Test 1 (½ through semester)	20	A 93-98%	C	73-76%
Test 2 (¾ through semester)	25	A- 90-93%	C-	70-72%
Final Exam	30	B+ 87-89%	D	60-69%
<b>FINAL GRADE</b>	<b>100</b>	B 83-86%	F	<60%

Each component will be graded using the indicated Grading Scale, and the indicated Value shows how much, as a percentage, each component will contribute to your Final Grade. Your final grade will thus be the sum of your four component grades.

Preparation, Attendance, Participation, and Respect: You are expected to come to every class having **read the assigned material for that week** (see page 2). You should spend an average of at least four hours per week outside of the classroom reading and digesting the set readings. **Missing classes will lower your grades** since in-class assessment is scheduled on thirteen of the fourteen weeks (see below).

Also, **attendance and active participation in class will improve your grades**. It will give you an opportunity to ask questions that improve your comprehension of the material, and to engage in debate with your classmates and with me (a core skill in philosophy).

**Ask questions when you do not understand** something from the readings or lectures. If you have a question but someone else is talking, then hold that thought or write it down. Even better, **tweet your questions during class at @2010gsu4** and they will come up on the screen. If you think you know how to answer someone else's question, then please share your thoughts with the class by speaking up or by tweeting at @2010gsu4 during class.

When you disagree with something, **express your disagreement in a respectful way** by criticizing *ideas* not *people*. Feel free to raise your hand and speak when your turn comes up, or, better, **tweet your objections during class at @2010gsu4**. Please **don't be "that guy"** who dominates all discussions and won't let others speak. Finally, your classmates are one of your best learning resources (really!) so **encourage others to speak by asking for their opinion**.

Lastly, **stay alert and focussed on the discussion**, do not become distracted, and do not distract your classmates. Please **switch your phone to silent** before class starts; I will do this too. Please arrive on time because late arrivals distract our attention, and do not start packing up early as this is also very distracting. **Use electronic gadgets if they facilitate learning** – smartphones, iPads, laptops – but, as always, only if this does not distract me or the class.

Class Quizzes: **25% of your final grade is tied to you showing up, on time, prepared for class.** On most weeks, one of the two **classes will begin with a 10 minute written quiz.** Quizzes will include *true-or-false* and *short-answer* type questions about the reading material set for *that* week. There will be 11 quizzes, each will contribute up to 2.5% towards your final grade, but I will only count your best 10 quiz grades. For each quiz you will get 1% just for being in class and turning it in, and the remaining 1.5% will depend on the quality of your answers. So please **come to class on time** and **be prepared** by reading the set material beforehand.

Tests and Final Exam: The dates for the two tests and exam are indicated on the week-by-week reading schedule (see page 2). Test 1 will relate to material covered in weeks 1-5; Test 2 will relate to material covered in weeks 6-10; and the Final Exam will relate to material covered in weeks 11-14. The tests and the exam will consist of objective questions (true-or-false, fill-in-the blank, etc), short answer questions, and essay questions.

Late Attendance, Leaving Early, Missed Classes and Missed Tests/Exam: Because **quizzes** check your attendance and whether you have prepared before class, they **can only be done at the start of class** when everyone else is doing their quiz. If you are late for class then you may miss the opportunity to (have adequate time to) do the quiz. If you are late for a test or exam, then you will have less time to complete that test or exam. If you show up too late to do the quiz, but are still there for most of the class and you would like the 1% *attendance* grade, then please speak to me after class. If you show up for class, do the quiz, and then leave, then you will not receive the 1% attendance portion for that quiz. If you miss a test or the exam, then you will receive a 0% grade for that component (unless there are extenuating reasons, see "Other Information" below). You can't make up for a missed test or exam without prior approval from me and/or an official letter from a medical provider (if relevant).

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

Disability Support Services and Special Needs: All efforts will be made to accommodate students with special needs, so long as sufficient notice is given. If you require special accommodations for lectures, quizzes, tests, examinations, or any other course component, you must contact me during the first week of class. It is also imperative that you notify Disability Services by calling 404-463-9044 or on the web via <http://disability.gsu.edu/>

Special Requests: If you know that you will miss a class, test or exam then let me know ahead of time so we can work something out. In very special circumstances – e.g. personal, family and medical crises – special arrangements can also be made. But I emphasize that these arrangements must, where possible, be made in advance. You must also provide adequate documentation when you make a special request. If you do not get in touch beforehand, or if you provide inadequate documentation, I reserve the right to not grant your request.

Academic Honesty & Miscellanea: See the last two pages of this syllabus.

# Department of Philosophy

## General Syllabus Statement Fall 2013

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- This syllabus provides a general plan for the course. Deviations may be necessary.
- The last day to **withdraw** from a course with the possibility of receiving a W is **Tuesday, October 15.**
- Students are responsible for confirming that they are attending the **course section** for which they are registered. Failure to do so may result in an F for the course.
- By University policy and to respect the confidentiality of all students, **final grades** may not be posted or given out over the phone. To see your grades, use PAWS.
- The customary penalty for a violation of the academic honesty rules is an "F" in the course. See the University Policy on Academic Honesty on the reverse of this sheet. **Copying or using material from the internet without citation is a violation of the academic honesty rules.**
- A student may be awarded a grade of "W" no more than 6 times in their careers at Georgia State. After 6 Ws, a withdrawal is recorded as a WF on the student's record. A WF counts as an F in a GPA.
- Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State University. Upon completing the course, please take the time to fill out the online course evaluation.
- Students who wish to request accommodation for a disability must do so by registering with the Office of Disability Services in Suite 230 of the Student Center. Students may only be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of Disability Services of a signed Accommodation Plan and are responsible for providing a copy of that plan to instructors of all classes in which an accommodation is sought.

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### Subscribe to one of our department listservs for current information and events:

1. Undergraduate Students: [www2.gsu.edu/~wwwphi/2131.html](http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwphi/2131.html)
  2. Graduate Students: [www2.gsu.edu/~wwwphi/2109.html](http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwphi/2109.html)
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**For more information on the philosophy program visit:**  
[www.gsu.edu/philosophy](http://www.gsu.edu/philosophy)

## Policy on Academic Honesty, from the GSU Catalog

As members of the academic community, students are expected to recognize and uphold standards of intellectual and academic integrity. The university assumes as a basic and minimum standard of conduct in academic matters that students be honest and that they submit for credit only the products of their own efforts. Both the ideals of scholarship and the need for fairness require that all dishonest work be rejected as a basis for academic credit. They also require that students refrain from any and all forms of dishonorable or unethical conduct related to their academic work.

The university's policy on academic honesty is published in the *Faculty Handbook* and *On Campus: The Student Handbook* and is available to all members of the university community. The policy represents a core value of the university, and all members of the university community are responsible for abiding by its tenets. Lack of knowledge of this policy is not an acceptable defense to any charge of academic dishonesty. All members of the academic community—students, faculty, and staff—are expected to report violations of these standards of academic conduct to the appropriate authorities. The procedures for such reporting are on file in the offices of the deans of each college, the office of the dean of students, and the office of the provost.

In an effort to foster an environment of academic integrity and to prevent academic dishonesty, students are expected to discuss with faculty the expectations regarding course assignments and standards of conduct. Students are encouraged to discuss freely with faculty, academic advisers, and other members of the university community any questions pertaining to the provisions of this policy. In addition, students are encouraged to avail themselves of programs in establishing personal standards and ethics offered through the university's Counseling Center.

### **Definitions and Examples**

The examples and definitions given below are intended to clarify the standards by which academic honesty and academically honorable conduct are to be judged. The list is merely illustrative of the kinds of infractions that may occur, and it is not intended to be exhaustive. Moreover, the definitions and examples suggest conditions under which unacceptable behavior of the indicated types normally occurs; however, there may be unusual cases that fall outside these conditions that also will be judged unacceptable by the academic community.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is presenting another person's work as one's own. Plagiarism includes any para-phrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgment, including the submitting of another student's work as one's own. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge in the text, notes, or footnotes the quotation of the paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else.

The submission of research or completed papers or projects by someone else is plagiarism, as is the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else when that use is specifically forbidden by the faculty member. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. Any work, in whole or in part, taken from the Internet or other computer-based resource without properly referencing the source (for example, the URL) is considered plagiarism. A complete reference is required in order that all parties may locate and view the original source. Finally, there may be forms of plagiarism that are unique to an individual discipline or course, examples of which should be provided in advance by the faculty member. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly or creative indebtedness, and the consequences of violating this responsibility.

**Cheating on Examinations:** Cheating on examinations involves giving or receiving unauthorized help before, during, or after an examination. Examples of unauthorized help include the use of notes, computer-based resources, texts, or "crib sheets" during an examination (unless specifically approved by the faculty member), or sharing information with another student during an examination (unless specifically approved by the faculty member). Other examples include intentionally allowing another student to view one's own examination and collaboration before or after an examination if such collaboration is specifically forbidden by the faculty member.

**Unauthorized Collaboration:** Submission for academic credit of a work product, or a part thereof, represented as its being one's own effort, which has been developed in substantial collaboration with another person or source or with a computer-based resource is a violation of academic honesty. It is also a violation of academic honesty knowingly to provide such assistance. Collaborative work specifically authorized by a faculty member is allowed.

**Falsification:** It is a violation of academic honesty to misrepresent material or fabricate information in an academic exercise, assignment or proceeding (e.g., false or misleading citation of sources, falsification of the results of experiments or computer data, false or misleading information in an academic context in order to gain an unfair advantage).

**Multiple Submissions:** It is a violation of academic honesty to submit substantial portions of the same work for credit more than once without the explicit consent of the faculty member(s) to whom the material is submitted for additional credit. In cases in which there is a natural development of research or knowledge in a sequence of courses, use of prior work may be desirable, even required; however the student is responsible for indicating in writing, as a part of such use, that the current work submitted for credit is cumulative in nature.