

Philosophy 231: Introduction to Philosophy

Instructor: Chris DeMarco

Office: McDivitt Hall, Room 211A (conveniently located inside of Room 211)

Office Hours: 8:00 am – 9:30 am, Monday thru Thursday
11:00 am – 1:00 pm, Tuesday and Thursday
and by appointment

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Text: Louis P. Pojman, ed., *Philosophy: The Quest for Truth*, 9th edition

Also available as an ebook at www.redshelf.com. The ebook is for the 10th edition, but it contains all the articles you'll need.

General Summary

Over the course of the semester, we will be examining a variety of philosophical questions. You will be graded on the basis of your familiarity with the positions taken on these questions and the arguments supporting those positions, and on your ability to critically examine those arguments.

Grading

Exams: We will have three exams, each containing a variety of short answer and mini-essay questions (around a page each). You will be given the essay questions prior to each exam. The exams make up 80% of your grade.

Quizzes: You will be given short quizzes throughout the semester, usually over topics that will be announced in advance. These will be graded on a pass/fail basis, and will make up 20% of your grade. Quizzes can not be made up, but you can drop one-fifth of your quiz scores.

Grading scale:	90% – 4.0	82% – 3.5	74% – 3.0	66% – 2.5
	58% – 2.0	50% – 1.5	42% – 1.0	34% – 0.5

Attendance Policy

You are expected to attend class regularly. Quizzes will be given frequently throughout the semester, and they cannot be made up, but again, you can drop one-fifth of them. Tests will be held at the dates shown below, and cannot be made up except in extreme circumstances.

Test Dates:

Test I – Tuesday, October 10

Test II – Tuesday, November 14

Test III – Thursday, December 21

TENTATIVE READING LIST

ETHICS

Socrates as a Role Model

Plato, "Socratic Wisdom" (pp. 6-18)

What Are Moral Standards? Why Should I Care about Them?

Ruth Benedict, "Morality Is Relative" (pp. 462-467)

James Rachels, "Morality Is Not Relative" (pp. 467-476)

Plato, "Why Should I Be Moral? Gyges' Ring and Socrates' Dilemma" (pp. 477-482)

A Few Ethical Theories

Immanuel Kant, "The Moral Law" (pp. 502-514)

John Stuart Mill, "Utilitarianism" (pp. 514-520)

Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialist Ethics" (pp. 560-567)

EPISTEMOLOGY

Rationalism: Knowledge Comes From the Mind

René Descartes, "Cartesian Doubt and the Search for Foundational Knowledge" (pp. 198-204)

René Descartes, "Substance Dualism" (pp. 291-298)

Empiricism: Knowledge Comes From Experience

David Hume, "The Origin of Our Ideas" (pp. 225-228)

David Hume, "Skeptical Doubts Concerning the Operations of the Understanding" (pp. 265-276)

Can We Avoid Skepticism?

G.E. Moore, "Proof of an External World" (pp. 228-231)

FREE WILL AND DETERMINISM

Do We Have Free Will?

Baron d'Holbach, "We Are Completely Determined" (399-404)

W.T. Stace, "Compatibilism" (pp. 437-443)

PERSONAL IDENTITY

What, if Anything, Makes You the Same Person over Time?

Louis Pojman, "Who Am I? Do We Have Personal Identity?" (pp. 376-380)

John Locke, "Our Psychological Properties Define the Self" (pp. 381-384)

David Hume, "We Have No Substantial Self with Which We Are Identical" (pp. 385-387)

PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

Exactly What Is the Mind, Anyway?

Gilbert Ryle, "Exorcising Descartes' 'Ghost in the Machine'" (pp. 299-304)

Jerry A. Fodor, "The Mind-Body Problem" (pp. 349-359)

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?

We Should Seek Pleasure

Epicurus, "Moderate Hedonism" (pp. 627-632)

We Should Accept What Life Brings

Epictetus, "Stoicism" (pp. 633-642)

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Can We Prove God's Existence? The Cosmological Argument

Thomas Aquinas, "The Five Ways" (pp. 58-61)

Paul Edwards, "A Critique of the Cosmological Argument" (pp. 80-89)

Can We Prove God's Existence? The Ontological Argument

St. Anselm and Gaunilo, "The Ontological Argument" (pp. 100-103)

William Rowe, "An Analysis of the Ontological Argument" (pp. 103-114)

Can We Prove God's Existence? The Teleological Argument

William Paley, "The Watch and the Watchmaker" (pp. 90-92)

David Hume, "A Critique of the Teleological Argument" (pp. 93-100)

If God Exists, Why Is There Evil?

B.C. Johnson, "Why Doesn't God Intervene to Prevent Evil?" (pp. 120-125)

John Hick, "There is a Reason Why God Allows Evil" (pp. 125-130)

William Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism" (pp. 130-139)

Is It Rational to Believe in God?

Blaise Pascal, "Yes, Faith is a Logical Bet" (pp. 140-143)

W.K. Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief" (pp. 143-148)

William James, "The Will to Believe" (pp. 148-157)