

# INTRO PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy 104, Fall 2017  
M/Th 11:30–12:50  
Rutgers Academic Building 4225  
office hours M 1:00–2:00 & by appt

Philosophy is not just dreamy contemplation of “the big questions”. Philosophers do indeed ask those big questions: Do we really know anything? Is there a god? Do we have free will? How should a moral person act? But they do not engage in whimsical speculation about vaguely defined issues. They use rigorous and disciplined methods of thinking, to bring these deep questions under intellectual control. This course will be an in-depth look at a few of these questions (rather than a comprehensive historical survey). You will learn what philosophy is all about and how to do it yourself.

## Requirements

One 3–5 page paper (10%), one 5–7 page paper (20%), two exams (30% each), section grade (10%). The second exam is not cumulative. For each paper, you will receive feedback on a first draft and then submit a second (and final) draft; your grade will be based on both drafts, and on how you respond to the feedback.

Papers must be turned in via Sakai by the start of class on the due date. Late papers lose one letter grade per day. Exceptions only in documented extreme circumstances (e.g., not for conflicts with assignments in other classes, holiday travel plans, or mistakes using Sakai). Similarly, missed exams will receive a failing grade, except in documented extreme circumstances.

## Website

<http://tedsider.org/teaching/intro/intro.html>

Paper topics, handouts, study guides, canceled classes and other announcements will be posted here.

## Textbook

Joel Feinberg and Russ Shafer-Landau, *Reason and Responsibility* (16<sup>th</sup> ed). (Feel free to purchase a previous edition, but you will need to find other access to any missing readings.)

## Important dates

- 10/2 paper 1 first draft due
- 10/16 paper 1 second draft due
- 10/30 exam 1 (in class)
- 11/21 class meets on this day—a Tuesday
- 12/4 paper 2 first draft due
- 12/18 paper 2 second draft due
- 12/21 exam 2 (12:00pm)

**Tentative schedule** (Readings from the textbook unless otherwise noted; items marked “web” are on the course readings webpage)

### *Existence of God*

- 9/7 What is philosophy? Preliminaries for discussing God’s existence
- 9/11 Cosmological arguments. Aquinas, “The Five Ways”; Clark, “A Modern Formulation of the Cosmological Argument”, Rowe, “The Cosmological Argument”
- 9/14 Cosmological arguments continued; argument from design. Paley, “The Argument from Design”
- 9/18 Problem of evil. Mackie, “Evil and Omnipotence”
- 9/21 Problem of evil continued. Swinburne, “Why God Allows Evil” (web)
- 9/25 Pascal’s wager. Pascal, “The Wager”
- 9/28 Pascal’s wager continued.
- 10/2 catch-up. **First draft of paper 1 due**

### *Free will and determinism*

- 10/5 The problem of free will.
- 10/9 Hard determinism. Holbach, “We Are Never Free” (web)
- 10/12 Libertarianism. Chisholm, “Human Freedom and the Self”

10/16 Soft determinism. **Second draft of paper 1 due**

10/19 Soft determinism continued. Wolf, “Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility”

10/23 catch-up

### *Epistemology*

10/26 The challenge of skepticism. Descartes, “Meditations on First Philosophy”, Meditations I and II (skim III–VI)

10/30 **Exam 1 (in class)**

11/2 Simplicity. Russell, “Appearance and Reality and the Existence of Matter”

11/6 The problem of induction. Hume, “An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding”, section IV (parts I and II)

11/9 Common sense and externalism. Reid, “Of the Existence of a Material World” (web)

11/13 Attacking the skeptic. Rinard, “Reasoning one’s Way out of Skepticism” (web)

11/16 catch-up

### *Ethics*

11/20 Introduction to value theory. Shafer-Landau, “Ethical Subjectivism”

11/21 continued. **(Note: this is a Tuesday)**

11/27 Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”

11/30 Wolf, “Moral Saints” (web)

12/4 Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion” (web). **First draft of paper 2 due**

12/7 Marquis, “An Argument that Abortion is Wrong”

12/11 catch-up

12/18 **Second draft of paper 2 due at 12:00 noon**

12/21 **Second exam.** The exam will be on epistemology and ethics (it's not cumulative). 12:00 noon, in our usual room.