

# INTRO PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy 104, Spring 2023  
T/F 10:20–11:40, Van Dyck 211  
office hours T/F 9:30–10 & by appt

Philosophers ask big questions. Do we really know anything? Does God exist? 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 to bring these topics under intellectual control. This course will be an in-depth look at a few questions rather than a comprehensive historical survey. You will learn what philosophy is about and how to do it yourself.

## TAs

| <i>TA</i>     | <i>sections</i> | <i>email</i>                   |
|---------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Diego Arana   | 3, 4            | da689@scarletmail.rutgers.edu  |
| Rose Fonth    | 6, 8            | rose.fonth@rutgers.edu         |
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## 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 (25% on the first, 75% on the second), and on how you respond to the feedback.

Papers must be turned in via Canvas by the start of class on the due date. Late papers will be penalized as described here: [http://tedsider.org/teaching/intro/lateness\\_policy.pdf](http://tedsider.org/teaching/intro/lateness_policy.pdf). (Short version: two day grace-period with no lateness penalty; 2.5 points per day subsequently; exceptions only for documented serious circumstances; technological mistakes are not excuses.) Missed exams will receive a grade of zero except in documented serious circumstances.

## Websites

Paper topics, handouts, study guides, canceled classes and other announcements will be posted on the course website:

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

You will turn in your papers and access supplemental readings on the Canvas site:

<https://rutgers.instructure.com/courses/212448>

### **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.)

### **Learning goals**

There are three main goals for the course. First, to introduce some of the major issues in the Western philosophical tradition, including the existence of God, freedom and determinism, our knowledge of the external world, and the nature of morality. Second, to develop the ability to analyze rational argumentation. And third, to learn to write clear, carefully structured papers in which arguments are set out and criticized.

### **Important dates**

- 1/27 Class is online (asynchronous)
- 2/10 First draft of paper 1 due
- 2/28 Second (final) draft of paper 2 due
- 3/3 Exam 1 (in class)
- 4/14 First draft of paper 2 due
- 4/28 Second draft of paper 2 due
- 5/10 Exam 2 (in our regular classroom, 9am)

### **Tentative schedule**

Readings from the textbook unless otherwise noted; items marked “Canvas” can be accessed on the Canvas site under “Files”.

#### *Existence of God*

1/17 What is philosophy? Preliminaries for discussing God’s existence

- 1/20 Cosmological arguments. Aquinas, “The Five Ways”; Clark, “A Modern Formulation of the Cosmological Argument”, Rowe, “The Cosmological Argument”
- 1/24 Cosmological arguments continued; argument from design. Paley, “The Argument from Design”
- 1/27 (*online, asynchronous*) Problem of evil. Mackie, “Evil and Omnipotence”
- 1/31 Problem of evil continued. Swinburne, “Why God Allows Evil” (Canvas)
- 2/3 Pascal’s wager. Pascal, “The Wager”
- 2/7 Pascal’s wager continued.

*Free will and determinism*

- 2/10 The problem of free will. **First draft of paper 1 due**
- 2/14 Hard determinism. Holbach, “We Are Never Free” (Canvas)
- 2/17 Libertarianism. Chisholm, “Human Freedom and the Self”
- 2/21 Chisholm continued
- 2/24 Soft determinism. Wolf, “Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility”
- 2/28 Soft determinism continued. **Second draft of paper 1 due**
- 3/3 **Exam 1 (in class)**

*Epistemology*

- 3/7 The challenge of skepticism. Descartes, “Meditations on First Philosophy”, Meditations I and II (skim III–VI)
- 3/10 Chisholm, “The Problem of the Criterion” (Canvas)
- 3/21 Chisholm continued

- 3/24 Externalism. Plantinga, "Is Belief in God Properly Basic?" (Canvas)
- 3/28 Attacking the skeptic. Rinard, "Reasoning One's Way out of Skepticism" (Canvas)
- 3/31 Rinard continued

*Ethics*

- 4/4 Introduction to value theory. Shafer-Landau, "Ethical Subjectivism"
- 4/7 Shafer-Landau continued
- 4/11
- 4/14
- 4/18 Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"
- 4/19 **First draft of paper 2 due at noon**
- 4/21 Wolf, "Moral Saints" (Canvas)
- 4/25 Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion" (Canvas)
- 4/28 Marquis, "An Argument that Abortion is Wrong"
- 5/4 **Final draft of paper 2 due at noon**
- 5/10 **Second exam, final exam period, 9am, in our regular classroom.** The exam will be on epistemology and ethics (it's not cumulative)