

# **Introduction to Philosophy (Phil101)**

## **Section 1902**

Autumn Quarter 2012

Bellevue College

Instructor: Jason Benchimol

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Course Location and Times: M-F 09.30-10.20 in C168

### **Course Description**

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the practice of thinking philosophically by considering several of the major themes in classical Western philosophical thought. The questions covered in the course will include (but are not limited to): What is Philosophy? What constitutes wisdom? What is the relationship between God and morality? How do we act justly? What is virtue? What is knowledge? Can we have knowledge of an objective world? Is there evidence that God exist? Does the existence of evil in the world cause a problem for God's existence? What will happen to me after I die? What constitutes personal identity? We will examine these questions and various answers to them through reading several philosophical dialogues, both historical and contemporary. Students will be encouraged to both develop their critical and philosophical abilities as well as master the philosophical material.

This course has no prerequisites. Background in philosophy, while helpful, is neither assumed nor required. What is required is a willingness to read our course materials carefully, to think critically about them, to engage with the ideas they contain, to practice defending your views with arguments, and to respectfully yet critically evaluate others' views in class discussion. Students should be advised that success in a philosophy course can be harder to achieve without an excellent command of the English language.

### **Required Texts**

(All required; all available in the College Bookstore):

Plato, Five Dialogues, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Grube, tr.; Cooper rev.)

Rosenberg, Three Conversations about Knowing

Hume, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (Popkin, ed.)

Perry, A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality

## Grades/Assessment

Your final grade will be based on points earned in the following categories:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Highest Possible Points</u>
Paper 1	100
Paper 2	120
Exam 1	100
Exam 2	150
Skills Assignments (6)	120 (20 points each)
In-class Work (33)	90 (3 points each)

Total points possible: 660

Grade calculation:

If you earn at least      you are guaranteed a grade no lower than

590 points	A-
525 points	B-
460 points	C-
395 points	D-

Students who earn less than 395 points will be subject to class failure.

More specific information about assessment:

You'll be asked to write two rather short philosophy papers. The first paper will be due no later than the end of the fifth week of the course. The second paper will be due no later than the end of the tenth week of the course. Specific due dates, as well as topics, will be provided with plenty of advance notice. A paper that is turned in late will be subject to a 10% point reduction per class day it is late, **regardless of the reason why it is late.**

Throughout the quarter, I will present a basic philosophical technique or concept and you will be given a relatively simple skills assignment to test your understanding of it. The due dates for these skills assignments are noted in the schedule below. *No skills assignments will be accepted via e-mail.* Late skills assignments will not be accepted. Each skills assignment is worth 20 points for a total of 120 points. Your lowest score will be replaced with your highest score.

To receive full credit for in-class work, **you will need to be present in class for the entire class session.** If you have to leave class early, you will not be able to receive credit for that day's in-class work. Missed in-class work cannot be made up for any reason. But be advised: you can miss three days of in-class work without any grade penalty.

Our midterm exam will take place in class on Fri 26 Oct, and our final exam will take place in class on Fri 7 Dec. The exams will not be administered after these dates. If you need to arrange to take an exam early, please see me at your earliest convenience so that we can discuss.

Finally, your respectful and helpful contributions to our class discussions might improve your final grade. Failure to participate in class discussion will not lower your final grade.

**READING SCHEDULE** (The following reading schedule is subject to change: readings may be added or removed at the discretion of the instructor. All due dates listed here are tentative and are subject to change. Timely advance notice of any changes will be provided.)

**\*TC = Rosenberg, Three Conversations About Knowing**

**\*DPID = Perry, A Dialogue on Personal Identity**

**\*FD = Plato, Five Dialogues**

**\*DNR = Hume, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion**

**\*ER = Electronic Reading (will be distributed by email)**

**Week 1:** No reading assignments.

**Week 2:** Plato, "Apology". FD, pp. 21-44  
Rosenberg, 1st Conversation. TC, pp. 1-17 (Skills Assignment 1 Due in Class Th 27 Sep)

**Week 3:** Rosenberg, 2nd Conversation. TC, pp. 18-36  
Rosenberg, 3rd Conversation. TC, pp. 37-55

**Week 4:** Plato, "Crito". FD, pp. 45-57 (Skills Assignment 2 Due in Class Th 11 Oct)  
**Note: no class Tu 9 Oct (College Issues Day)**

**Week 5:** Plato, "Phaedo". FD, pp. 93-154 (Paper 1 Due in Class Th 18 Oct)

**Week 6:** Perry, Nights 1 and 2. DPID, pp. 1-36 (Skills Assignment 3 Due in Class Tu 23 Oct)  
**Note: no class Fr 26 Oct (Faculty Professional Development Day)**

**Midterm Exam in Class on Mon 29 Oct**

**Week 7:** Perry, Night 3. DPID, pp. 37-49.  
Hume, Introduction, Pref., I, II. DNR, pp. vii-22

**Week 8:** Hume, III, IV, V. DNR, pp. 23-38 (Skills Assignment 4 Due in Class Tu 6 Nov)  
Hume, VI, VII, VII. DNR, pp. 39-53

**Week 9:** Hume, IX, X, XI. DNR, pp. 54-76  
Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence". ER. (Skills Assignment 5 Due in Class Th 15 Nov)  
**Note: no class Mo 12 Nov**

**Week 10:** Hume, XII. DNR, pp. 77-89  
**Note: no class Th-Fr 22-23 Nov. Happy Thanksgiving!**

**Week 11:** Plato, "Euthyphro". FD, pp. 1-20 (Skills Assignment 6 Due in Class Tu 4 Dec; Paper 2 Due in Class Fr 30 Nov)

**Week 12:** Course Review and Wrap-Up

**Final Exam in Class on We 5 Dec**

**Special Note:** during weeks 3 and 4 of our course, Dr. W. Russ Payne, chair of the BC Philosophy Department, will be substituting as your instructor.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Bellevue Community College provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Students who need course accommodations because of a disability, have emergency medical information, or need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, should notify the instructor as soon as possible. The responsibility for determining a student's eligibility for accommodations rests with Disability Resource Center. For more information, visit the Disability Resource Center in room B132, call (425) 564-2498 (TTY line (425) 564- 4110), or go to [bellevuecollege.edu/drc](http://bellevuecollege.edu/drc).

## **AFFIRMATION OF INCLUSION**

Bellevue Community College is committed to maintaining an environment in which every member of the campus community feels welcome to participate in the life of the college, free from harassment and discrimination. We value our different backgrounds at BCC, and students, faculty, staff members, and administrators are to treat one another with dignity and respect.

For further information regarding the Bachelor of Applied science program and policies, see the BAS student handbook. For further information regarding BCC policies, programs and services, review the BCC student handbook at [bellevuecollege.edu/stupro/handbook\\_cd2008/programs/default.html](http://bellevuecollege.edu/stupro/handbook_cd2008/programs/default.html).

## **CHEATING POLICY**

Upon demonstrable evidence of cheating and/or plagiarism, students will be subject to the following penalties:

1<sup>st</sup> offense: a score of '0' for the assignment itself.

2<sup>nd</sup> offense: a score of '0' for the entire category of assessment in which the offense was detected.

3<sup>rd</sup> offense: class failure.

## **EMAIL POLICY**

I try my best to respond to all student emails within 48 hours of the time they are sent. Please understand that I cannot respond to student emails "on the spot" as I do not carry a smartphone nor am I continuously connected to the internet. **I will reply only to student emails that are sent from a Bellevue College email address.**