

Fall 2023
Introduction to Philosophy
Philosophy 100—02

Professor:

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Office Location: CCC 418

Drop-In Hours: MWF, 11:00am—12:00pm; By Appointment

<http://charlesjhorn.webstarts.com/index.html>

Course Information:

Class Time: MWF, 2:00pm—2:50pm

Class Location: TNR 352

Course Description:

One of the typical misconceptions of philosophy is that it is often understood merely as the study of old books that have no bearing or practical beneficial consequences for those who study it. While philosophy does sometimes involve the study of old books, the thought that philosophy cannot benefit us is simply false. Studying philosophy correctly can cultivate skills that can be used in a wide variety of settings—both academic and otherwise. Philosophy is also sometimes understood as a discipline that deals with “the big questions”, those which have no easy answers, and which empirical study might not be able to answer. Our focus in this class will be on these big questions:

1. How do we make good arguments?
2. What kind of arguments should we avoid?
3. What sorts of things exist?
4. How do we know what we think we know?
5. What is a mind? What kinds of things have minds?
6. What does it mean for something to be conscious?
7. What kinds of things can be conscious? Humans? Animals? Plants? Computers?
8. What does it mean to be a morally good person?
9. What is the nature of justice?
10. Does God exist? Is there a way that we could *prove* this one way or the other?
11. If God exists, how do we explain suffering in the world?

Reading in the Discipline:

This section of PHIL 100 will have an *optional* course where students can earn an additional 1 credit hour. PSL is primarily a discussion-based course led by one of my advanced students in the Philosophy program here at UWSP. The discussion course is Pass/Fail and in the past, students enrolled in the discussion section of the course have, on average, a full letter grade higher in my course. [See here for more information on Reading in the Disciplines.](#)

Text:**Rental:**

1. *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings, 9th Ed.*
Oxford University Press
ISBN: 9780197543825
2. *What Does it All Mean?*
Oxford University Press
ISBN: 9780195052169

Course Goals:

- Demonstrate an ability to read carefully, speak clearly, think critically, or write persuasively about cultures and cultural works/artifacts (including texts, images, performances, and technologies, as well as other expressions of the human condition).
- Identify and analyze how beliefs, values, languages, theories, or laws shape cultures and cultural works/artifacts.
- Engage a variety of ideas and worldviews critically by formulating reflective and informed moral, ethical, or aesthetic evaluations of cultures and cultural works/artifacts.

Expectations:

Students are expected to check into Canvas daily to check for class announcements, complete assignments, use the discussion board, etc. Students are expected to attend every class and remain for the entire time. Do not come late or leave early. Students must complete the necessary readings prior to class and be prepared for discussion and participation. Students will treat other students with respect. This means turning off all electrical equipment, including cell phones, laptops, and tablets. Students must also address their peers in a respectful tone. It is important to note that the nature of this class will inevitably result in disagreements among colleagues; however, it is essential to maintain respect toward one another despite disagreement.

Disability Information:

Students with disabilities should register with the ADA coordinator on campus and let me know at the beginning of the semester. I would be happy to accommodate you in any way that I can. Just let me know. More information can be found at:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf>

Intellectual Property Notice:

Lecture materials and recordings for Philosophy 100 are protected intellectual property at UW-Stevens Point. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or share lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

Academic Integrity:

Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism or helping others to commit these acts will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty will result in severe disciplinary action including, but not limited to, failure of the student assessment item or course, and/or dismissal from the University.

Academic integrity violations include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Cheating: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids, or other devices in any academic exercise. This definition includes unauthorized communication of information during an academic exercise.
- 2) Fabrication and Falsification: Intentional and unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. Falsification is a matter of inventing or counterfeiting information for use in any academic exercise.
- 3) Multiple Submissions: The submission of substantial portions of the same academic work for credit (including oral reports) more than once without authorization.
- 4) Plagiarism: Intentionally or knowingly presenting the work of another (including AI generators) as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source). The sole exception to the requirement is when the ideas, information, etc., is common knowledge.
- 5) Complicity in Academic Dishonesty: Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

Additional information can be found at:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap14.pdf>

Grading Criteria:

Assignments can be completed beyond the due dates for both unexcused and excused absences. For unexcused absences, a late penalty may be imposed. Late work must be complete within one week of the assignment due date.

Canvas will automatically calculate and update grades as the semester progresses. To determine your current grade in the class, take the score in the “Total” column and divide it by 100. If there are still remaining assignments left, add the remaining points possible to your points earned to see the best-case scenario for your grade. Then use the grading scale below. The goal for the class is to try to earn as many points as possible. Any points earned over these 100 points will count as extra credit. Final grades will be calculated based upon the following.

- 1) Four Exams: 40 Points Total
 - a) Exams will be composed of multiple-choice questions to be completed in 50 minutes.
- 2) Ten Argument/Reflections 40 Points Total
 - a) There are ten days set aside in the course schedule to have a discussion based on the Nagel text and a philosophy podcast. To receive credit, students must write a one-page reflection prior to class, attend these days, and then actively discuss the material with their peers.
- 3) One Group Presentation 20 Points Total
 - a) During the last two weeks of the semester, students will work in small groups to present philosophical topics, figures, concepts, or arguments, chosen in consultation with Dr. Horn, not covered in the class. Think creatively about what interests you in philosophy!
- 4) One “Philosophy at UWSP” Bonus Quiz 5 Points Total
 - a) There will be a short quiz on the advantages of studying philosophy at UWSP!
- 5) Engagement

Engagement comes in many forms. I reserve the right to raise or lower final grades up to 10 points based on engagement, meaning that it is also possible for engagement points to remain at 0. There is no hard and fast rule for raising or lowering the 10 points. While the grade is subjective, it is not arbitrary. Taken together, engagement includes, but is not limited to:

 - a) Preparation: reviewing readings and materials before class.
 - b) Focus: avoiding distractions during class.
 - c) Presence: responsive during class.
 - d) Asking Questions: in class, out of class, on the discussion board, through email, etc.
 - e) Listening: hearing what others say, and what they are not saying.
 - f) Specificity: referring to specific ideas from readings and discussions.
 - g) Synthesis: making connections between readings and discussions.

“Pass” Range			“Fail” Range	
(70—100 Points)			(<70 Points)	
“A” Range	“B” Range	“C” Range	“D” Range	“F” Range
	B+ (87—89)	C+ (77—79)	D+ (67—69)	F (<60)
A (94—100)	B (84—86)	C (74—76)	D (60—66)	
A- (90—93)	B- (80—83)	C- (70—73)		

Course Schedule:**UNIT I: HOW TO MAKE AN ARGUMENT/ARGUMENTS TO AVOID**

Week 1		(September 3—September 9)	
September 6		Syllabus/Course Introduction	
September 8	R1	Nagel, <i>What Does It All Mean?</i> Introduction	
		Pig That Wants to be Eaten Exercise	3-8
Week 2		(September 10—September 16)	
September 11		Modus Ponens/Fallacy of Affirming the Consequent	
September 13		Modus Tollens/Fallacy of Denying the Antecedent	
September 15		Disjunctive Syllogism/Fallacy of False Dilemma	
Week 3		(September 17—September 23)	
September 18		Reductio ad Absurdum	
September 20		Informal Fallacies	
September 22		Exam I	

UNIT II: KNOWLEDGE AND REALITY

Week 4		(September 24—September 30)	
September 25	R2	Nagel, <i>What Does It All Mean?</i> Chapter 2: How Do We Know Anything?	8-18
September 27		No Class	
		Plato, “Allegory of the Cave”	157-161
September 29		No Class	
		Descartes, “Meditations on First Philosophy (1 and 2)”	164-169
Week 5		(October 1—October 7)	
October 2		Hume, “Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding”	
October 4	R3	Nagel, <i>What Does It All Mean?</i> Chapter 3: Other Minds	9-26
October 6		Turing, “Computing Machinery and Intelligence”	282-295
Week 6		(October 8—October 14)	
October 9		Searle, “Minds, Brains, and Programs”	
October 11	R4	Nagel, <i>What Does It All Mean?</i> Chapter 4: The Mind-Body Problem	27-37
October 13		Exam II	

UNIT III: ETHICS AND SOCIETY

Week 7		(October 15—October 21)	
October 16	R5	Nagel, <i>What Does It All Mean?</i> Chapter 7: Right and Wrong	59-75
October 18		Herodotus, “Morality as Custom”	Canvas
		Pojman, “Who’s to Judge?”	Canvas
October 20		Bentham, “The Principle of Utility”	481-484
		Mill, “Utilitarianism”	485-501
Week 8		(October 22—October 28)	
October 23		Kant, “Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals”	
October 25		Kant, “Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals”	
October 27		Aristotle, “Nicomachean Ethics”	
Week 9		(October 29—November 4)	
October 30	R6	Nagel, <i>What Does It All Mean?</i> Chapter 8: Justice	76-86
November 1		Rawls, “A Theory of Justice”; Nozick, “Justice and Entitlement”	
November 3		Exam III	

UNIT IV: GOD AND EVIL

Week 10		(November 5—November 11)	
November 6		Anselm, “The Ontological Argument”	52-54
November 8		Aquinas, “The Existence of God”	54-56
November 10	R7	Nagel, <i>What Does It All Mean?</i> Chapter 9: Death	87-94
Week 11		(November 12—November 18)	
November 13		Hume, “Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion”	74-103
November 15		Hume, “Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion”	74-103
November 17		Hume, “Of Miracles”	Canvas
	R8	Nagel, <i>What Does It All Mean?</i> Chapter 6: Free Will	47-58
Week 12		(November 19—November 25)	
November 20		Leibniz, “God, Evil, and the Best of All Possible Worlds”	104-106
November 22	R9	Nagel, <i>What Does It All Mean?</i> Chapter 10: The Meaning of Life	95-101
November 24		No Class—Academic Holiday	
Week 13		(November 26—December 2)	
November 27	R10	Philosophy Bites Podcast Discussion	
November 29		“Philosophy at UWSP” Bonus Quiz,	
December 1		Exam IV	

UNIT V: GROUP PRESENTATIONS

Week 14		(December 3—December 9)	
December 4		Group 1, 2	
December 6		Group 3, 4	
December 8		Group 5, 6	
Week 15		(December 10—December 16)	
December 11		Group 7, 8	
December 13		Group 9, 10	
December 15		Group 11, Course Evaluations	