

Philosophy 202
 Introduction to Philosophy
 Spring Semester 2012
Erling T. Teigen Instructor

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Required Text: Steven M. Cahn, *Exploring Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2005, 2nd Ed.
 Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual*, Bedford–St. Martins, 5th edition

Course Objectives

The aims of this course are to:

Expose the students to the basic questions dealt with in philosophical inquiry.

Familiarize the students with philosophical categories and vocabulary.

Develop the student's ability to critically examine the presuppositions behind their worldviews and those of others, and to articulate this critical thinking.

Grading and course requirements

Exams 300 pts

Discussion papers 50 pts each

Miscellaneous—abstracts, reading quizzes, and class work 200 pts

Attendance (minus 10 pts per absence)=100 pts

On the basis of a percentage of the entire point accumulation, the grade will be assigned as follows:
 90–100%—A; 80–89%—B; 70–79%—C; 60–69%—D; less than 60%—F

Class attendance and participation

Class attendance is strictly taken into account in determining the semester grade. There is no “cut policy.” Any absences not accounted for by illness or other school activities will be subtracted from the one hundred point attendance allowance. A student may be dropped from the course after 6 unexcused absences. Since it is an important part of the learning process to make oral contributions to class discussions, to ask questions, and to offer insights, class participation is taken into account in determining the grade.

Written work

All assigned work must be completed in order to receive a grade (except for reading quizzes which cannot be made up). Papers must be handed in on time to receive full credit. Late papers will receive substantially lowered grades.

Class Procedures

Each class hour will consist primarily of a discussion of the assigned readings according to the reading schedule below. From time to time, the instructor may lecture on background material. The class and group discussions will depend on student participation, which assumes that the scheduled material has been read. Each student is therefore required to have completed the required reading before the class hour begins.

In the reading schedule, articles which appear in **bold type** are foundational. These articles are to be read by everyone and an abstract – a short 150–200 word summary, without critique or argument, and no quotations – is prepared by each student. On the basis of the abstracts, the instructor will lead a discussion of the reading.

The other readings, are to be read by each student, but one (or in some cases two) will be assigned to prepare a 1 1/2 to 2 page paper (double spaced, correctly formatted and written, and properly documented) following a format similar to the outline below. The student will be asked to read or summarize the paper, with discussion following by the instructor and members of the class. These papers are to be electronically distributed the day before the class.

Name(s)
Phil 202
Precis #
Date

Title

Paragraph 1: Statement of the article being studied; formulation of the problem.

Paragraph 2: Restatement of the article's main point in your own words

Paragraph 3: Analysis of the argument, including objects and problems raised by the article

Paragraph 4: Alternative solution; concluding statement.

Reading Schedule
Steven M. Cahn , Exploring Philosophy

Bold Type = abstract & class discussion

*** = Student paper and presentation**

1. Introduction: January 9–13

*What is Philosophy?, Monroe C. Beardsley and Elizabeth Lane Beardsley (3–12)

Defence of Socrates, Plato (13–36)

2. Reasoning: January 16 – 30

*Improving Your Thinking, Stephen F. Barker 50–56)

*Fixing Belief, Morris R. Cohen and Ernest Nagel (56–59)

*Testing Hypotheses, Steven M. Cahn, Patricia Kitcher, and George Sher (59–63)

*Science and Common Sense, Ernest Nagel (63–68)

3. Knowledge: February 1–10

Meno, Plato (91–124)

Meditations on First Philosophy, René Descartes (126–129)

An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, David Hume (130–139)

*Appearance and Reality, Bertrand Russell (71–74)

*What Can I Know?, D.Z. Phillips (74–80)

*Knowledge and Belief Norman Malcolm (80–83)

*The Problem of Induction, Bertrand Russell (84–86)

*Will the Future Be Like the Past?, Frederick L. Will (86–90)

4. Mind: February 13–27

Meditations on First Philosophy, René Descartes (174–180)

*The Ghost in the Machine, Gilbert Ryle (143–147)

*The Mind as a Function of the Body, Richard Taylor (147–154)

*What Is It Like To Be a Bat, Thomas Nagel (154–158)

*Do Computers Think? John Searle (158–160)

*Free Will or Determinism?, Steven M. Cahn (160–170)

*Free Will and Determinism, W.T. Stace (171–173)

Unit I exam Feb 29

4. God: March 12 – 30

Euthyphro, Plato (218–235)

Summa Theologiae, Saint Thomas Aquinas (236–239)

Meditations on First Philosophy, René Descartes (239–241)

An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, David Hume (241–247)

Anselm: Ontological argument (Handout)

Pascal's Wager (210–212)

*Does God Exist?, Ernest Nagel (183–191)

*Why God Allows Evil, Richard Swinburne (191–202)

*Theology and Falsification, Antony Flew and Basil Mitchell (202–206)

*Do Miracles Occur?, Monroe C. Beardsley and Elizabeth Lane Beardsley (206–209)

*The Hiddenness of God, Robert McKim (212–217)

5. Morality: April 2 – April 20

The Challenge of Cultural Relativism, James Rachels (251–261)

Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle (307–312)

Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, Immanuel Kant (313–317)

Utilitarianism, John Stuart Mill (318–323)

*How Not to Answer Moral Questions, Tom Regan (262–265)

*The Nature of Ethical Disagreement, Charles L. Stevenson (260–271)

*A Supreme Moral Principle?, Steven M. Cahn (271–274)

6. Society: April 14 – 23

Crito, Plato (383–395)

On Liberty, John Stuart Mill (397–406)

*Democracy, John Dewey (327–332)

*Letter from Birmingham Jail, Martin Luther King (332–339)

*Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands, Michael Walzer (339–343)

*What Is a Liberal Education?, Sidney Hook (374–382)

7. Conclusion: April 30– May 4

Phaedo, Plato (421–424)

*The Meaning of Life, Richard Taylor (409–417)

*The Value of Philosophy, Bertrand Russell (417–420)

**Unit II and Final Exam
Monday, May 7, 3:30 p.m.**