

SYLLABUS

Humans act for reasons. We set goals, pursue projects, careers and relationships for certain reasons and not others. Likewise, the way we conceptualize the world, and the value we see in various ways of conceiving the world drive us to act in pursuit of our projects and plans. The goal of this course is to improve our ability to evaluate ways of conceptualizing the world by looking at various questions or problems philosophers have set out to address, in the hope that we can reason and think better.

Instructor:

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OFFICE HOURS | Mondays & Wednesdays 1–2PM & by appt.

Textbook:

Various articles posted online on D2L (<https://desire2learn.kutztown.edu>)

Assessment:

Each student's success in learning the material for this course will be evaluated based on their performance on written summaries of assigned articles, a long-form writing assignment, and in-class pop quizzes:

Assignment	Due Date	Weight
Mid-Term Exam	Oct. 13th	25% of grade
Writing Assignment	Dec. 1st	25% of grade
Final Exam	Dec. 13th	40% of grade
Quizzes	Various	10% of grade

Quizzes will be administered during any class session in which a student uses an electronic device, as indicated below (see: '*In-Class Participation*'). Quizzes can only be made up if the student has a university-approved reason for missing class (see: '*Missed Classes*').

Grading and Evaluation

Assignments will (generally) be graded on a ten (10) point scale, with grades assigned as following:

Fail: <2; 'D': 2-3.99; 'C': 4-5.99; 'B': 6-7.99; 'A': 8-10

with a third of each grade range devoted to +/- grading (e.g. 'B-': 6-6.66). In order to pass the course, each student must complete all assignments.

Late Assignments

Assignments are due on the dates indicated in the *Course Schedule*. Late assignments will NOT be accepted. A student's late assignment will only be accepted if the student demonstrates that the circumstances that caused the assignment to be late were both unexpected and unduly burdensome, which will be determined by the course instructor.

Course Conduct:

Academic Honesty

Each student is responsible for their own work. While students are encouraged to discuss course material both inside and outside class, each assignment/exam should be the product of the student's own thinking. Any apparent improper use of the intellectual work of others will be submitted to the Student Honor Council. Students are encouraged to review the university's Code of Academic Integrity (<http://app.kutztown.edu/policyregister/policy.aspx?policy=ACA-027>), as the policies stipulated in that code will be exceptionlessly adhered to during this course.

In-Class Participation

Students are expected to read the course material prior to coming to each class session, and are also expected to contribute to discussion during lectures. This participation should be conducted with civility and respect for course instructors and fellow students. In this vein, any in-class use of wireless-network-enabled electronic devices is prohibited during this course. These devices invariably lead to distracting and disrespectful behavior during class sessions, even for students not tempted by the allure of these devices. **Thus, any use of laptop computers, tablet computers, smart phones, mobile phones, two-way messaging devices, pagers, or any other electronic communication device during class sessions is prohibited. Violation of this prohibition will be immediately followed by a Quiz administered to the class.**

Participation in class discussion is expected, though not explicitly evaluated. However, the degree and quality of a student's participation in class discussion can bear positively on a student's final course grade.

Missed Classes

-Due to Illness

Regular attendance and participation in this class is the best way to grasp the course material. However, in the event that a class must be missed due to an illness, the policy in this class, in conformity with the University's Attendance Policy (<http://app.kutztown.edu/policyregister/policy.aspx?policy=ACA-016>) is as follows:

For every medically necessary absence from class, a reasonable effort should be made by the student to notify the instructor prior to class. When returning to class, students should bring a note identifying the reason for the absence in order to inform their instructor that the absence was due to illness (as opposed to, say, laziness).

For this course, if a student is absent for any 'Grading Event' (i.e., any class day with an exam, quiz, or in which an assignment is due) they are required to notify the instructor of their absence as soon as possible (preferably in advance of their absence), and upon returning to class, the student must bring *documentation* of the absence. Failure to do so will result in a considerably lower grade on the relevant exam or assignment.

-Due to Religious Observance

Students will not be penalized for missing class sessions due to religious observances. The *Course Schedule* is designed to minimize possible conflicts between students' academic and religious commitments. However, all students should review the *Course Schedule* within the first two(2) weeks of the term and determine any potential conflicts between their religious commitments and their responsibilities for this course. They should then inform their instructors of any such conflicts. Arrangements should be made between the student and their instructor to enable the student to satisfy their course responsibilities without undermining their religious commitments.

Correspondence with Instructors

Electronic mail has become the chief medium for out-of-class communication between university instructors and students. Because of the impersonal nature of this medium, email correspondence between students and instructors should be clear and respectful. A respectful email includes a salutation, the full name of the correspondent, and abides by English grammar rules. Correspondence that is not respectful, in this sense, will likely be ignored by instructors.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

The University is committed to the accessibility of higher education. In light of this commitment, any student with a disability should contact the course instructor so that any needed accommodations can be made to establish an equitable learning environment. Also, any student with a disability is encouraged to contact Disability Support Office to learn about the resources available to them.

([https://www.kutztown.edu/about-ku/administrative-offices/disability-services-\(dso\).htm](https://www.kutztown.edu/about-ku/administrative-offices/disability-services-(dso).htm))

COURSE SCHEDULE

The following indicates the timeline for the course readings. Each article can be found on D2L (<https://desire2learn.kutztown.edu>). Each student is expected to have read the relevant article for classes on the relevant week.

INTRODUCTION: LOGIC AND METHODOLOGY

Week I: 8/28–9/1 WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?
Plato (360 BCE). “Crito”
Priest, G. (2000). *Logic: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: OUP. Ch.1, (pp. 1–6)

PART I: EPISTEMOLOGY

Week II: 9/4–9/8..... KNOWLEDGE
No Class 9/4 | Labor Day
Plato. (360 BCE). “Theaetetus”

Week III: 9/11–9/15..... CERTAINTY
Descartes, R. (1641). “Meditation I”
“Meditation II”

Week IV: 9/18–9/22 INDUCTION & JUSTIFICATION
Hume, D. (1748). “An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding”
Gettier, E. (1971). “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?”

PART II: METAPHYSICS

Week V: 9/25–9/29..... FREE WILL
van Inwagen, P. (1993). “The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will”
Frankfurt, H. (1969). “Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility”

Week VI: 10/2–10/6 PERSONAL IDENTITY
Perry, J. (1978). “A Dialogue on Personal Identity”

Week VII: 10/9–10/13 NO CLASS 10/9 | COLUMBUS DAY
REVIEW DAY
MID-TERM EXAM

PART II: MIND

Week VIII: 10/16–10/20..... MATERIALISM
Descartes, R. (1641). “Meditation I & II”
Sacks, O. (1985). “The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat”
Ryle, G. (1949). ‘Descartes’ Myth”

Week IX: 10/23–10/27 CONSCIOUSNESS & COMPUTATION
Nagel, T. (1974). “What is It Like to Be a Bat?”
Turing, A. (1950). “Computing Machinery and Intelligence”

Week X: 10/30–11/3	THINKING & KNOWING
	Searle, J. (1980). “Minds, Brains, and Programs”
	Jackson, F. (1986). “What Mary Didn’t Know?”
PART IV: VALUES	
Week XI: 11/6–11/10	RELIGION AND SOCIETY
	Plato (380 BCE). “Euthyphro”
	Nussbaum, M. (1999). “Judging Other Cultures: the Case of Genital Mutilation”
Week XII: 11/13–11/17	UTILITARIANISM
	J.S. Mill. (1859). “Utilitarianism”
	Williams, B. (1973). “Utilitarianism and Integrity”
Week XIII: 11/20–11/24	APPLIED ETHICS
	Singer, P. (1972). “Famine, Affluence and Morality”
	No Class 11/24 Thanksgiving
Week XIV: 11/27–12/1	VIRTUE & DUTY
	Kant, I. (1785). <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> : Ch. 1.
	Aristotle. (350 BCE) <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> : Book I, Ch. 1–7; Book II, Ch. 1–7
Week XV: 12/4–12/8	MEANING OF LIFE
	Nozick, R (1978). “The Experience Machine”
	Camus, A. (1942). “The Myth of Sisyphus”
FINAL EXAM: 12/15	11:00AM–1:00PM
	NO READINGS!