



**University of International Business and Economics
International Summer School**

PHI 110: Introduction to Philosophy

Term: May 29 – June 29, 2017

Instructor: Peter B. M. Vranas

Home Institution: University of Wisconsin-Madison

Email: vranas@wisc.edu

Class Hours: Monday through Thursday, 120 minutes each day (2,400 minutes in total)

Office Hours: TBD

Teaching Assistant: TBD

Email: TBD

Discussion session: 2 hours each week

Total Contact Hours: 64 contact hours (45 minutes each, 48 hours in total)

Credit: 4 units

Course Description

How can we know that we are not in “The Matrix”, that the world we think we perceive is not an illusion? Why is astronomy more respectable than astrology? Are there objective moral values? Do we have an immaterial soul? Are we in control of our actions if everything is predetermined? This course teaches you how to think systematically about these fascinating questions. There are no prerequisites, and the readings are quite accessible: almost all of them are in dialogue form.

Course Goals

- ✧ To help you become more open-minded by helping you realize that about every attempt to justify your positions is subject to powerful objections.
- ✧ To help you realize that some positions are better justified than others, that one can give reasons for and against positions, that philosophy is not merely a matter of opinion.
- ✧ To help you construct arguments for and against positions and to determine whether those arguments are good or bad.
- ✧ To help you develop valuable skills by emphasizing rigorous thinking, clarity, and precision.

Required Texts

Sober, Elliott (2012). Core questions in philosophy: A text with readings (6th ed.). Pearson.

Okasha, Samir (2002). Philosophy of science: A very short introduction. Oxford University Press.



Required course materials

All readings other than those from the required text will be made available electronically.

Attendance

Required.

Grading Policy

	Grade component	Date	Returned	Weight
1	Midterm exam	June 15	June 19	25%
2	Term paper (1,000 words maximum)	June 22	June 26	25%
3	Final exam	June 29	—	50%
				100%

Grading Scale

Assignments and examinations will be graded according to the following grade scale:

- A 90-100
- A- 85-89
- B+ 82-84
- B 78-81
- B- 75-77
- C+ 72-74
- C 68-71
- C- 64-67
- D 60-63
- F below 60

Course Hours

The course has 20 class sessions in total. Each class session is 120 minutes in length for a total of 2,400 minutes of class time. The course meets from Monday to Thursday.

Class Rules

Class participation is not graded, because (1) I would like people to speak out of intrinsic motivation and interest in the topics, not to get a higher grade, and (2) I would not like people to be afraid of speaking because saying something less than brilliant might hurt their grade. On the other hand, I would like *everyone* to participate.

The fundamental discussion rule is that we must *treat everyone with the utmost respect*. It is not acceptable to insult or ridicule people or views. Everyone should feel free to voice unpopular opinions, as long as the opinions are expressed respectfully and backed by arguments. *You should feel especially free to disagree with me.*

The fundamental rule of respect has two concrete consequences. (1) Interrupting others is disrespectful: *please raise your hand and wait for your turn* before you speak. (2) Ignoring speakers is disrespectful: *please do not talk among yourselves* while someone is speaking.

Course Schedule

Date	Class topic	Reading (to be done <i>before class</i>)
Mon 29 May	Introduction to the course and to philosophy	Sober, chapters 1, 2, 3
Part I: THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE		
Tue 30 May	Descartes' foundationalism	Sober, chapters 12, 13
Wed 31 May	The reliability theory of knowledge	Sober, chapter 14
Thu 1 June	Hume's problem of induction	Sober, chapters 15, 16
Mon 5 June	Locke on the existence of external objects	Sober, chapters 17,18
Part 2: PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE		
Tue 6 June	The demarcation problem	Okasha, chapter 1
Wed 7 June	Scientific reasoning	Okasha, chapter 2
Thu 8 June	Scientific explanation	Okasha, chapter 3
Mon 12 June	Scientific realism and anti-realism	Okasha, chapter 4
Tue 13 June	Scientific revolutions	Okasha, chapter 5
Part 3: PHILOSOPHY OF MIND		
Wed 14 June	Dualism and the mind/body problem	Sober, chapters 19, 20
Thu 15 June	The identity theory— Midterm exam	Sober, chapters 21, 22
Mon 19 June	Freedom and determinism	Sober, chapters 23,24
Tue 20 June	Free will and compatibilism	Sober, chapters 25, 26
Part 4: ETHICS		
Wed 21 June	The is/ought gap	Sober, chapters 28, 29
Thu 22 June	Conventionalism— Term paper due	Sober, chapters 30, 31
Mon 26 June	Utilitarianism	Sober, chapters 32
Tue 27 June	Kant's moral theory	Sober, chapters 33
Wed 28 June	Aristotle on the good life	Sober, chapters 34
Thu 29 June	Lessons from the course— Final exam	—