



South China Normal University International Summer Session

02A08485: Introduction to Philosophy

Term: July 15th –August 9th, 2019

Instructor: Prof. Dyron Daughrity

Home Institution: Pepperdine University

Credit: 4

Course Description

This course is designed to strengthen your thinking skills. It won't teach you what to think (figuring out what to think will be up to you), but it will show you how to think clearly and deeply about important issues—issues like knowledge, freedom, and justice. Together we'll uncover and sharpen some vital intellectual tools and then apply those tools to big ideas and to specific real-world situations.

Course Goal

Upon faithful completion of the course requirements (as outlined below), you will be able to:

1. Describe some of the central questions that guide philosophical inquiry.
2. Apply critical-thinking and problem-solving skills to those central questions.
3. Compare different answers to those central questions.
4. Gather and evaluate evidence in favor of those answers.
5. Propose your own variations on those answers.

Course Readings

1. Thomas Nagel, *What Does It All Mean?* Oxford University Press, 1987.
2. Bruce & Barbone, *Just the Arguments*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Grading Scale

| Percentage | Grade |
|------------|-------|
| 90-100 | A |
| 80-89 | B |
| 70-79 | C |
| 60-69 | D |
| < 60 | F |



Grading

- Participation: attendance, attitude, course notes, oral participation: 25%
 - Oral articulation of a key philosophical argument in front of class: 15%
 - 15-20-minute office debate with another student over a contemporary idea: 15%
 - Write a persuasive letter to someone using a key philosophical argument: 20%
 - Comprehensive Final Exam: 25%
- **Participation (20%):** Based on attendance, attitude, and oral participation in class. Each week you will also be asked to give the professor your class notebook (containing course notes and textbook reading notes) so he can grade the thoroughness and quality of your notes.
 - **Oral articulation of a key philosophical argument (20%):** This will take place in front of the class and should last around 5-10 minutes. You will be graded mainly on clarity and thoroughness.
 - **20-minute debate with another student over a contemporary idea (20%):** You will have a debate in the professor’s office on a contemporary idea. With professor’s approval you and your debate partner will choose the idea (examples: war, poverty, vegetarianism, loans, climate change).
 - **Persuasive letter (20%):** Students will write a letter to someone attempting to persuade them of a particular idea. You will employ a key philosophical argument to persuade them or dissuade them of a particular idea. The professor’s approval is required for your topic.
 - **Comprehensive Final Exam (20%):** The Final Exam is comprehensive and will be made up of short answer, fill in the blank, true/false, and other evaluative methods.

Course Schedules

| Day | Date | Topic & Assignments | Readings |
|-----|---------|--|--------------|
| Mon | July 15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Introduction to the Course • Syllabus Review • Introduction | Nagel, ch. 1 |
| Tue | July 16 | How do we know anything? | Nagel, ch. 2 |
| Wed | July 17 | Other minds | Nagel, ch. 3 |
| Thu | July 18 | The Mind-Body Problem | Nagel, ch. 4 |
| Fri | July 19 | The Meaning of Words | Nagel, ch. 5 |
| Mon | July 22 | Free Will | Nagel, ch. 6 |



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| Tue | July 23 | Right and Wrong | Nagel, ch. 7 |
| Wed | July 24 | Justice | Nagel, ch. 8 |
| Thur | July 25 | Death | Nagel, ch. 9 |
| Fri | July 26 | The Meaning of Life | Nagel, ch. 10 |
| Mon | July 29 | Aquinas's Five Ways | Bruce & Barbone, ch. 1 |
| Tue | July 30 | Pascal's Wager | B&B, ch. 5 |
| Wed | July 31 | Hume's argument against miracles | B&B, ch. 10 |
| Thur | Aug 1 | Nietsche's Death of God | B&B, ch. 12 |
| Fri | Aug 2 | Ockham's Razor | B&B, ch. 13 |
| Mon | Aug 5 | Film & Discussion: Notes from the Tilt-A-Whirl | |
| Tue | Aug 6 | The Cogito Arguments of Descartes and Augustine | B&B, ch. 35 |
| Wed | Aug 7 | Aristotle and the Argument to End All Arguments | B&B, ch. 50 |
| Thur | Aug 8 | Mill's Proof of Utilitarianism | B&B, ch. 57 |
| Fri | Aug 9 | *FINAL EXAM* | |