I. LET’S DO SOME PHILOSOPHY

You probably have practiced some philosophy already, whether you knew it or not. If you have ever wondered who you are, why things exist as they do, what is real or illusory, whether our lives have any meaning whatsoever, what is the right or wrong thing to do, whether all of this is just a dream, whether God exists, why (if God does exist) He would allow you to suffer, whether death is the end of you, whether your dog thinks the way you do, whether computers will ever have feelings, whether life came to be by natural forces or God’s will, whether you have a soul, or whether fate or freedom governs your life – if you have wondered about any of these things, you are already a philosopher. Such questions arise naturally in our lives, and they are the beginning of philosophy.

If you are not content with the surface meaning of things and want to dig deeper; if you question what your parents, society, the media, or any other authority figure has told you; even if you question why you question; then you are a philosopher.

Our task in the philosophy classroom is to refine these questions and to search for their answers. We may not get far, but at least we will have taken the question seriously; and that may be the most important thing: “Physicists have microscopes. Astronomers have telescopes. Philosophers have questions: necessary questions.” (Kolak, p. 394)

II. REQUIRED TEXTS

Rachels, Problems from Philosophy
Kolak and Martin, The Experience of Philosophy, abbreviated ExPhil in Class Schedule
Warburton, Philosophy: The Essential Study Guide
Readings on electronic reserve, abbreviated ER in Class Schedule

III. REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING SCHEME

Two Quizzes: 80 pts each (40 pts each)
Paper One: 70 pts
Paper Two: 125 pts
Midterm: 85 pts
Final Exam: 140 pts

Points and Grades:
350-364: C-; 335-349: D+; 315-334: D; 300-314: D-
IV. PAPERS, QUIZZES, and ATTENDANCE

**Paper One:** A page and a half, due **Feb 12** in class. Prompt to be distributed.

**Paper Two:** Three to four pages, due **April 2** in class. Prompt to be distributed.

**No emailed papers!** Please see last page of this syllabus for **paper evaluation criteria**.

**Quiz Dates:** **Jan 31, April 9**

**Late Papers:** All late papers will be marked down 25% during the first week after the paper is due; and 50% after more than one week.

**Attendance:** I will not take attendance formally. However, much of the material on which you’ll be tested will come from our lectures. You’d be wise to attend class if you want a passing grade.

**MidTerm Exam:** **Feb 28**

**Final Exam:** April 29, 12:00-1:50

V. CLASS SCHEDULE

**SHADOWS IN THE CAVE**

**Jan 10** **Introduction:** The Cave, Appearance, and Reality

**Jan 15** **Socratic Wisdom and the Gadfly**

**Readings:** Plato, “The Cave” (ER)
               Plato, “The Apology“ ExPhil pp. 9-22

**KNOWLEDGE, REALITY, AND THE EXTERNAL WORLD**

**Jan 17** **Epistemology:** What is Knowledge?

**Readings:** Armstrong, ExPhi, pp. 254-260
               Rachels, pp. 135-136
               Bryson, “How to Build a Universe” (ER)
               Wittgenstein, ExPhil, pp. 365-368

**Jan 22** **Skepticism: Opening the Experience/EW Gap**

**Readings:** Locke, ExPhil, 232-235
               Rachels, pp. 134-138, and 146-148
               Descartes, ExPhil, pp. 224-227
               Nagel, “How Do We Know Anything”? (ER)
               Russell, “Perception, Knowledge, and Induction” ExPhil pp. 240-253

**Jan 24** **Idealism and Phenomenalism: It’s All in Our Heads**

**Readings:** Descartes, ExPhil pp.227-231
               Berkeley, ExPhil, pp. 236-239
               Whiteley, “Phenomenalism: Its Grounds and Difficulties” (ER)
               Kolak, ExPhil, pp. 383-384
               Rachels, pp. 141-144
               Nozick, ExPhil, pp. 369-371

**Jan 29** **C’mon, Let’s Get Real:** Realism and the External World

**Readings:** Descartes, Exphil, pp. 98-100
               Rachels, pp. 138-152
               Russell, pp. 246-247 (ER)

**INTERLUDE: LOGIC**

**Jan 31** **Deductive Logic**

**Readings:** Johnson, “Deductive Arguments” (ER)
               Rachels, pp. 197-205

**QUIZ 1**
Feb 5  **Inductive Logic**  
*Readings:* Johnson, “Inductive Arguments” (ER)

**SCIENCE, CAUSATION, AND TIME**

Feb 7  **The Problem of Induction: Is Causation Real?**  
*Readings:* Hume, “Causation, Reality, and Fiction” *ExPhil* pp. 356-360  
Russell, *ExPhil*, pp. 250-253  
Rachels, p. 120  
Whiteley, pp. 104-105 (ER)

Feb 12  **Science, Realism, Idealism, and Einstein’s Dilemma**  
Kolak, pp. 384-387  
Russell, *ExPhil*, pp. 246-250  
Bryson, “The Mighty Atom” (ER)  
Kant, *ExPhil*, pp. 430-433

**First paper due**

**PHILOSOPHY OF MIND**

Feb 14  **Dualism: Descartes’ Distinction Between Mind and Body**  
*Readings:* Descartes, “Of Self and Substance” *ExPhil* pp. 98-105  
Rachels, Ch. 6

Feb 19  **Materialism, Functionalism, and Machines**  
*Readings:* Rachels, Chapter 7  
Thomson and Turetzky, again  
Lycan, “Robots and Minds” (ER)  
Dennett, “A Perfect and Beautiful Machine” (ER)

Feb 21  **Subjectivity and Consciousness: Bats, People, and Qualia**  
*Readings:* Rachels, chapter 6  
Nagel, “What Is It Like To Be a Bat?” *ExPhil* pp. 477-483  
Jackson, “Epiphenomenal Qualia” *ExPhil* pp. 484-486

**FREEDOM AND DETERMINISM**

Feb 26  **Free Will: My Favorite Illusion**  
*Readings:* Holbach, “The Illusion of Free Will” *ExPhil* pp. 152-157  
Dawkins, “The Selfish Gene” *ExPhil* pp. 466-470  
Rachels, chapters 8-9

Feb 28  **MidTerm Exam**

March 5  **Trying to Resurrect Freedom**  
*Readings:* Taylor, “Freedom and Determinism” *ExPhil* pp. 183-193  
Rachels, chapters 8-9

**FUN WITH PARADOXES**

March 7  **This Sentence is False. Ha!!!**  
*Readings:* Sainsbury, “Paradoxes” (ER)  
Kolak, *ExPhil*, “The Incredible Shrinking Zeno”
PERSONAL IDENTITY
March 19  The Problem of Personal Identity:  Can You Kiss the Same Person Twice?
Readings:  Rachels, Chapter 5
Buddha, “On Having No Self” ExPhil pp. 94-97
Hume, “Personal Identity” ExPhil pp.114-116
Martin, “Personal Identity from Plato to Parfit” ExPhil pp. 124-138

March 21  Identity, cont.
Readings:  Same as March 19
Nozick, “Fiction” ExPhil pp. 368-371

THE GOD HYPOTHESIS
March 26  The Design Argument
Readings:  Rachels, pp. 10-22, and 29-40
Dawkins, “Natural Selection” (ER)
Paley, “The Teleological Argument” (ER)

March 28  The Ontological Argument
Readings:  Anselm, “The Ontological Argument” ExPhil pp. 262-265
Descartes, “The Ontological Argument Revisited” (ER)
Everist, “The Modal Ontological Argument” (ER)
Rachels, pp. 24-28

COSMOGONY:  WHY IS THERE IS SOMETHING RATHER THAN NOTHING?
April 2  Fine-Tuning:  Is God Necessary To Explain Why Any Universe Exists, or Why This Universe Exists?
Readings:  Rachels, chapter 2
Kolak, “Quantum Cosmology and the Anthropic Principle, or Why Is There Something Rather than Nothing?” ExPhil, pp. 372-394
Drange, “The Fine-Tuning Argument” (ER)
Parfit, “The Puzzle of Reality” ExPhil pp. 396-403

Second Paper due
April 4  Nothing Makes Sense…..Maybe
Readings:  Holt, “The Arithmetic of Nothingess” (ER)

April 9  Cosmogony, cont.
Readings:  Parfit and Kolak, again

QUIZ 2

DEATH AND MEANINGFULNESS/MEANINGLESSNESS
April 11  Death is……..What?
Readings:  Rachels, chapter 4
Clark, “Death, Nothingness, and Subjectivity” ExPhil pp. 526-534
Nagel, “Death” (ER)

April 16  Fleetingness, Speckness, Futility, and Meaninglessness
Readings:  Tolstoy, “My Confession” ExPhil pp. 540-545
Rachels, ch. 13
Camus, “The Myth of Sisyphus,” ExPhil 446-549
Taylor, “Is Life Meaningful” ExPhil pp. 550-55
April 18  Absurdity, Angst, and Irony  
Readings: Heidegger, “The Quest for Being” (ER)
         Nagel, “The Absurd” (ER)
         Camus, “The Myth of Sisyphus” again

April 23  Gravity, Levity, and Carpe Diem  
Readings: Kundera, “Lightness and weight” (ER)
         Baggini, “Carp Diem” (ER)
         Nietzsche, “Eternal Recurrence” (ER)

April 25 Review

April 29 Final Exam
PAPER EVALUATION CRITERIA
(No Emailed Papers; No Late Papers)

A philosophy paper is essentially an argumentative paper. You are exploring the paper question by reasoning/arguing for and against one or more claims that attempt to answer the question. You do not have to arrive at a definite answer. Rather, you are attempting to explore the issue thoroughly, interestingly, honestly, and persuasively.

*Also, I expect you read and follow pp. 47-79 in Warburton, for tips on writing a philosophy paper!*

**Clarity**
Be clear! Keep asking yourself whether what you are saying is clear to someone else (it may be clear to you, but that does not mean it will be clear to someone else.)

**Economy**
Your sentences should be free of unnecessary words/phrases. Each of your paragraphs should count in the overall argument of your paper.

**Firm Grasp of the Issues from Class/Reading**
You should utilize relevant material from our class in order to address the question. Also, you should at least state the positions (e.g. utilitarianism) correctly.

**Originality**
Can you go beyond the ideas presented in the readings and in class? Strive to be original in your arguments.

**Good Use of Available Space**
If the paper assignment allows 3 to 5 pages, then that means that if your particular argument -- to be complete and convincing -- requires more than 3 pages, then you should use more than 3 pages. But, at the same time, it is not good to try to get more pages with irrelevant “filler.”

**Evidence of Editing and Proofreading**
Try to eliminate typographical and grammatical errors. Watch for run-on sentences, spelling, punctuation, and sentence fragments.

**Serious Entertaining of the Opposing View(s)**
Your paper should entertain the strengths and weaknesses of your particular claim or thesis. Remember that your reader will trust you much more if you entertain doubts/objections that she might have, and then respond to them persuasively. An entirely one-sided paper is never convincing.

**Strong Opening, and Stick the Landing**
Think of your paper as a gymnastics routine. Judges look for that strong first move that catches their attention; and then for “sticking the landing,” to close the routine convincingly and leave a lasting impression. Your paper should do the same.

**Length, font, spacing, and margins**
A three page minimum does not mean two and three quarters pages! It means at least three pages, with font no larger than 12, and left-justified margins.

**No Plagiarism!**
Using someone else’s words without citing them as the author is an academic crime. It is called plagiarism.