



## **Introduction to Western Philosophy**

PHIL 1000

Summer 2019

7/1 – 8/2

3 Credit Hours

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The course serves as an introduction to the problems, methods and goals of classical and contemporary Western philosophy. Emphasis is placed upon how these differ from and relate to other fields of human knowledge.

### **COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

In this course students will be introduced to arguments for and against the existence of God, immortal souls, and freedom of the will, along with arguments purporting to show that morality is relative, democracy is overrated, and that the society we live in is radically unjust. In addition to developing a much greater appreciation of the complexity underlying our most basic beliefs about ourselves and the world students will develop logical and critical skills that will be valuable to them outside of the philosophy classroom.

The main goal of this course is to introduce students to philosophy as *a way of thinking* about the kinds of deep questions that occur to all reflective people during the course of their lives. Our emphasis throughout will be on developing the set of skills essential to philosophical analysis, including the ability to formulate basic or fundamental questions clearly and precisely, identify possible answers to these questions, evaluate the merits and demerits of these answers, and communicate the results of our critical analysis in clear, logically rigorous prose.

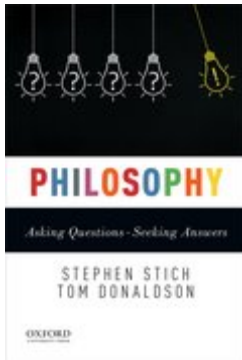
Upon successful completion of this course, students will have acquired:

- **Knowledge** of core philosophical problems and issues, as well as the main positions philosophers have developed and defended in response to these issues.
- **Critical Thinking Skills**, or the ability to identify, evaluate, and construct logical arguments.
- **Ethical Competence**, or the ability to engage more reasonably, knowledgably, and thoughtfully in the debates that define our moral and political cultures.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

This is an accelerated course and it is thus imperative that students attend all meetings. Homework assignments will only be accepted from students who attend class on the date for which the homework was assigned. Since homework will be assigned for each class, students who miss a class will always lose points. Students who miss more than three meetings *may* fail the course, depending on the reasons for their absences and their overall performance in the course.

## REQUIRED TEXT



Stephen Stich and Tom Donaldson. *Philosophy: Asking Questions, Seeking Answers* (Oxford University Press: 2018).

## ASSESSMENTS/COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students will be required to complete the following assignments prior to most meetings:

- *Reading assignments* from our textbook, introducing the material to be discussed in class.
- *Viewing assignments* designed to reinforce material introduced in the readings.
- *Quizzes* on the reading assignments.
- *Short writing assignments* (prior to our weekly discussion sessions).

Students will take two *exams*: a **mid-term exam** (7/15) and a (non-cumulative) **final exam** (8/2). Review guides will be distributed prior to each exam and our penultimate meeting (8/1) will be devoted to review and discussion. Assignments are weighted as follows:

Assignment	Total # of points	% of final grade
Quizzes	150 (15 x 10)	37.5%
Short writing assignments	50 (5 x 10)	12.5%
Mid-term exam	100	25%
Final exam	100	25%

## COURSE OUTLINE

All *viewing assignments* [V] will be posted on our Blackboard course site.

All *short writing assignments* [W] will be posted on our Blackboard course site.

All *quizzes* [Q] will be taken on our Blackboard course site.

DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT	VIEWING ASSIGNMENT	WORK DUE
7/1	Philosophy as an activity; branches of philosophy; course expectations and requirements	--	--	--
7/2	What are arguments, and how should we evaluate them?	Chapters 1 & 2	V1, V2	Q1
7/3	Philosophy and conceptual analysis	Chapter 2	V3, V4	Q2
7/4	Does God exist?	Chapter 3	V5, V6, V7	Q3
7/5	Review/ Discussion Section	--	--	W1
7/8	The problem of evil	Chapter 4	V8	Q4
7/9	Can we be completely certain of anything?	Chapter 5	V9	Q5
7/10	The problem of induction	Chapter 6	V10	Q6
7/11	What is knowledge?	Chapter 8	V11	Q7
7/12	Review / Discussion Section	--	--	W2
7/15	<b>Mid-term exam</b>	--	--	--
7/16	Do we have free will?	Chapter 9	V12	Q8
7/17	Do we have free will?	Chapter 9	V13	Q9
7/18	How is your mind related to your body?	Chapter 10	V14	Q10
7/19	Review / Discussion Section	--	--	W3
7/22	How is your mind related to your body?	Chapter 10	V15	Q11
7/23	Personal identity	Chapter 11	V16	Q12
7/24	Personal identity	Chapter 11	V17	Q13
7/25	Are there objective truths about right and wrong?	Chapter 12	V18	Q14
7/26	Review / Discussion Section	--	--	W4
7/29	Are there objective truths about right and wrong?	Chapter 12	V19	Q15
7/30	What should we do?	Chapter 14	V20	Q16
7/31	What should we do?	Chapter 14	V21	Q17
8/1	Review/Discussion Section	--	--	W5
8/2	<b>Final exam</b>	--	--	--

### **FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE GRADING POLICY**

<b><u>4.0</u></b>	<b><u>A</u></b>	<b><u>95 – 100</u></b>
<b><u>3.7</u></b>	<b><u>A-</u></b>	<b><u>92 – 94</u></b>
<b><u>3.5</u></b>	<b><u>A-/B+</u></b>	<b><u>89 - 91</u></b>
<b><u>3.3</u></b>	<b><u>B+</u></b>	<b><u>86 – 88</u></b>
<b><u>3.0</u></b>	<b><u>B</u></b>	<b><u>83 – 85</u></b>
<b><u>2.7</u></b>	<b><u>B-</u></b>	<b><u>80 – 82</u></b>
<b><u>2.5</u></b>	<b><u>B-/C+</u></b>	<b><u>77 – 79</u></b>
<b><u>2.3</u></b>	<b><u>C+</u></b>	<b><u>74 – 76</u></b>

<u>2.0</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>71 – 73</u>
<u>1.7</u>	<u>C-</u>	<u>69 – 70</u>
<u>1.5</u>	<u>C-/D+</u>	<u>67 – 68</u>
<u>1.3</u>	<u>D+</u>	<u>64 – 66</u>
<u>1.0</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>60 – 63</u>
<u>0.0</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>0 – 59</u>
-	<u>IN</u>	<u>Incomplete</u>
-	<u>IP</u>	<u>In Progress</u>
-	<u>W</u>	<u>Withdrawn</u>

### **CLASS POLICIES**

- ✓ Homework assignments will not be accepted from students who do not attend class on the day the assignment is due. Also, late work will not be accepted.
- ✓ In the event that a student cannot make the mid-term or final exam on the assigned date a make-up date can be arranged, but students should contact me as early as possible to make arrangements.
- ✓ Please do not use your cell-phone in class.
- ✓ Each student is responsible for completing all course requirements and for keeping up with all activities of the course.

### **POLICY ON DISABILITY**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medication information, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment at the beginning of the course to talk with me. It is important that the issues relating to disabilities be discussed with me as soon as possible.

### **GRADE APPEAL**

If you disagree with the evaluation of your work or believe an improper grade has been assigned, an appeal may be followed. Please discuss the matter with the instructor and refer to the Fitchburg State University Grade Appeal Policy in the university catalog: <https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/?/catalog/>

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY**

The faculty at Fitchburg State University require that work submitted in fulfillment of course requirements will be solely that of the individual candidate and all other sources will be cited appropriately. University Academic Integrity Policy, as outlined in the University Catalogue, will be strictly adhered to.

### **DISTANCE LEARNING & EXTENDED CAMPUS LIBRARY SERVICES**

The Gallucci-Cirio Library at Fitchburg State University provides a full range of library services including borrowing privileges; document delivery (books and articles mailed to your home); Interlibrary Loan; reference assistance via: phone, email, IM, Blackboard's Collaboration and Elluminate tools, Skype

and in-person; library instruction; research help and more. Any questions relating to library services should be directed to the Linda LeBlanc, Access Services Librarian, at 978-665-3062 or [dlibrary@fitchburgstate.edu](mailto:dlibrary@fitchburgstate.edu). There is also a special section for Distance Learning and Extended Campus Services at <http://fitchburgstate.libguides.com/dlservices> outlining the wide range of services available to you and how to access them.