

PHI 167M Foundational Issues in Philosophy

Hanover College, Winter 2011

1:00-1:50pm, MTWF, CLA 301

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Winter 2011 Office Hours: 10-11 MWF, 10-12 T, and by appointment

<http://vault.hanover.edu/~bates/fip/>

Course Description

How do our concepts of knowledge, mind, free will, God, the world, and ethics help us make sense of who we are and how we fit in with the rest of the world? How *do* we think about these big ideas? What are some alternative ways of thinking about them? Are some alternatives better than others? How do we decide? This course introduces students to philosophy by engaging them to think critically and analytically about these concepts and how they figure in an integrated view of who we are and how we fit into the big picture.

Texts

Simon Blackburn, *Think: a compelling introduction to philosophy* (OUP, 1999).

Course Requirements & Grading

During the semester, students complete three short writing projects, take two in-class exams, and take a comprehensive final exam – all of which count toward the course grade. The first in-class exam (worth 75 pts) is scheduled for Friday, 11 Feb; the second in-class exam (worth 75 pts) is Friday, 18 Mar; and the final exam (worth 100 pts) will be held the week of 18 Apr. The first writing project (worth 20 pts) is due at the beginning of class Monday, 31 Jan; the second writing project (worth 40 pts) is due Monday, 7 Mar; and the third writing project (worth 60 pts) is due Monday, 4 Apr. On typical class days there will be directed class discussions, and all students are expected to participate in discussions and to demonstrate their understanding of the assigned reading. Reading assignments are to be read by the date they are assigned. Detailed study guides and writing assignments will follow. Grades will be weighted and calculated as follows:

Point Distributions		Letter Grade Distributions			
3 short WPs (20, 40, 60pts)	120	A 345-370	B+ 321-332	C+ 284-295	D+ 247-258
2 in-class exams (75pts ea)	150		B 308-320	C 271-283	D 234-246
Final exam	100	A- 333-344	B- 296-307	C- 259-270	D- 222-233
Total:	370			F 0-221	

Objectives of the Examined Life (EL) LADR:

- (1) To confront foundational questions essential to the examined life, questions of epistemology, ethics, theology, and spirituality.
- (2) To learn the basic skills of logical thinking and critical thinking from within rational and faith-based perspectives.
- (3) To provide a framework for reinforcing and integrating recurring themes (e.g., ethics, epistemology) integrated vertically into the LADR curriculum.

Special Information

- Americans with Disabilities Act: If you have any special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act and need course materials or tests in alternative formats, notify me immediately. All reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate your special needs.

- Academic Dishonesty: Academic honesty is essential to the intellectual life of the College. Thus, academic dishonesty, such as cheating and plagiarism, is a basis for disciplinary action. No suspected case of academic dishonesty will be taken lightly; all will be handled in accordance with the student conduct code.
- Dropping this course: The deadline for discretionary withdrawal from any class is 5:00pm, Friday, 11 Mar.
- Degree Requirements: This course partially satisfies the Examined Life (EL) LADR.

Reading Schedule

Date	Readings	Topic	Important Dates
Jan 10	Introduction: 1-13	Course introduction	
17	Ch. 1: 15-32	Knowledge	
24	Ch. 1: 32-48	Knowledge	
31	Ch. 2: 49-65	Mind	First WP due, Jan 31
Feb 7	Ch. 2: 65-80	Mind	First Exam, Feb 11
14	Ch. 3: 81-99	Free will	
21	Ch. 3: 100-119	Free will	
28	--	--	Winter Break
Mar 7	Ch. 5: 149-168	God	Second WP due, Mar 7
14	Ch. 5: 168-192	God	Second Exam, Mar 18
21	Ch. 7: 233-253	World	
28	Ch.7: 253-269	World	No class Fri, Apr 1
Apr 4	Ch. 8: 270-287	What to do	Third WP due, Apr 4
11	Ch. 8: 287-298	What to do	
18	Finals Week: Comprehensive Final Exam date to be announced.		

NB: The reading schedule lists each week of the semester by Monday's date. Readings cover the entire week. This schedule is subject to change.