

# INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

## PHIL 242, SPRING 2010

### GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

*Time:* Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday 1:00–1:50 PM

*Room:* CMUQ 3175

### INSTRUCTOR

*Name:* David Emmanuel Gray

*Office:* CMUQ 1039

*Email:* [d-gray@northwestern.edu](mailto:d-gray@northwestern.edu)

*Office Hours:* Sunday 8:00–10:00 AM  
Monday 2:00–4:00 PM  
Tuesday 8:00–10:00 AM  
Wednesday 2:00–4:00 PM  
Thursday 8:00–10:00 AM

### ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

Important course information will be posted on the Blackboard for this class on the web.  
Please routinely check for updates at:

<http://courses.northwestern.edu/>

### REQUIRED TEXTS

All articles are available in PDF format on Blackboard. You will be expected to print them out and bring these hardcopies to class the day they are discussed.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

“Wonder is the feeling of a philosopher,” said Plato, “and philosophy begins in wonder.” In this course, I hope to share the feelings of wonder that have affected philosophers for millennia. In particular, we will explore classical and contemporary works that address a few representative philosophical problems concerning God, the Good and the Beautiful. While this course’s approach may be more rigorous than you are used to, the problems we address should not be. For as long as there have been people, adults and children (especially children) have asked these questions. You have undoubtedly asked some of them yourself.

There is no simple and precise definition of the subject-matter for philosophy, as it covers many different topics and disciplines. For this course, we will look at three branches within philosophy and some basic problems they each address. We will begin by analyzing some traditional theological arguments purporting to prove God’s existence. Then we will move into the domain of ethics, which concerns the nature of morality and questions of right and wrong. Following that, we will briefly return to theology and examine the relationship between reason and religious faith. Finally, we

will conclude with aesthetics, focusing on the nature of judgments concerning beauty and art.

Throughout the course, you will not merely learn about philosophy, but you will also actively practice it. I encouraged you to critically examine and develop your own views on these issues. While some of these problems may initially appear obscure and possibly even irrelevant, our responses to them profoundly shape how we understand ourselves and our place in the world.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this term, I expect that you will be able to:

- Understand the philosophical arguments we cover in class,
- Critically evaluate these arguments,
- Construct your own arguments on these issues, and
- Communicate all the above through both verbal and written discourse.

Each course requirement is designed with these objectives in mind.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Quizzes	= 25%
Homework	= 15%
Analytical Analyses	= 20% (2 @ 10% each)
Critical Position Papers	= 40% (2 @ 20% each)

Philosophy is a full-contact sport, but conducted as a cooperative process. Together, we wrestle with arguments and not attack those advocating them. Classes will typically follow an interactive lecture format, with certain days set aside for seminar-style discussions. As a result, the quality of the course depends critically on the quality of each individual's attention and participation. The purpose of us coming together as a class is to engage in philosophical activity together.

To help in your learning, I strongly encourage you to also discuss this course's issues outside of class with your fellow classmates, friends, and family, as well as with myself. However, all written work must be done independently, unless otherwise noted. You are all expected to be familiar with the university policies on cheating and plagiarism. If you have any questions, please ask; do not assume.

## GRADING SCALE

Each assignment will be graded on a 100-point scale. Unless you are notified of otherwise, the grading distribution will be as follows:

92.6–100	A	82.6–87.4	B	72.6–77.4	C	0–59.9	R
90.0–92.5	A-	80.0–82.5	B-	70.0–72.5	C-		
87.5–89.9	B+	77.5–79.9	C+	60.0–69.9	D		

Your final course grade will be on the same 100-point scale, with each assignment weighted as indicated in the course requirements section above.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### INTRODUCTION – PHILOSOPHY AND ARGUMENTATION [# of Pages Assigned]

January 10: Course Introduction.	
January 12: Irving M. Copi and Carl Cohen, “Propositions and Arguments”.	[14]
January 14: Plato, <i>Apology</i> .	[15]

### UNIT I – PROVING THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

January 17: Discussion on proving the existence of God. <b>First homework and first extra credit due.</b>	
January 19: Saint Anselm, “The Ontological Argument”. William L. Rowe, “The Ontological Argument”.	[11]
January 21: Discussion on deductive arguments. <b>Second homework and second extra credit due.</b>	
January 24: Saint Thomas Aquinas, “Five Ways to Prove that God Exists”. Michael Martin, “The Cosmological Argument”.	[6]
<b>First analytical analysis topic assigned.</b>	
January 26: Discussion on paper topic and non-deductive arguments. <b>Third homework and third extra credit due.</b>	
January 28: David Hume, <i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i> . <b>Fourth extra credit due.</b>	[6]
January 31: William Paley, “The Argument from Design”. <b>First analytical analysis due by 11:59 PM via TurnItIn.</b>	[5]
February 2: Stephen Jay Gould, “The Panda’s Thumb” and “Senseless Signs of History”. <b>Second analytical analysis topic assigned.</b>	[6]
February 4: Discussion on paper topic and unit wrap up. <b>Fourth homework and fifth extra credit due.</b>	

### UNIT II – THE NATURE OF MORALITY

February 7: Ruth Benedict, “Anthropology and the Abnormal”. James Rachels, “The Challenge of Cultural Relativism”.	[17]
February 8: <b>Rough draft of second analytical analysis due by 11:59 PM via TurnItIn.</b>	
February 9: David Hume, “Morality as Based on Sentiment”. James Rachels, “Subjectivism in Ethics”.	[16]
February 11: Peer review.	
February 14: Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> . <b>Peer review letters due.</b>	[13]
February 16: Discussion on the foundation of morality. <b>Fifth homework and sixth extra credit due.</b>	
February 18: Ayn Rand, “Value Yourself”. James Rachels, “Ethical Egoism”.	[24]
February 21: Jeremy Bentham, “The Principle of Utility”. Robert Nozick, “The Experience Machine”.	[8]

- February 23: John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*.  
E.F. Carritt, "Criticisms of Utilitarianism". [7]  
**Second analytical analysis due by 11:59 PM via TurnItIn.**
- February 25: Discussion on utilitarianism.  
**Sixth homework and seventh extra credit due.**
- February 28: No class.  
March 2: No class.  
March 4: No class.  
March 7: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. [15]  
March 9: Onora O'Neill, "Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems". [6]  
**First critical position paper topic assigned.**
- March 11: Discussion on paper topic and unit wrap up.  
**Seventh homework due.**

### UNIT III – REASON AND RELIGIOUS FAITH

- March 14: Richard Swinburne, "Why God Allows Evil". [9]  
March 15: **Rough draft of first critical position paper due by 11:59 PM via TurnItIn.**
- March 16: J.L. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence". [8]  
March 18: Peer review.  
March 21: *Genesis 22: 1-14*.  
Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*. [20]  
**Peer review letters and eighth extra credit due.**
- March 23: Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Death of God". [18]  
March 25: Unit wrap up.  
**Eighth homework due.**

### UNIT IV – ART AND ÆSTHETIC JUDGMENT

- March 28: Discussion on the nature of art.  
**Ninth and tenth extra credit due.**  
**First critical position paper due by 11:59 PM via TurnItIn.**
- March 30: Plato, *Republic*. [13]  
April 1: Aristotle, *Poetics*. [14]  
April 4: David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste". [9]  
April 6: Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*. [26]  
**Second critical position paper topic assigned.**
- April 8: Discussion on paper topic and the æsthetic experience.  
**Ninth homework due.**
- April 11: Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*. [9]  
April 13: Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*. [18]  
**Eleventh extra credit due.**
- April 15: Discussion on the function of art.  
**Tenth homework due.**
- April 18: Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art?* [12]  
April 20: John Dewey, *Art as Experience*. [20]  
April 21: **Rough draft of first critical position paper due by 11:59 PM via TurnItIn.**

April 22: Unit wrap up.

**Eleventh homework due.**

April 25: Peer review.

### **EPILOGUE – WHAT PHILOSOPHY IS (AND ISN'T)**

April 27: Harry G. Frankfurt, "On Bullshit". [17]

April 29: Plato, "The Allegory of the Cave".

Voltaire, "The Good Brahmin". [8]

**Twelfth homework, twelfth extra credit, and peer review letters due.**

May 6: **Second critical position paper due by 11:59 PM via TurnItIn.**

### **EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

Reading: Most days of class will have an assigned reading (see the course schedule) that you will be expected to have read and thought about before class. This will allow us to devote more time to collaborate in understanding and assessing the arguments in these texts. Hence, you need to do more than merely peruse the readings: you must endeavor to understand the author's position and how the author justifies it. In some cases, this may take multiple readings to accomplish. However, reading assignments are relatively short so that this is feasible. In addition, it is good to take notes while reading, so that you can remember the author's main points. Finally, feel free to bring questions to class. This material is hardly obvious and, despite a tremendous amount of scholarship, it still challenges the most intelligent of people.

Quizzes: Throughout the semester, there will be thirty short quizzes, with the lowest five grades being dropped, so your highest twenty-five will each count for 1% towards your final course grade. A quiz will consist of three multiple-choice questions covering the main points from the reading for that day and from previous lectures. These questions ought to be straightforward for anyone who has done the reading and attended class. You are allowed to use a single page of your own notes for reference.

Each quiz will be given promptly at the start of class at 1:00 PM. It will then be collected **EXACTLY FIVE MINUTES LATER** at 1:05 PM. If you come in late before they are collected, you will not be given extra time. If you come in after they are collected, you will have missed your chance to take the quiz. **SO ARRIVE PROMPTLY FOR CLASS EACH DAY.** Quizzes will not be announced in advance and cannot be made up. The reason that five of your quizzes are dropped is to give you the freedom to miss a few classes with no questions asked. Please note, however, these are not vacation days, they are for illness, job interviews, projects in other courses, and emergencies. To summarize: **THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UP QUIZZES.**

Each quiz will be graded on the 100-point scale. Writing your name on the quiz earns you 61 points. Each correct answer to a question earns you another 13 points.

Homework: There will be twelve short homework assignments, with the lowest two grades being dropped, so your highest ten will each count for 1.5% towards your final course grade. There will be about one per week (see the course schedule for exact dates), due at the **BEGINNING** (i.e., within the first five minutes) of class the day they are

due. Their purpose is to provide you with skills that will aid your critical thinking and paper-writing abilities. In particular, they involve organizing ideas and claims into a structure called an argument diagram. We will discuss argument diagrams in great detail in class and you will see many examples of them throughout the course.

Your homework will be assessed according to (1) the effort put into it, (2) the plausibility of the answers, and (3) the creativity of those answers. Each problem on a homework assignment will be graded on a 100-point scale as follows:

A (95)	Demonstrates solid effort. Answer is plausible and/or creative.
B (85)	Demonstrates solid effort. Answer is somewhat plausible and/or creative.
C (75)	Demonstrates basic effort. Answer is neither plausible nor creative.
D (65) or lower	Demonstrates little or no effort. Answer is neither plausible nor creative.
0	Problem was not done. No answer is given.

Truly outstanding solutions to a problem may receive a perfect A+ (100). A homework assignment's grade will be based on the average grade of its individual problems.

Analytical Analyses: There will be two analytical analyses, each of which will count for 10% of your final course grade. These will involve communicating, in your own words, the ideas we have studied. The first analysis will concern the presentation of just one argument. The second analysis will have you describe two opposing arguments on the same issue. In both cases you will explain arguments found in the reading, but not critically evaluate them. More details concerning each analysis will be announced and discussed in class. Each analytic analysis will be graded on the 100-point scale and will not be curved. A grading rubric for each analysis will be posted.

Critical Position Papers: There will be two critical position papers, each of which will count for 20% of your final course grade. In the first of these, you will be asked to explain and then critically evaluate two opposing arguments on the same issue. In doing so, you will defend one of the arguments by providing it a reasoned defense of your own against the other one. In the second critical position paper, you will present a reasoned defense of a position of your own. More details concerning these papers will be announced and discussed in class. Each critical position paper will be graded on the 100-point scale and will not be curved. A grading rubric for each critical position paper will be posted.

Class Participation: Class attendance and participation are very important in understanding and retaining the class material. You are expected to participate thoughtfully, to take notes, and to have a grasp of what was accomplished in each meeting. I recognize that not everybody is comfortable speaking in class, but active class participation can increase your final grade if you are in a borderline situation.

Films: If a quorum of at least two-thirds of the students is interested (and can, between themselves, agree on a time), I will show some films outside of class time that explore the subject matter we are covering in the course. You will not be required to attend these, but you can complete a short write-up to count as extra credit towards your overall quiz grade.

## REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

I recognize that most students are human beings with occasional human problems associated with human finitude. Illness, family emergencies, job interviews, Other Professors, etc... will inevitably lead to legitimate conflicts over your time. If you expect that you will be missing class or be unable to turn in an assignment on time, please notify me (either in class or via email) **IN ADVANCE** and we can agree on a reasonable accommodation. Arrangements after the fact will only be made in extraordinary, documented circumstances.

## CHALLENGING AN ASSIGNMENT GRADE

Please recognize that I am human also: mistakes will occasionally occur when grading your assignments. Therefore, you have **ONE WEEK** after an assignment is handed back to challenge its grade. To do so, you must return the assignment to me along with a clearly written explanation of your reason for challenging its grade. I will promptly and seriously consider all such challenges and meet with you, if necessary, to resolve them. Assignments without a written explanation will not be considered. After one week, no challenges will be accepted, except in extraordinary, documented circumstances. Of course, if you are not satisfied with your grade, but recognize that it was not due to a fault in the grading, I encourage you to talk with me to learn how to improve on future assignments.

## EXTRA CREDIT

There will be twelve extra credit assignments that will count towards your overall quiz grade. In addition, if there are any community lectures, documentaries, television specials, news reports, web content, etc... on topics related to course material, please bring them to my attention. I may provide extra credit opportunities for the class based upon them.

## A NOTE ON CLASSROOM COURTESY

Classes begin at 1:00 PM. Students are expected to be seated by that time and to remain seated until the class is dismissed. If you must leave before the class ends because of a medical appointment, or similar commitment, notify me before class begins and sit near the door. Students who leave without providing such notice and have not suddenly taken ill will be expected to file a drop form and not to return.

## VIDEO TAPING AND AUDIO RECORDING

Your classmates and I have a reasonable expectation to not be recorded in this course. Therefore, videotaping and audio recording are prohibited without our expressed, unanimous permission.

## CELL PHONES, LAPTOPS, AND OTHER RELATED TECHNOLOGIES

Student interactions with portable technology devices can harm the dynamics of the classroom. Therefore, I expect you to silence your cell phones prior to class and to not text-message during class. **ALL LAPTOPS SHOULD BE CLOSED UNLESS YOU HAVE MADE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS WITH ME AND HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT USING A LAPTOP IS NECESSARY FOR YOUR LEARNING.**

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In compliance with university policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability. Request for academic accommodations should be made during the first week of the term, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students are required to register for disability verification and for determination of reasonable academic accommodations. For more information, visit

<http://www.northwestern.edu/disability/>

## CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

**pla•gia•rism** (plā'jě-rîz'ěm) *n* 1: a piece of writing that has been copied from someone else and is presented as being your own work. 2: the act of plagiarizing; taking someone's words or ideas as if they were your own.

Plagiarism is bad. Do not do it. It amounts to lying, cheating, and stealing. Anyone caught doing it can fairly assume that they will not pass this course.

To encourage proper citing of sources, [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) will be used for submitting your assignments. Beyond this, it is the responsibility of each student to be aware of the university policies on academic integrity, including the policies on cheating and plagiarism. This information is available at

<http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/plagiar.html>

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

It is the policy of the university that no male or female member of the university community (i.e., students, faculty, administrators, or staff) may sexually harass any other member of the community. Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made or threatened to be made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment or education; or
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used or threatened to be used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting that individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic or professional performance or creating what a reasonable person would sense as an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment, educational, or living environment.

For more information, visit

<http://www.northwestern.edu/sexual-harassment/policy/index.html>



## PHIL 242 – INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY SETTING UP YOUR TURNITIN ACCOUNT

For this course your instructor will be using turnitin.com to check each of your papers for their originality. For each paper, you will be expected to submit a copy to TurnItIn (no hardcopies need be submitted). If you have trouble submitting please email a copy to your instructor **BEFORE** the posted time that the assignment is due.

Before you can turn anything in, you must set up an account on TurnItIn and get it connected to this course. This is a relatively painless process so don't be scared. Follow these simple instructions in order to begin your journey on the path of originality:

1. Get a computer with Internet access.
2. Open up a web browser and go to: <http://www.turnitin.com>.
3. You may be asked to "Select your language". If so, please click on ENGLISH (US). (Beyond English, your instructor knows Ancient Greek and Latin, neither of which is useful for guaranteeing that these instructors work for any of the site's other supported languages.)
4. Look towards the top right of the webpage and click on NEW USERS CLICK HERE.
5. On the next screen, look for the section entitled "New students start here". Click on CREATE A USER PROFILE.
6. On the next screen, click on STUDENT from the choices.
7. On the next screen, enter the following information:

TurnItIn Class ID: 3043248  
TurnItIn Class Enrollment Password: plato

Enter your (real) first and last name, along with your *northwestern email address (or whatever email address you actually check)*.

Make up a password (*and write it down! No seriously, write it down right now! Just write it here:* \_\_\_\_\_) and enter it into the two fields.

Select a "secret question" from the pull down menu and then type the answer in the field provided.


Finally, read and understand the license agreement, or (like your instructor) just skip it and click on I AGREE – CREATE PROFILE.

8. On the next screen it should say you are done. And so you are. Ignore the instructions it gives you – you do not need to turn anything in yet, unless, of course, you put this off until an assignment was due.

## PHIL 242 – INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY TURNING IT IN WITH TURNITIN

Now that you have set up your TurnItIn account (see the previous handout on this), you are now ready to submit your highly original papers. Please note that you are expected to submit all papers via the TurnItIn website by their respective due date/time in order to avoid a late penalty. Turning in a hardcopy in class is not required as long as the paper has been successfully submitted to TurnItIn.

In order to turn in your assignment, please follow these instructions:

1. Finish the assignment. Make sure it is all in a **SINGLE** text file (acceptable formats are MS Word, WordPerfect, PostScript, PDF, HTML, RTF, and plain text) on a computer.
2. Find a computer with Internet access and somehow put your paper's file on it.
3. Open up a web browser and go to: <http://www.turnitin.com>.
4. You may be asked to "Select your language". If so, please click on ENGLISH (US). (See previous handout for your instructor's esoteric knowledge of foreign languages.)
5. Look towards the top right of the webpage and enter your email address and password (which you had better have written down) and then click on LOGIN.
6. On the next screen, click on PHIL-242 – INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY.
7. On the next screen, click on the submit icon (  ) next to where it has the name of the assignment you wish to turn in.
8. On the next screen, select FILE UPLOAD from the pull down menu. Your first and last name should already be filled in. For SUBMISSION TITLE enter "My Assignment" (or "Plato Approved" or something else witty and clever). Then click the BROWSE... button to find the location of the assignment's file on the computer. Then click the SUBMIT button.
9. On the next screen, make sure this is the file you wish to submit and then click SUBMIT PAPER.
10. On the next screen it should that you are done. And yes you are. Almost. **PLEASE SAVE A COPY OF THIS "Turnitin Digital Receipt"** so that, in case anything goes wrong, we can verify that you turned it in on time. **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO DO THIS.** Failure to do so means that you will not be absolved of any late penalties. Now you are really done. Congratulations.

If any problems occur when trying to submit, please email a copy of your assignment to your instructor. He can then submit it for you. If you cannot do this before the due date/time, then you must submit a hardcopy at the instructor's office to avoid a late penalty (and your instructor must actually have the paper in hand before the due date/time).