

**Coastal Carolina University**  
**College of Humanities and Fine Arts**  
**Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies**  
  
**Fall 2014**  
**Syllabus & Tentative Schedule**

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**Course:** Introduction to Philosophy, PHIL 101, Sections 26 & 27

**Credit hours:** 3

**Time and Location, Section 26:** MWF 12:00–12:50 p.m., EHFA, Rm 246

**Time and Location, Section 27:** MWF 2:00–2:50 p.m., Williams-Brice Bldg, Rm 116

**Instructor:** Patrick Beach, Ph.D. (please call me “Dr. Beach” or “Professor Beach”)

**Email:** pbeach@coastal.edu

**Office:** 124 Sands Hall

**Telephone** 843-349-4049

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:30–11:00, and by appointment

**Course Website:** moodle.coastal.edu

**Communication Policy:** I will respond to emails within 24 hours (but usually sooner).

## Required Texts

- Peter van Inwagen, *Metaphysics, 4th Edition*

ISBN-10: 0813349346

ISBN-13: 978-0813349343

Amazon, Barnes & Nobel, Chegg, etc., may have new or used or rental copies at different price points, but new is about \$35.

Do *not* get the eBook, please, and please get the correct edition (if you get an older edition, it is at your own risk—I have not compared them to see what the differences are).

- Supplemental materials will be posted on Moodle.

## Course Description

This course is an introduction to the central problems of philosophy. Topics may include logic, God, mind, justice, personal identity, freedom and determinism, knowledge, skepticism, morality and responsibility. The course provides an introduction to argumentation, critical thinking, conceptual analysis and problem solving skills.

## Student Learning Outcomes

1. Understand central humanistic concepts such as freedom, autonomy, knowledge, god, determinism, functionalism, mind, reason, and morality.
2. Explain the significance of central philosophical problems.
3. Analyze and evaluate the logical structure of arguments, theories, and thought-experiments.
4. Identify philosophical arguments and objections.
5. Formulate questions, arguments and objections concerning the philosophical issues addressed in the course.
6. Describe central philosophical positions pertaining to the problems addressed in the course.
7. Use basic philosophical terms and concepts.
8. Apply basic rules of formal and informal reasoning.
9. Read and discuss philosophical texts critically.
10. Express one's own position with clarity and precision both verbally and in writing.

## Course Objectives

Students who are successful in the course will be able to ...

1. Understand and charitably interpret philosophical texts.
2. Express ideas clearly and precisely in well-organized prose.
3. Identify, reconstruct, and evaluate arguments. Particular attention ought to be paid to their internal structure (premises vs. the conclusions they aim to support).
4. Demonstrate familiarity with central philosophical problems, such as personal identity, knowledge and skepticism, and arguments for and against the existence of God.

## Course Requirements

**Work Load Estimates:** In a typical week, you should expect to devote about 6–10 hours to the reading and writing for this course. This is time beyond class attendance. Sometimes the readings are long and sometimes they are quite difficult. You will need to invest time in preparing for class.

**Means of Assessment:** Two exams, one 4–5 page paper, and quite a number of low-stakes assignments (reading quizzes, in-class writings, etc.). The exams are in-class (closed

book and closed notes).

We will spend about half an hour per week in class working on what makes for good philosophical writing, how to give good peer feedback, etc.

**Attendance Policy:** Students are obligated to attend class regularly. Absences, excused or not, do not absolve students from the responsibility of completing all assigned work promptly. Students who miss assignments, announced quizzes, or other course work obligations due to excused absences will be allowed to make up the work if possible (in-class work is often not possible to make up).

Absences will be excused for documented cases of:

1. incapacitating illness,
2. official representation of the University (excuses for official representation of the University should be obtained from the official supervising the activity),
3. death of a close relative, and
4. religious holidays.

**Students who miss more than 25% of the regularly scheduled class meetings with unexcused absences will fail the course.**

See <http://www.coastal.edu/policies/pdf/acad-125classattendance.pdf> for Coastal's official attendance policy.

## Grading Proportions

Paper: 25%  
Midterm exam: 25%  
Low-stakes assignments: 25%  
Final exam: 25%

## Grading Scale

90–100% = A  
86–89% = B+  
80–85% = B  
76–79% = C+  
70–75% = C  
66–69% = D+  
60–65% = D  
0–59% = F

## Advice

- Read the material carefully and take reading notes as you go along. Mark up the text in meaningful ways as you read. While I sometimes will give some guidance on the material before you read it, some of it will still be difficult. Be prepared to read and re-read the material. Philosophy *cannot* be skimmed.
- Take good lecture notes and rewrite them as soon as you can after class. This will aid you greatly in understanding the material.
- Organize study/discussion groups. One of the best ways to understand philosophy is to talk about it.
- Look up terms you don't understand.
- Write summaries of the readings, and write up what you think are the muddiest points in your understanding of the material.
- Get help with any writing problems that you know you have. I can help you and the writing center can help you. I expect college-level reading and writing skills.
- Come to office hours and we can talk about the material. I am the most informed person you can talk to about this class. Or set up discussion groups and invite me to participate. Warning: my time becomes very tight before exams.
- Philosophy is a *content-laden* discipline. We will pay attention to a lot of fine-grained details. So while looking at the big picture helps, much of what we will attend to (and you will be responsible for) is at the micro level. The devil is in the details.
- Students may vary in their abilities to read and write at the college level. You can expect to acquire these abilities only if you honor all course policies, attend classes regularly, complete all assigned work in good faith and on time, and meet all other course expectations of you as a student.

## Policies

- Students who cheat or plagiarize will fail the course. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for details. <http://www.coastal.edu/conduct/documents/codeofconduct.pdf>
- Students are expected to follow Coastal Carolina University's community standards: "Coastal Carolina University is an academic community that expects the highest standards of honesty, integrity and personal responsibility. Members of this community are accountable for their actions and are committed to creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust."
- Reasonable accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Accessibility and Disability Services office.

- Respectful, professional, and civil conduct is the expected norm for the class.
- The schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, or to ensure better student learning.
- This class is technology free. That is, use of cell phones, tablets, and laptops is forbidden (except for those whose documented disability requires an electronic accommodation). Print the papers we will be discussing and bring them to class (well read and marked up). Take copious lecture notes with pen or pencil and paper. As a courtesy, if you would like to record classes, please inform me.

### Tentative Schedule

Last Updated: July 17, 2016  
(Subject to Revision)

**Note:** Readings are in Peter van Inwagen, *Metaphysics, Fourth Edition* (PvI) or are posted as PDFs on Moodle unless otherwise noted. Assignments are posted on Moodle. In-class assignments are not.

Week / Week of	Topics, Readings, & Tests	Assigned Work
<b>1</b>	<b>Knowledge &amp; Skepticism</b>	
Aug. 18	Beach, "Logic and Truth"	Assignment 1
	Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , "First Meditation"	Assignment 2
<b>2</b>	Hospers, "A Critique of Skepticism"	Assignment 3
Aug. 25	Unger, "A Defense of Scepticism"	Assignment 4
<b>3</b>	Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?"	
Sept. 1	Logic practice	
<b>4</b>	PvI, Chapter 8, "What Rational Beings Are There?"	
Sept. 8	PvI, Chapter 9, "The Place of Rational Beings in the World: Design and Purpose"	
<b>5</b>	Design and Purpose continued	
Sept. 15		
<b>6</b>	PvI, Chapter 10, "The Nature of Rational Beings: Dualism and Physicalism"	
Sept. 22		
<b>7</b>	<b>Mid-term exam</b>	Mid-term exam
Sept. 29		
<b>8</b>	PvI, Chapter 11, "The Nature of Rational Beings: Dualism and Personal Identity"	
Oct. 6		
<b>9</b>	Dualism and Personal Identity continued	
Oct. 13		
continued on next page		

<b>Week / Week of</b>	<b>Topics, Readings, &amp; Tests</b>	<b>Assigned Work</b>
<b>10</b> Oct. 20	PvI, Chapter 12, "Freedom of the Will" Paper assigned	
<b>11</b> Oct. 27	Freedom of the Will continued	
<b>12</b> Nov. 3	PvI, Chapter 6, "Necessary Being: The Ontological Argument" Paper due	Paper due
<b>13</b> Nov. 10	The Ontological Argument continued	
<b>14</b> Nov. 17	PvI, Chapter 7, "Necessary Being: The Cosmological Argument"	
<b>15</b> Dec. 1	The Cosmological Argument continued	
<b>Finals</b> Dec. 8 Dec. 10	Section 26, 1:30–3:30 p.m. Section 27, 1:30–3:30 p.m.	