

**Missouri State University
College of Humanities and Public Affairs
Department of Philosophy**

**Spring 2016
Syllabus & Schedule**

Course: Introduction to Philosophy, PHI 110, Sections 004, 005, 008

Credit hours: 3

Time and Location, Section 004: MWF 1:25–2:15, Strong 201

Time and Location, Section 005: TR 8:00–9:15, Strong 300

Time and Location, Section 008: TR 3:30–4:45, Strong 201

Instructor: Patrick Beach, Ph.D.

Email: patrickbeach@missouristate.edu

Office: Strong 329

Telephone 417-836-5720 (I am easier to reach by email)

Office Hours: MWF 9:00–11:00, R 9:30–11:00, and by appointment

Course Website: blackboard.missouristate.edu

Communication Policy: I will respond to emails within 24 hours (but usually sooner). The same is expected of students.

Required Materials

- Steven M. Cahn. *Exploring Philosophy: An Introductory Anthology*. Fifth. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014
- A TurningPoint clicker for in-class quizzes—it needs to be registered
- Supplemental materials will be posted on or linked from Blackboard.

Course Description

General Education Course (Focus on Humanities). This course explores various ways of understanding the human self and its relation to the world. Through a consideration of what can be known, what is worth valuing, what reality is, and how human communities should be composed and regulated, the course deals with central themes that arise from the human quest for deeper self-understanding.

Course Goal

General Goal (9): Students will cultivate their intellect, imagination, and creativity as they develop an understanding of how social, cultural, linguistic, artistic, religious, philosophical, and historical contexts have shaped the thoughts and actions of people worldwide.

Student Learning Outcomes

- SLO9.1 Understand how various forms of written, oral, musical, visual, and bodily expression contribute to human knowledge and experience.
- SLO9.2 Utilize knowledge of various critical and theoretical frameworks to analyze and respond to works in humanities and the arts.
- SLO9.4 Interpret texts and other cultural products in ways that reflect informed understanding of relevant contextual factors, including socio-cultural influence and cultural traditions, perspectives, and behavioral patterns.
- SLO9.5 Analytically compare the influences of community, institutions, and other constructions such as class, gender, and race on the ways of thinking, believing, and acting in cultural and historical settings other than one's own.

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: (A) Four exams and (B) low-stakes assignments (in-class quizzes, in-class writings, assigned writings, etc.). The exams are in-class (closed book and closed notes). Reading quizzes will be a regular in-class feature. Read the material carefully (take reading notes, mark up your text, whatever it takes to understand the material). If you do not come to class well prepared and on-time, your grade will suffer. Almost every class will have something that will contribute to the low-stakes grade.

Make Up Work: I do not allow make up work except in cases which can be documented for (a) a death in your family, (b) extreme illness, (c) religious observation, or (d) your representation of MSU in some official capacity (such as presenting at a conference). Any work to be made up for documented excuses must be made up within one week of your return to campus. My expectation is 100% attendance. At the end of the semester, I drop the lowest three scores of your low-stakes assignments (that gives you three misses for personal reasons that will not penalize you). This policy of dropping low-stakes scores is to cover instances where you have a good excuse for not being in class that does not meet the requirements for making up work listed above. For example, if you are sick (or someone you are caretaker for

is sick) and there's no doctor's note documenting that, and you miss a quiz, you can't make it up, but it should not hurt your grade. Or, you have car problems or work and you miss an in-class assignment, you cannot make that work up, but it should not hurt your grade (because of the dropped low-stakes policy). The intent of the policy is to recognize that there are genuinely good reasons to miss a class (and perhaps in-class work), but to keep the administration of makeups to a reasonable level (the class of excuses in (a)–(d) above).

Clickers: Quizzes are given using TurningPoint clickers. It is your responsibility to register your clicker promptly and to bring it to *every* class. If you don't bring it to class, and we have a quiz, you just get a zero on the quiz. You cannot write your quiz on a piece of paper and turn that in, come to my office to make it up, etc. If you don't register your clicker promptly, you get a zero on the quizzes for which it was unregistered, even if you took the quizzes. You must register your clicker using your MSU email. Registration instructions are here: http://www.missouristate.edu/assets/clickers/MSU_Student_Cloud_Account_Registration.pdf. Follow them exactly (they are specific in what you need to do). Tech support for clickers lives here: http://www.missouristate.edu/fctl/clickers/Tech_Support_How_To_Page.htm.

Extra Credit: I offer no extra credit. Take your grades seriously from day one of this course. At the end of the semester there is *nothing* you can do to improve your grade other than do your best on the remaining assignments.

Grading Proportions

Exams: 70%

Low-stakes assignments: 30%

Grading Scale

94–100% = A

90–93% = A-

87–89% = B+

84–86% = B

80–83% = B-

77–79% = C+

74–76% = C

70–73% = C-

67–69% = D+

60–66% = D

0–59% = F

See <http://www.missouristate.edu/registrar/catalog/grades.html> for an explanation of what the grades mean.

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 with a grade of XF. Refer to the Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures. It is available at the reserve desk at Meyer Library and at http://www.missouristate.edu/policy/0p3_01_AcademicIntegrityStudents.htm
- 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 Disability Resource Center. <http://www.missouristate.edu/disability/>
- Respectful, professional, and civil conduct is the expected norm for the class.

- You are expected to check your MSU email daily and respond to any email that I send you (seeking a response) within 24 hours. You do not need to respond to informative emails from me. Any emails sent to me should be written to a professional standard (see “How to Email Your Professor” on Blackboard).
- 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.
- The first day of class will include a review of the Emergency Response Policies: <http://www.missouristate.edu/safetran/erp.htm>
- 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). Bring your reading to class every day (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 Steven M. Cahn, *Exploring Philosophy: An Introductory Analogy, Fifth Edition* (Cahn) or are posted as PDFs on Blackboard (Bb) unless otherwise noted.

Week / Week of	Topics, Readings, & Tests	Assigned Work
1 Jan. 11	<p>Topic 1: Philosophy and Its Methods</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>Beach, “Logic and Truth” (Bb) and Beach, “Enthymemes and Rendering Arguments” (Bb)</p>	
2 Jan. 18	<p>No class on Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday: Jan. 18</p> <p>Barker, “Improving Your Thinking” (Cahn)</p> <p>http://www.sfu.ca/~swartz/conditions1.htm</p>	No class on Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday: Jan. 18
3 Jan. 25	<p>Plato, “Defense of Socrates” (Cahn)</p> <p>Russell, “The Value of Philosophy” (Cahn)</p>	
4 Feb. 1	<p>Exam 1: Feb. 1/2</p> <p>Topic 2: Knowledge</p> <p>Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> (Cahn 110–114), and Locke, <i>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> (Cahn 114–121)</p>	Exam 1: Feb. 1/2
5 Feb. 8	<p>Berkeley, <i>A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge</i> (Cahn, 121–131)</p> <p>Hume, <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> (Cahn 131–140) and (optional) Kant, <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i>, (Cahn, 140–149)</p>	
6 Feb. 15	<p>No class on Presidents’ Day Holiday: Feb. 15</p> <p>Ayer, “What is Knowledge?” (Cahn)</p> <p>Gettier, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?” (Cahn)</p>	No class on Presidents’ Day Holiday: Feb. 15

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Week / Week of	Topics, Readings, & Tests	Assigned Work
7 Feb. 22	Nozick, "Conditions for Knowledge" (Cahn) Exam 2: Feb. 25/26	Exam 2: Feb. 25/26
8 Feb. 29	Topic 3: Mind Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> (Cahn 189–199) and Gertler, "In Defense of Mind-Body Dualism" (Bb)	
Mar. 7	Spring Break	
9 Mar. 14	Churchland, "The Mind-Body Problem" (Cahn)	Mid-term grades available online: Mar. 17
10 Mar. 21	Nagel, "What's it Like to Be a Bat?" (Cahn), Jackson, "The Qualia Problem" (Cahn) and Lewis, "Knowing What It's Like" (Cahn) Ryle, "The Ghost in the Machine" (Cahn) No class Spring Holiday: Mar. 24–25	No class on Spring Holiday: Mar. 24–25
11 Mar. 28	Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" and Searle, "Do Computers Think?" (Cahn) Exam 3: Mar. 31/Apr. 1	Exam 3: Mar. 31/Apr. 1
12 Apr. 4	Topic 4: God & Free Will Anselm and Guanillo, "The Ontological Argument" (Cahn) and Kant, "Against the Ontological Argument" (Bb) Pascal, "The Wager" (Cahn) and Blackburn, "Pascal's Wager" (Cahn)	
13 Apr. 11	Paley, "Natural Theology" (Cahn) and Dawkins, "The Improbability of God" (Bb) van Inwagen, "The Wider Teleological Argument" (Bb)	

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Week / Week of	Topics, Readings, & Tests	Assigned Work
14 Apr. 18	Howard-Snyder, "On Rowe's Argument from Particular Horrors" (Bb) Hume, "An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding" (Cahn)	
15 Apr. 25	Cahn, "Free Will or Determinism?" (Cahn) and Chisholm, "Agents, Causes, and Events" (Bb) van Inwagen, "The Powers of Rational Beings" (Bb)	
16 May 2	Harris on Free Will: https://www.youtube.com/embed/pCofmZlC72g	May 5: Last day of classes May 6: Study day
Final Section 004 Section 005 Section 008	 Monday, May 9, 1:15 pm to 3:15 pm Saturday, May 7, 10:15 am to 12:15 pm Tuesday, May 10, 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm	