



Soochow University

PHIL 1211 Introduction to Philosophy

Course Outline

Summer, 2020

The course is an introductory course to philosophy. It discusses the basic concepts and issues in philosophy and their application in real world. Students will develop their critical and logical thinking based on the discussion on the written works of philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Descartes and more, as well as the debate practices in class. Topics that will be covered in this course are Hume's problems and some solutions, minds, brains and machines, personal identity, freedom and responsibility, utilitarianism, justice and equality, morality, Zeno's paradoxes and more.

Course Information

Contact Hours: 54 hours

Credits: 3 credits

Course Prerequisite: n/a

Instructor: TBA

Course Objectives

Upon successfully completing the course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the basic concepts and terms in philosophy



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2. Introduce the thoughts and wisdom of some philosophers
3. Discuss the issues related to real-world problems, human behaviors and mind
4. Develop critical thinking skills based on the class discussion, writing works and debates
5. Express personal opinion in a logic way

Textbooks/Materials

John Perry, Michael Bratman, John Martin Fischer. (2015). *Introduction to Philosophy*, 7th Edition. Oxford University Press.

Attendance Requirements and Academic Integrity

Students are required to attend classes on the scheduled time. Missing classes without permission will lead to decrease in overall grade.

- Missing less than two classes: no penalty.
- Missing more than two classes: 7% will be taken off from the overall grade.

Exams must be taken on the scheduled day and location. There will be no makeup exam for summer sessions.

Soochow University values academic integrity, respect, fairness, honesty and responsibility. Students must be aware of and comply with Soochow University's Academic Integrity policies. Any cheating, falsification, plagiarism, impersonation or any attempting to commit the above will be reported to the university's administration office. Any academic dishonesty behaviors will be kept on record and students will be punished according to the rules.



Evaluation and Grading

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Participation and Homework | 10% |
| 2 Essays | 15% for each |
| Presentation | 15% |
| Midterm Test | 20% |
| Final Exam | 25% |
| Total: 100% | |

Homework will be given on a regular basic in order to reinforce the understanding of specific skills and they should be submitted to the course website. Students will be given a list of essay topics and be required to write their essay independently. Essays should be handed in via the course website and in 12 font size, double spaced format. Presentation is a group-debating task. Students will be grouped into several teams and they will select their own topics for debating. More details will be discussed in class.

Midterm Test will be held on the middle of the class while the Final Exam will be on the last day of the class. More details will be informed in class.

Soochow University's grading scale is shown as the following:

| Letter Grade | Score Grade | Grade Point Average |
|--------------|-------------|---------------------|
| A+ | 95-100 | 4.0 |
| A | 90-94 | 4.0 |
| A- | 85-89 | 3.7 |



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| | | |
|----|-------|-----|
| B+ | 80-84 | 3.3 |
| B | 75-79 | 3.0 |
| B- | 72-74 | 2.7 |
| C+ | 68-71 | 2.3 |
| C | 65-67 | 2.0 |
| C- | 60-64 | 1.7 |
| D+ | 55-59 | 1.3 |
| D | 50-54 | 1.0 |
| F | < 50 | 0.0 |

Course Topics

1. Week of June 8th:

Course Introduction and Overview

What is philosophy?

Why Believe?

The Problem of Evil

Descartes and the Problems of Skepticism

Hume's Problems and Some Solutions

2. Week of June 15th: **Essay 1 due (15%)**

The Traditional Problem of Mind and Body

Minds, Brains, and Machines



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Personal Identity

Freedom, Determinism, and Responsibility

Review for Midterm Test

3. Week of June 22nd: **Midterm Test (20%)**

Midterm Test

Utilitarianism

Kantian Ethics

Aristotelian Ethics

Justice and Equality

4. Week of June 29th: **Essay 2 due (15%)**

Contemporary Moral Problems

Challenges to Morality

Existential Issues

Zeno's Paradoxes

Metaphysical and Epistemological Puzzles and Paradoxes

5. Week of July 6th: **Presentation (15%) Final Exam (25%)**

Puzzles of Rational Choice

Paradoxes of Logic, Set Theory, and Semantics

Puzzles of Ethics

Review of the Final Exam