

PHIL 30001: THE RATIONAL ANIMAL HONORS  
Fall 2013  
M & W 12:30-1:45  
NAC 4/161  
Professor Jennifer M. Morton

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Office Hours: M 3.30-4.30pm, W 11:00am-12:00pm

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The general aim of this course is to serve as an introduction to central philosophical problems and methods of philosophical argumentation and analysis. We will consider some of the following questions: How can we know there is an external world? Can we be free if the world is determined by physical laws? Are our minds just physical entities? What makes an action right and/or good?

**READING:** All of the primary reading for this course will be posted on the course website

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** You will be required to turn in 7 one-to-two page polished reading responses based on the assigned reading and a prompt I will post on Blackboard. Be ready to share your reading response with the rest of class when called upon to do so. You will complete an exam, two group presentations, a 3-4 page paper, and a 5-6 page paper. You will be required to bring a draft of both papers to class for peer review on the assigned date (see schedule). You should expect a few unannounced quizzes during the term. Participation and attendance will count for a significant portion of your grade.

Exam #1	15%
Paper #1 (3-4 pages)	15%
Paper #2 (5-6 pages)	30%
7 Reading Responses	20%
Group Presentations	5%
In-Class Quizzes/Assignments	5%
Participation	5%
Attendance	5%

A	95-99%
A-	90-94%
B+	85-89%
B	80-84%
B-	75-79%
C+	70-74%
C	65-69%
C-	60-64%
D	51-59%
F	0-50

**LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY:** Late papers will only be accepted in cases of emergency AND arrangements must be made with me at least **48 hours in advance**. No exams will be issued after the exam date, except for in extreme medical circumstances with a hospital note. You will have the chance to make-up for ONE reading response at the end of the term. You cannot make up missed quizzes or group presentations.

**SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS:** A printed copy **AND** an electronic copy (via Safe Assign) should be submitted.

**ATTENDANCE: Regular attendance is required.** You will be granted up to **3 excused absences** (medical, family emergencies, etc) throughout the term, any absences above that number will affect your grade significantly. If you arrive **late to class**, you **must** contribute to the class discussion in the form of a **thoughtful** question or comment in order to count as having attended the class.

**PLAGIARISM:** Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will be subject to penalties in conformity with the College's policy on Academic Integrity.

**LEARNING COURSE OBJECTIVES:** By the end of this course you should: (1) Be able to read philosophy; that is, to identify the thesis of a piece of philosophical writing and the arguments or evidence adduced in support of that thesis. (2) Be able to write philosophy; that is, to present a claim in clear terms and to defend it in a logically coherent manner. (3) Be able to reconstruct and debate some foundational issues in the Western philosophical tradition.

As part of the College's General Education Curriculum, this course is designed to satisfy the requirements for a *Logical-Philosophical Perspective* course. Students successfully completing this course will develop the following proficiencies: will have had multiple experiences in communicating ideas in writing and speaking by completing assignments totaling at least 3500 words of writing, will have had experiences that emphasize analytic and/or philosophical reasoning to critically examine fundamental questions of ethics, justice and epistemology, and will have had multiple experiences in finding information and evaluating the reliability of this information.

Date	Reading	Assignment
W 08/28	Introduction/Jim Pryor's "Guidelines on Reading Philosophy"	
ETHICS		
M 09/09	Singer, <i>Famine, Affluence, and Morality</i> /Vaughn, Chapter 1 of <u>Writing Philosophy</u>	
W 09/11	Rachels, <i>The Challenge of Cultural Relativism</i>	
M 09/16	Mill, Selections from <u>Utilitarianism</u> (Chapters 2 & 4)	Reading Response #1
W 09/18	Rachels, <i>Egoism and Moral Skepticism</i> / <u>Writing Philosophy</u> Chapter 2	
M 09/23	Nagel, <i>War and Massacre</i>	Reading Response #2
W 09/25	Kant, Selections from <u>Groundwork For The Metaphysics Of Morals</u>	
M 09/30	O'Neil, <i>Kantian Ethics</i>	Reading Response #3
W 10/03	Aristotle, "The Nature of Virtue" (selections <u>Nichomachean Ethics</u> )	
M 10/07	Thomson, <i>A Defense of Abortion</i>	Reading Response #4
W 10/09	Wolf, <i>Moral Saints</i>	
T 10/15	Review [Monday Schedule]	
W 10/16	<b>Exam #1 (In Class)</b>	
FREEDOM & DETERMINISM		
M 10/21	Ayer, <i>Freedom &amp; Necessity</i> / <u>Writing Philosophy</u> Chapter 3	Paper Topics Distributed /Group Presentation
W 10/23	Van Inwagen, <i>The Incompatibility of Free Will &amp; Determinism</i>	Group Presentation
M 10/28	Kane, <i>Responsibility, Luck, and Chance</i>	Group Presentation
W 10/30	Strawson, <i>Freedom and Resentment</i> / <u>Writing Philosophy</u> Chapter 4	Group Presentation
M 11/04	Paper Writing Workshop/Peer-Review	<b>Paper #1 Draft Due</b>
THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM		
W 11/06	Descartes, <i>Meditations I &amp; II</i>	<b>Paper #1 Due</b>
M 11/11	Ryle, <i>Descartes' Myth</i>	Reading Response #5/Topics Distributed
W 11/13	Smart, <i>Sensations and Brain Processes</i>	
M 11/18	Armstrong, <i>A Causal Theory of Mind</i>	Reading Response #6
W 11/20	Jackson, <i>What Mary Didn't Know</i>	
M 11/25	Phil of Mind Review	
W 11/27	NO class [Friday Schedule]	<b>Paper #2 Draft Due</b>
KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXTERNAL WORLD		
M 12/02	Group Presentations	<b>Online Peer Review Due</b>
W 12/04	Descartes, <i>Meditations I &amp; II</i> (Reread)/Moore, <i>Proof of an External World</i> (pp 145-150)	Reading Response #7
M 12/09	Unger, <i>A Defense of Skepticism</i>	<b>Paper #2 Due</b>
W 12/11	Russell, <i>The Value of Philosophy</i>	Reading Response Make-Up