

The Big Questions: Introduction to Philosophy

Philosophy 110 – CRN 15942

Fall Term 2019 – Purdue University

Instructor: Daniel Kelly

Teaching Assistants: Matthew Church and Samantha Seybold

Syllabus

1. Course Description

There are two main goals of this course. The first is to introduce students to the Western philosophical tradition, its defining themes and the way those have been developed by major historical and contemporary figures. Such themes include religion and the existence of God; perception and its relations to knowledge and the external world; the nature of personal identity and the self; the connection between mind and body, the mental and physical aspects of a person; free will; and morality. The second is to provide students with the tools to refine their thinking, articulate their own views, and evaluate the arguments of others. It will give you many opportunities to sharpen your wits on Great Ideas and Meaning of Life type questions, to think systematically about The Big Picture, and to thereby help you to TurboCharge your own Bullshit Detector.

2. Class Meetings

Class lectures meet Tuesday and Thursday from 1:30pm – 2:20pm in ARMS 1010, in the Neil Armstrong Hall of Engineering. Recitation sections will all take place in Beering Hall in Room BRNG B268 as follows:

W	9:30 – 10:20a	BRNG B268	Samantha Seybold
W	10:30 – 11:20a	BRNG B268	Samantha Seybold
W	11:30 – 12:20p	BRNG B268	Matthew Church
W	12:30 – 1:20p	BRNG B268	Matthew Church
W	1:30 – 2:20p	BRNG B268	Samantha Seybold
W	2:30 – 3:20p	BRNG B268	Matthew Church

3. Office Hours and Contact Information

Professor Kelly

Office: 7126 Beering Hall

Email: drkelly@purdue.edu

Office Hours: 11:00am – 1:00pm Wednesday and by appointment

Matthew Church

Office: 412 Recitation Hall

Email: church0@purdue.edu

Office Hours: 10:30am – 11:30am Wednesday and by appointment

Samantha Seybold

Office: 7143 Beering Hall
Email: sseybold@purdue.edu
Office Hours: 11:00am – 12:00pm Monday and by appointment

4. Course Requirements and Grading

Grades on papers and exams will be given on the standard 0-100 point grading scale:

100-98:	A+
97-93:	A
92-90:	A-
89-87:	B+
86-83:	B
82-80:	B-
79-77:	C+
76-73:	C
72-70:	C-
69-67:	D+
66-63:	D
62-60:	D-
59-0:	F

Final grades will be determined by class participation (broadly construed), 2 papers, a midterm, and a final exam. They will be weighted roughly as follows:

Participation, 5 outlines and in section participation	20%
Two Papers	20% each (40% total)
Midterm	15%
Final Exam	25%

The date and time for the Final Exam are not scheduled yet.

Exams will be closed book, short essay format. A list of potential exam questions will be made available before both the midterm and the final.

The papers will be 5 pages. Some suggestions for paper topics will be posted roughly 2 weeks before they are due. Papers not turned in by the end of class the day they are due are LATE. For each day late, 7 points will be deducted.

5. Course Policies

Readings: Do them; it will pay off. A recent book's introduction says it well: "Patience is a primary virtue in philosophy. Genuine understanding is a rare and valuable commodity, not to be obtained on the cheap. One cannot reap philosophy's rewards breathlessly, or by looking for the intellectual equivalents of sound bites. Very large claims are at issue here, claims that bear on understanding some of the matters most important to being human. Understanding requires investing time, close reading, and reflection."

Lectures: Come to them; it will pay off. I try to make them not boring. Also, I will try to begin on time, and will usually go right up until the end of the class session. Please come on

time. Do not pack up your materials until class has been dismissed. Talking during lectures will not be tolerated. Repeat offenders will be asked to leave.

Screens: Bold proposal: dare to give yourself a break from the internet and [free will sapping technology of distraction](#) for 50 minutes! I would prefer that you exercise enough self-restraint to keep from texting or looking at your smartphone for the 50 minutes that class is in session, but since a formal prohibition would be too difficult to enforce, this remains a preference. Use of laptop computers and iPads during lectures will not be allowed, however. There's a [very good case](#) for this. Although I am not inflexible: talk to me if you have special needs or circumstances.

Attendance: See [Attendance Policy](#) for details.

Outlines: Your grade will also include your turning in five outlines that meet the following specifications:

- Choose one of the assigned readings that we haven't talked about in class yet
- Write up a one-page (single spaced) outline of that paper, pulling out the "bird's eye view" structure of article – sections, main claims of sections, basic arguments offered in support of those claims
 - How? **Two Steps:**
 - **Step 1:** Create your outline of the reading using the standard capital Roman numerals>capital letters>Arabic numerals>small letters>small Roman numerals system to mark different "levels" of indentation in your outline
 - Most word processors will do this kind of indentation formatting and number/lettering for you automatically
 - If you've never done an outline before
 - This is a good helpful overview: <https://libguides.gatech.edu/c.php?g=54271&p=350394>
 - You can also look at this for a helpful model: <https://web.ics.purdue.edu/~drkelly/KellyOutlineIsmaelOnDennett2018.pdf>
 - You can also see the outlined lecture notes I will post online for (more detailed and elaborated examples of) what you'll be aiming at
 - **Step 2:** On the back of the page, separate from your outline, do these three things:
 - 1) Formulate in your *own words* the **main question** you take the paper to be addressing
 - 2) Identify a sentence or two *from the paper* (i.e. quoted verbatim from the text itself) that best states **the answer** the author gives to the paper's main question. This will be the **thesis** of the paper, its main point, its Take Home Message
 - 3) Pose a question *of your own* that the paper provoked
 - Comments:
 - The outline part of this, Step 1, should fill a **full page**
 - But also try to keep that outline part to **just a single page** (though you can spill over a little if need be) – keep in mind that being concise and getting better able to

distinguish the forest through the trees, the signal through the noise, is the point of the exercise

- Why? (**Learning Outcome Alert!**) Here are the skills you are working on:
 - To **synthesize** a large amount of information, organize it, think systematically about what's important and what's peripheral
 - To develop the ability to identify and pull out the **thesis** of an article, and to distinguish the main claims and most important premises from the editorial asides or ancillary supporting details
 - To be able to **summarize an argument** as a whole, and thus to conceptualize, at a general level, the line of reasoning that an article is putting forth, and to understand it in its **entirety** as a single thing
 - Then, once you've understood the line of reasoning on its own terms, to take the time and effort to **formulate an explicit question** about it
 - This is an important first step in **developing your own sophisticated opinion** about it
 - Articulating questions helps to redirect and focus attention on what *you* think the issue and argument, once you have come to grips with what *the author* thinks about it
 - All of this helps you to not just organize, synthesize, and comprehend a body of information, but to also **evaluate** it, to **make a judgment** about it
 - All of this, it turns out, is one of those **Big Picture abilities** you can work on, hone and sharpen and refine with practice, and it is one that will benefit you in any domain and for the rest of your life

In section participation: I realize that not everyone is equally outgoing or talkative in class. However, participation in class discussion almost always helps in learning philosophy, and the quality of the discussion depends on everyone collectively. So while we highly encourage it, we will not penalize students simply for not speaking up. That said, a consistent record of engagement and participation always helps a student's final grade if it is on a borderline at the end of the semester. On the other hand, students who have not been present and engaged throughout the semester will not get the benefit of the doubt in similar borderline cases, and in particularly egregious cases will have their grades dragged down. There will occasionally have small group discussion questions in recitation sections, and participation in these will count towards participation grade, as will outlines.

Emergencies: (See end of Syllabus for full Purdue attachment on Emergency Procedures). In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. Information about emergencies changes in the course can be gotten by contacting either instructor via email or phone, or by consulting the course website (see above for that information). Purdue's Emergency Procedures Handbook and other important emergency planning information is available online at

http://www.purdue.edu/emergency_preparedness/

To obtain updates regarding an ongoing emergency, and to sign up for Purdue Alert text messages, go to

<http://www.purdue.edu/emergency/>

For the full document of Beering Hall Building Emergency Plan

https://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency_preparedness/bep/brng-bep.html

Plagiarism: With the advent of the internet, plagiarism has become an increasingly serious problem at universities around the country, particularly in classes like this one, where papers determine a substantial part of the grade.

In order to avoid plagiarizing from a source, both **direct quotations and paraphrases or summaries** of material found in traditional print media or on the internet must be acknowledged. If you have any questions about how this definition will be interpreted, please do not hesitate to discuss the matter with me or your TA.

Plagiarism and cheating on exams undermines the integrity of the academic community. When undetected, it gives the perpetrator an unfair advantage over students who are graded on the basis of their own work. In this class we will do our best to detect plagiarism and cheating. Students who are aware of violations by others should bring this to my attention. This is the right thing to do. It is also in your own self-interest.

There will be zero tolerance for plagiarism in this course. Plagiarized papers will receive a 0, the student will automatically fail the course, and their name will be handed given to the university authorities. For more on the Purdue University policy on plagiarism, see the following websites:

http://www.purdue.edu/univregs/pages/stu_conduct/stu_regulations.html

<http://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academicintegritybrochure.php>

With each paper assignment, a handful of students may be selected at random to submit their papers to TurnItIn, an online service that maintains an enormous database of papers that it uses to check for instances of plagiarism.

Nondiscrimination Statement: Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. Purdue's nondiscrimination policy can be found at http://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea_eou_statement.html.

Students with disabilities: Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at: drc@purdue.edu, by phone: 765-494-1247, or at the website: <https://www.purdue.edu/drc/students/index.html>

External Sources: Using sources not listed on the syllabus in researching and writing your papers is fine, as long as they are both to the point, and are properly cited. And at all times, when in doubt, ***cite your sources!*** It is the best way to avoid being accused of plagiarism.

This is probably the best place to make this point, too: Wikipedia can be useful for getting a very broad grasp of positions and debates, but when it gets into details, especially on philosophic topics, it can just as often be horrible – sketchy, convoluted, misinformed, and often simply wrong. If you wish to consult online resources, I suggest you use some of the other, much better sites. Most prominent is the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, but others are useful as well:

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

6. Website

Information and comments will often be posted on the website, which can be reached via my homepage:

<http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~drkelly/>

To go directly to this course's website, the address is:

<http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~drkelly/KellyIntroPhilFall2019.html>

7. Topics and Readings

Here is a tentative schedule of topics and readings. Depending how fast we are going, amendments and alterations will be announced in class as we go, and the readings for the next class will always be listed on the lecture outlines published on the course website. Since reminders and other information will be posted on the course website, **make sure you check that website on a fairly regular basis.**

Weeks 1 – 4 (Beginning 8/20): Introduction and Philosophy of Religion

- Russell, “The Value of Philosophy”
- Plato *Apology*
- Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*
- Anselm, *Proslogium, Or Discourse on the Existence of God*
- Paley, *Natural Theology*
- Hume *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*
- Dennett 1st reading, “Show Me the Science”
- Hume 2nd reading, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*
- Mackie, *Free Will and the Problem of Evil*
- Pascal, *Notes on Natural Religion and Other Subjects*
- James, *The Will to Believe*
- Alvin Plantinga, Interview on The Sensus Divinitatis
- Kwan, Can Religious Experience Provide Justification for the Belief in God?
- Gellman, *Mysticism*

First Paper Due: In lecture, Thursday 9/12

Weeks 5-7 (Beginning 9/17): Epistemology: Perception, Reality, and the External World

- Descartes 1st reading, *Meditations on First Philosophy*

- Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*
- Berkeley, *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*
- Chalmers, Matrix as Metaphysics
- Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*
- Paul, *What You Can't Expect When You're Expecting*

Midterm Exam: in class, Thursday 10/3

Fall Break 10/7 and 10/8 (No lecture)

Weeks 9-11 (Beginning 10/15): Ethics

- Plato *Euthyphro*
- Rachels *Does Morality Depend on Religion?*
- Antony, *Good Minus God*
- Rachels, *Subjectivism in Ethics*
- Rachels, *The Challenge of Cultural Relativism*
- Mill, *Utilitarianism*
- Le Guin, *The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas*
- Coates, *The Case for Reparations*

Weeks 12-13 (Beginning 11/5): Free Will, Moral Responsibility, and Determinism

- Timpe, *Free Will*
- Holmstrom, *Firming Up Soft Determinism*
- James, *The Dilemma of Determinism*
- Nahmias, *Neuroscience and the Death of Free Will?*
- Roskies, *Neuroscientific Challenges to Free Will and Responsibility*
- Roberts, *The Radical Moral Implications of Luck in Human Life*

Second Paper Due: In lecture, Thursday 11/14

Weeks 14-15: (Beginning 11/19): Personal Identity, Immortality, and the Self

- Perry, *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality*
- Witt, *Gender Essences*

Thanksgiving Break 11/28 and 11/29 (No lecture)

If any extra time: Philosophy of Mind (time permitting)

- Nagel, *What is it Like to be a Bat?*
- Dennett, *Where Am I?*
- Ismael, selection on "Where am I?"

Final Exam: (Cumulative) 10:30am – 12:30pm, Monday 12/9/19 ARMS 1010



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS SYLLABUS ATTACHMENT

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES are based on a simple concept – if you hear a fire alarm inside, proceed outside. If you hear a siren outside, proceed inside.

- **Indoor Fire Alarms** mean to stop class or research and immediately **evacuate** the building.

Proceed to your Emergency Assembly Area away from building doors.

Remain outside until police, fire, or other emergency response personnel provide additional guidance or tell you it is safe to leave.

- **All Hazards Outdoor Emergency Warning Sirens** mean to immediately seek shelter (**Shelter in Place**) in a safe location within the closest building.

“Shelter in place” means seeking immediate shelter inside a building or University residence. This course of action may need to be taken during a tornado, a civil disturbance including a shooting or release of hazardous materials in the outside air. Once safely inside, find out more details about the emergency*. **Remain in place** until police, fire, or other emergency response personnel provide additional guidance or tell you it is safe to leave.

**In both cases, you should seek additional clarifying information by all means possible...Purdue Home page, email alert, TV, radio, etc...review the Purdue Emergency Warning Notification System multi-communication layers at http://www.purdue.edu/ebps/emergency_preparedness/warning-system.html*

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES:

- Review the **Emergency Procedures Guidelines**
https://www.purdue.edu/emergency_preparedness/flipchart/index.html
- Review the **Building Emergency Plan** (available from the building deputy) for:

Evacuation routes, exit points, and emergency assembly area

when and how to evacuate the building

Shelter in place procedures and locations

Additional building specific procedures and requirements.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AWARENESS VIDEOS

- **"Run. Hide. Fight."** is a 6-minute active shooter awareness video that illustrates what to look for and how to prepare and react to this type of incident. See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5mzI_5aj4Vs (Link is also located on the EP website)

MORE INFORMATION

Reference the Emergency Preparedness web site for additional information:

http://www.purdue.edu/emergency_preparedness