

Introduction to Philosophy

Summer Session I - 2019

Tu/Th 2:00pm-4:50pm
Warren Lecture Hall 2113

Instructor: Rosalind Chaplin, rchaplin@ucsd.edu

Office Hours: Wed 10:30-12:30, Thurs 11am-noon, or by appointment, [Mandeville Coffee Cart](#)

Course Description. This course is a general introduction to philosophical questions, texts, and methods. Since philosophy addresses an extraordinarily wide range of questions, our approach will be to focus on developing skills that will be useful no matter what future philosophy classes you choose to take (and no matter what future career path you pursue). What are these skills? Follow [this link](#) to the portion of the syllabus that explains them.

In order to develop the skills that are at the heart of this course, we will be exploring four main sets of philosophical questions. Although these questions are only a very small sample of the questions that one could ask in philosophy, they should give you a good sense of some of philosophy's core subspecialties. Our specific questions are the following:

- (1) **An ethics question** → Is it okay to be partial towards our friends and loved ones, or does morality demand that we treat everyone impartially? Do our relationships with our friends and loved ones sometimes require us to behave immorally?
- (2) **An epistemology question** → Is our social media use shaping our beliefs in an acceptable way? Do we have implicit biases, and what are the costs of having implicit biases?
- (3) **A philosophy of action and responsibility question** → Do we have the kind of free will that would make us morally responsible for what we do?
- (4) **A metaphysics question** → Does physical matter really exist, or should we think that everything is mental? Historically, why have some philosophers been idealists?

Course Credits. 4 credits, no prerequisites.

Texts. All required readings will be available on Canvas.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Grade Breakdown

10%	Reading Worksheets
5%	In Class Assignments
20%	Writing Assignment 1 - Argument Reconstruction
20%	Writing Assignment 2 - Argument Reconstruction
20%	Writing Assignment 3 - Write an Objection
20%	Writing Assignment 4 - Respond to an Objection
5%	Final Assignment

Assignments

- *Reading Worksheets.* Each reading will be accompanied by a worksheet, which must be turned in at the beginning of class. The purpose of these worksheets is to help you learn to read more effectively, and as such you will receive full points just for completing them. Links to worksheets can be found in the schedule below and in the 'Worksheets' folder on Canvas.
- *In Class Assignments.* There will be a variety of in class assignments, some of which will simply register your participation and some of which will test specific skills and course content.
- *Writing Assignments.* You will complete four writing assignments over the course of the summer session. Each of these will be very short (roughly 2 pages double-spaced), but the expectation is that you will put significant time into making these pieces clear, concise, and accurate. The assignments are already posted on Canvas, so you can get started as early as you want.
- *Final Assignment.* There will be no final exam in this course, but you will be asked to turn in a short final assignment no later than Saturday, August 3rd by 10am. This assignment will include some preliminary, in-class components (likely in weeks 4 and 5).

Late Policy. Because of the compressed summer schedule, assignments need to be turned in on time. The late policies for each of the assignment types are as follows: (i) reading worksheets must be turned in on time to receive any credit; (ii) writing assignments will be assessed a 1/3 letter grade penalty per day late; (iii) in-class assignments cannot be made up outside of class—if you miss class, you forfeit those points; (iv) the final assignment must be turned in on time to receive any credit.

All this said, if you have a medical, family, or other true emergency, email me as soon as you can, and we will figure out a reasonable solution. Absences for any sincerely held religious belief, observance, or practice will also be accommodated where reasonable.

OTHER POLICIES

Computers, tablets, and cell phones. You will need to have access to the course readings during our class meetings, and since many of you will not be printing out the readings, computers and tablets will be allowed. However, out of consideration for yourselves and others, please turn off all notifications, do not check email, and stay off of unrelated websites and apps during class. Please also keep your cell phones put away — you can check messages during the break.

Email and Canvas Announcements. I will make every effort to answer your emails within 48 hours, and if 48 hours have passed and you still have not heard from me, feel free to resend your message—your email was probably pushed down to the bottom of my inbox, and I will be grateful for the reminder. Generally speaking, it is best to reserve email for logistical matters rather than for substantive philosophical discussions. Come to office hours if you would like to have a substantive discussion about course material. Finally, please do not forget to check your own emails and Canvas messages — I'll sometimes be sending out important announcements electronically.

Accessibility. If you will be requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability, you must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to Faculty (please make arrangements to contact me privately) and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged. Contact OSD for further information: <http://osd.ucsd.edu/osd@ucsd.edu> | 858. 534.4382

Academic Integrity. Academic Integrity is expected of everyone at UC San Diego. This means that you must be honest, fair, responsible, respectful, and trustworthy in all of your actions. Lying, cheating, or any other forms of dishonesty will not be tolerated because they undermine learning and the University's ability to certify students' knowledge and abilities. Thus, any attempt to get, or help another get, a grade by cheating, lying or dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office and will result in sanctions. Sanctions can include an F in the class and suspension or dismissal from the University. So, think carefully before you act. Before you act, ask yourself the following questions: a) is my action honest, fair, respectful, responsible, and trustworthy, and b) is my action authorized by the instructor? If you are unsure, don't ask a friend, ask your instructor, instructional assistant, or the Academic Integrity Office. You can learn more about academic integrity at academicintegrity.ucsd.edu.

(Source: Bertram Gallant, T. (2017). Teaching for integrity. UC San Diego Academic Integrity Office.)

Please be aware that assignments submitted to Canvas will be automatically reviewed by Turnitin, a third-party originality checker licensed for use by UC San Diego.

OTHER RESOURCES

Learning Resources

- [Library Help](#)
- [Writing Hub](#)
- [Supplemental Instruction](#)
- [Tutoring](#)

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

858.534.3755 | <https://caps.ucsd.edu>

CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center

858.534.5793 | sarc@ucsd.edu | <https://care.ucsd.edu>

Office for the Prevention of Harassment & Discrimination (OPHD)

858.534.8298 | ophd@ucsd.edu | <http://ophd.ucsd.edu/report-bias/index.html>

Basic Needs

Any student who has difficulty accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in this course, is encouraged to contact:

foodpantry@ucsd.edu | basicneeds@ucsd.edu | 858.246.2632

Conduct and Community Resources

[UCSD Student Conduct Code](#)

[Principles of Community](#)

Inclusion

Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:

858.822.3542 | diversity@ucsd.edu | <https://diversity.ucsd.edu/>

<https://students.ucsd.edu/student-life/diversity/index.html>

<https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/governance/policies/4400.html>

Technical Support

For help with accounts, network, and technical issues:

<https://acms.ucsd.edu/contact/index.html>

SCHEDULE

	Day	Topic	Assignments Due
Week 1	Tu 07/02	What is philosophy? What makes for a good argument?	<i>Read</i> → Wilfred Sellars (1960), "The Philosophical Quest." <i>Note: this is just the first section of the posted paper.</i> (Optional: these online pieces about how to write a philosophy paper: piece 1 , piece 2)
	Th 07/04	<i>HOLIDAY - NO CLASS</i>	
Week 2	Tu 07/09	Partiality, Morality, and Personal Relationships	<i>Read</i> → Dean Cocking and Jeanette Kennett (2000), "Friendship and Moral Danger" <i>Turn In</i> → Reading Worksheet 1
	Th 07/11	Partiality, Morality, and Personal Relationships	<i>Read</i> → Susan Wolf (1992), "Morality and Partiality" <i>Turn In</i> → Reading Worksheet 2 ; Writing Assignment 1
Week 3	Tu 07/16	Epistemology Today	<i>Read</i> → C. Thi Nguyen (2018), "Echo Chambers and Epistemic Bubbles" <i>Turn In</i> → Reading Worksheet 3
	Th 07/18	Epistemology Today	<i>Read</i> → Tamar Gendler (2011), "On the Epistemic Costs of Implicit Bias" <i>Turn In</i> → Reading Worksheet 4 ; Writing Assignment 2
Week 4	Tu 07/23	Freedom of the Will	<i>Read</i> → Helen Steward (2002), "Are They Playing our Tune?" <i>Turn In</i> → Reading Worksheet 5
	Th 07/25	Freedom of the Will	<i>Read</i> → P. F. Strawson (1962), "Freedom and Resentment" <i>Turn In</i> → Reading Worksheet 6 ; Writing Assignment 3
Week 5	Tu 07/30	Idealism	<i>Read</i> → Bishop Berkeley (1734), <i>Three Dialogues, First Dialogue</i> , pp 107-147. <i>Turn In</i> → Reading Worksheet 7
	Th 08/01	Idealism	<i>Read</i> → reread Berkeley while doing the writing assignment; no new readings <i>Turn In</i> → Writing Assignment 4
	Sat 08/03	<i>no final exam -- final assignment submitted on Canvas by 10:00am</i>	

COURSE SKILL AIMS

(1) Learn to reconstruct arguments presented by others

What does success look like? → When reading an argument, can you identify the conclusion of the argument? Can you identify the premises? Can you distinguish the premises from the evidence that supports the premises?

How will I be assessed? → The first two at home Writing Assignments will focus on this skill. We will also do some argument reconstruction exercises as in-class assignments.

(2) Learn to identify and articulate plausible objections to arguments

What does success look like? → When reading a philosophical paper, can you distinguish parts of the paper that deal with objections from parts of the paper that simply present the author's view? In your own writing, can you clearly articulate an objection to an argument?

How will I be assessed? → Your third Writing assignment will focus on this. We will also do some objection exercises as in-class assignments.

(3) Learn to defend an argument against an objection

What does success look like? → Can you produce a written response to an objection that summarizes the objection and explains why it initially looks compelling while also explaining exactly where the objection goes wrong?

How will I be assessed? → Your final writing assignment will focus on this skill.

(4) Learn to read philosophical texts

What does success look like? → Different people have different reading strategies, but you should develop some procedures to help yourself read effectively. For instance, perhaps you always label the main conclusion(s) of a text in the margins. Or perhaps you keep separate notes summarizing the main moves in the argument.

How will I be assessed? → The reading worksheets will give you some structure for self-assessing your reading skills (on the grading end, they will be assessed roughly as a participation grade). In addition, the four writing assignments will all require you to have a solid understanding of the texts, so some assessment of your reading will work its way in there too.