

Lingnan University
Department of Philosophy

Course Title	: Introduction to Philosophy
Course Code	: PHI4399E
Recommended Study Year	: Year 1
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Lecture and tutorial
Class Contact Hours	: 2 hours Lecture/week; 2 hours Tutorial/fortnight
Category	: Programme Elective – Special Topics
Discipline	: -
Prerequisite(s)	: -
Co-requisite(s)	: -
Exclusion(s)	: -
Exemption Requirement(s)	: -

Brief Course Description

This introduction to philosophy will cover a number of the central topics of philosophy. These include: the challenge of skepticism, the ontological argument for existence of God, the problem of evil, free will, the relationship between the mind and body, and personal identity.

Aims

The aim of this course is to

1. provide students a good basic understanding of a number of central problems of philosophy,
2. enhance the abilities of students to understand and evaluate views and arguments in philosophy, and
3. enhance the verbal, writing, critical thinking, problem solving, and argument construction skills.

Learning Outcomes

Students who complete this course are expected to

1. understand a number of the most important problems in philosophy and some of the most important responses to these problems,
2. critically evaluate these responses,
3. articulate their own views about what the correct responses to these problems are, and
4. defend these views by developing arguments defending them.

Indicative Content

1. Descartes dreaming argument
2. The cogito
3. The ontological argument for the existence of God
4. The problem of evil
5. Moore's proof of the external world
6. The problem of free will
7. The causal argument for physicalism
8. The Mary argument for dualism
9. Personal Identity

Teaching Method

Lectures and tutorials

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

1. Answering tutorial questions: corresponding to LO1-3
Tutorials will consist of students asking questions about material in the lectures and readings and answering questions given out in the tutorials.
2. Class participation: corresponding to LO1-3
Students will be assessed on the degree of participation they make to discussion in class.
3. Midterm exam and final exam: corresponding to LO1-3
These two exams will consist in short answer questions that test the student's knowledge of the course material and their ability answer questions, solve problems and construct short arguments relating to this material.
4. Essay writing: corresponding to LO1-3
Each student will write one essay of length 1200 words. This essay will test students ability to display their knowledge of course material and construct their own arguments in an essay format.

Evaluation of the essay and answers to questions in the midterm exam and final exam will be based on either the Philosophy Department Standard Essay Grading Rubric (see attachment), or on a replacement rubric chosen by the instructor (and approved by the department board).

Assessment

1. Class participation in lectures and tutorials (15%)
2. Midterm exam (20%)
3. Essay (25%)
4. Final Exam (40%)

Required Readings

Conee, Earl & Sider, Theodore: *Riddles of Existence: A Guided Tour of Metaphysics (second edition)*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Descartes, René: *Meditations on First Philosophy: With Selections From the Objections and Replies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Jackson, Frank: What Mary didn't know, *Journal of Philosophy*, May 83, pp. 291-5, 1986.

Supplementary Readings

Braddon-Mitchell, David & Jackson, Frank: *Philosophy of Mind and Cognition: An Introduction*, Chicester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006.

McGinn, Colin: *Problems in Philosophy*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1993.

Russell, Bertrand: *The Problems of Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Soames, Scott: *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century, Volume 1: The Dawn of Analysis*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Stroud, Barry: *The Significance of Philosophical Scepticism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.

Important Notes

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is "the presentation of another person's work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even

footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student's own work". Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.

- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students' understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course "Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness" is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>