

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
PHIL 201 Lec 02
“Problems of Philosophy”
Fall 2008

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Course Description:

There is an objective and scientific way of looking at the world that seems to leave little room for real moral structure, deep religious or philosophical meaning, free will, the specialness (for lack of a better word) of life, the mind, or our selves. When we look at the world objectively, some might say, we are simply physical objects – machines, albeit very complicated ones, in a physical universe. When we look at the world from our subjective perspective, it is hard to lose the picture of ourselves as beings with autonomy and value, in a world of agents and objects that have rational and moral value. We will discuss 4 domains in which the subjective and objective views seem to come into tension: human knowledge, our personal identity over time, moral value, and free will.

Texts:

REQUIRED:

Sher, George, ed., *Moral Philosophy: selected readings*
Course Pack

Graded Work:

- 1) Two **papers**, the first 3-5 pages long (worth 20%), due November 4th, the second 4-6 pages long (worth 25%), due the last day of class (December 4th). **Late papers will be marked down 1/3 of a grade for each day they are late, up to 4 letter grades. Papers not turned in will receive a zero.**
- 2) A take-home **midterm exam** (worth 20%), due October 21st.
- 3) A **Registrar-scheduled final exam** (worth 25%).
- 4) **Tutorial** performance (worth 10%).

Letter Grades translate to numerical values according to the following scheme:

A+: 98.33	B+: 88.33	C+: 78.33	D+: 68.33	F: 55
A+/A: 96.67	B+/B: 86.67	C+/C: 76.67	D+/D: 66.67	
A: 95	B: 85	C: 75	D: 65	
A/A-: 93.33	B/B-: 83.33	C/C-: 73.33	D/D-: 63.33	
A-: 91.67	B-: 81.67	C-: 71.67	D-: 61.67	
A-/B+: 90	B-/C+: 80	C-/D+: 70		

Final Grades are computed by rounding to the nearest recognized letter grade.

Disclaimer Page

INTELLECTUAL HONESTY

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. As a result, cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is regarded as an extremely serious academic offence, the penalty for which may be an F on the assignment and possibly also an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw. The University Calendar states that plagiarism exists when:

- *the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test;*
- *parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author;*
- *the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source; and/or*
- *a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.*

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted. Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Plagiarism occurs not only when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, but also when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. A bibliography is insufficient to establish which portions of the student's work are taken from external sources; footnotes or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

STUDENTS' UNION REPRESENTATIVE

The Humanities Representative is Daniel Pagan, MSC 251,
humanitiesrep@su.ucalgary.ca or 220-3913.

Syllabus

Part I. Epistemological and Metaphysical Problems (all readings are in the course packet)

A. Knowledge and the Evaluation of Belief

9/9, Tues: Intro	Intro
9/11, Thurs: What is Knowledge?	Plato, <i>Theaetetus</i> , selection
9/16, Tues: Is Knowledge Possible?	Descartes, <i>Meditation I</i>
9/18, Thurs: A Refutation of Skepticism?	Moore, "Proof of an External World," selection
9/23, Tues: Belief without Evidence	Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief"
9/25, Thurs: Belief and Trust	Lewis, "On Obstinacy in Belief"
9/30, Tues: Trust and God	Flew, Hare, and Mitchell, "Theology and Falsification"

B. Personal Identity

10/2, Thurs: The "Forensic Notion"	Locke, "Of Identity and Diversity"
10/7, Tues: Anti-Reductionism about the Self	Reid, "Of Identity" and "Of Mr. Locke's Account of Our Personal Identity"
10/9, Thurs: A Hindu View of the Self	Selection from <i>A Sourcebook on Indian Philosophy</i>
10/14, Tues: Buddhist and Humean Eliminativism	Selection from <i>A Sourcebook on Indian Philosophy</i> and Hume, "Of Personal Identity"

C. Freedom and Responsibility

10/16, Thurs: A Case Study	<i>Law and Order</i> : "Pro Se"
10/21, Tues: The Importance of Moral Responsibility	Moore, "Closet Retributivism"
10/23, Thurs: A Difficulty for Moral Responsibility	Strawson, "Luck Swallows Everything"
10/28, Tues: A Libertarian Response	Chisholm, "Human Freedom and the Self"

Part II. Ethical Problems (all readings are in the Sher book: page #s in parentheses)

A. The Foundations of Morality

10/30, Thurs: The Basis of Value	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> (166-179)
11/4, Tues: The Open Question Argument	Moore, "Goodness as Simple and Indefinable" (111-119)
11/6, Thurs: The Cultural Differences Argument	Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism" (194-204)
11/13, Thurs: Moral Explanation	Harman, "Ethics and Observation" (205-211)

B. Moral Theories

11/18, Tues: Utilitarianism	Mill, "Utilitarianism" (298-312)
11/20, Thurs: Deontology	Ross, "What Makes Right Acts Right" (374-384)

D. The Good Life

11/25, Tues: Morality and a Worthy Life	Wolf, "Moral Saints" (563-580)
11/27, Thurs: A Taxonomy of Views	Parfit, "What Makes Someone's Life Go Best?" (665-674)
12/2, Tues: Does Reality Matter?	Nozick, "The Experience Machine" (612-614)
12/4, Thurs: Wrap-Up and Exam Review	