P**HIL 100g Central Problems of Philosophy Fall 2017**

Professor Edwin McCann, MHP 205, [mccann@usc.edu](mailto:mccann@usc.edu)

Office hours: Monday 2:15 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.; Wednesday 11:15 to 12:15 p.m.

Preceptor: Dr. Kenneth Silver kmsilver@usc.edu

Lecture course # 49300R MWF 10:00 a.m. to 10:50 a.m., THH 301

Discussion section #49301R T 8:00 a.m. to 8:50 a.m., MHP 102

Discussion section #49302R T 9:00 a.m. to 9:50 a.m., MHP 102

Discussion section #49303R Th 8:00 a.m. to 8:50 a.m., VKC 157

Discussion section #49304R Th 9:00 a.m. to 9:50 a.m., VKC 157

Catalog description: Explores questions about human beings and their place in nature, including questions about knowledge, mind and body, freedom and determinism, and the existence of God.

Learning objectives:

1. To provide an introduction to the discipline of philosophy through the study of important contemporary work in the field.
2. To explore a variety of philosophical methods and contexts in which some of the central problems of philosophy have been approached, and in particular to focus on the distinctive character of philosophical inquiry.
3. To develop the ability to write analytically and critically on abstract conceptual questions.
4. To afford each student the opportunity to arrive at her or his own reasoned, rationally defensible position on these major issues.

**Course requirements**

1. Regular attendance and participation in lectures and discussion sessions. Counts for 20% of the course grade.
2. Two 6-7 page critical/analytical papers. Each paper counts for 20% of the course grade.
3. An in-class essay format midterm exam covering material from the first part of the course. Counts for 20% of the course grade.
4. A take-home essay format final exam covering material from the whole course. Counts for 20% of the course grade.

Schedule of readings and discussions

8/21 [1.1.1] Introduction and overview of the class

SECTION 1—KNOWLEDGE AND SKEPTICISM

8/23 [1.2.2] Plato, *Meno* and the Myth of the Cave from *Republic*

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 7-26

8/25 [1.3.3] Immanuel Kant on synthetic a priori knowledge

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 27-31

8/28 [2.1.4] Bertrand Russell on a priori knowledge

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 32-35

8/30 [2.2.5] Saul Kripke on the a priori and the necessary

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 35-42

9/1 [2.3.6] Edmund Gettier and Robert Nozick on the definition of ‘knowledge’

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 43-49

9/4 Labor day holiday

9/6 [3.1.7] René Descartes on skepticism, the cogito, and our ideas of mind and body.

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp 50-56 [*Meditations* I-II]

9/8 [3.2.8] René Descartes on the existence of God, the nature of error, and clear and distinct ideas.

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp 56-69 [*Meditations* III, IV, V]

9/11 [4.1.9] René Descartes on the real distinction between mind and body and our knowledge of the external world.

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp 69-76 [*Meditations* VI]

9/13 [4.2.10] Barry Stroud and Robert Nozick on skepticism and everyday life.

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp 95-114

9/15 [4.3.11] David Hume on skepticism about induction and necessary connection

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 175-197

9/18 [5.1.12] Bertrand Russell on induction and Nelson Goodman’s new riddle of induction

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 216-226

SECTION 2—MIND AND BODY

9/20 [5.2.13] J. J. C. Smart on the identity theory

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 384-390

9/22 [5.3.14] J. J. C. Smart on the identity theory II

First paper due Sunday September 24 at 11:59 p.m.

9/25 [6.1.15] Hilary Putnam on functionalism

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 391-397

9/27 [6.2.16] Hilary Putnam on finctionalism II

9/29 [6.3.17] David Lewis on Mad Pain and Martian Pain

Reading: Available from USC Libraries

How to access: go to http://libraries.usc.edu. In the ‘Search’ box (make sure it is set to ‘Search everything’ and not ‘Search USC libraries’) enter the search terms ‘David Lewis Mad Pain Martian Pain’. You will see a link to a fulltext version, and when you click on that link you will be sent to a Shibboleth login screen, and after you’ve logged in you will have access to the article to read online, download, etc.

10/2 [7.1.18] Thomas Nagel and Frank Jackson on the special nature of consciousness

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 421-433

10/4 [7.2.19] Janet Levin’s physicalist/functionalist response to Nagel and Jackson

Reading: Available through USC Libraries [see ‘How to access’ instructions above, 9/27; search terms ‘Janet Levin could love be like a heatwave’ ]

10/6 [7.3.20] Hilary Putnam on brains in a vat

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 433-443

10/9 [8.1.21] Midterm examination

10/11 [8.2.22] John Locke on identity and persons

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 310-315

10/13 [8.3.23] John Locke on personal identity and and Thomas Reid’s objections

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 315-321

10/16 [9.1.24] Bernard Williams on the self and the future

Reading: Available through USC Libraries [see ‘How to access’ instructions above, 9/27; search terms ‘Bernard Williams self future’]

10/18 [9.2.25] Derek Parfit on personal identity

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 334-345

10/20 [9.3.26] Marya Schechtman on personhood and narrative selves

Reading: Reading: Available through USC Libraries [see ‘How to access’ instructions above, 9/27; search terms ‘Marya Schechtman personhood personal identity’]

SECTION 3—FREE WILL AND DETERMINISM

10/23 [10.1.27] David Hume on liberty and necessity

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 197-206

10/25 [10.2.28] Peter van Inwagen on the incompatibility of free will and determinism; David Lewis on freedom as breaking laws of nature

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 346-353, 368-373

10/27 [10.3.29] Roderick Chisholm on the special nature of agent causation

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 353-359

10/30 [11.1.30] Harry Frankfurt on freedom and higher-order desires

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 360-368

11/1 [11.2.31] Gary Watson on free agency

Reading: Watson, “Free Agency” available through the USC Libraries [see ‘How to access’ instructions above, 9/27; search terms ‘Gary Watson free agency’]

11/3 [11.3.32] Susan Wolf on asymmetical freedom

Reading: Susan Wolf, ‘Asymmetrical Freedom’ available through the USC Libraries [see ‘How to access’ instructions above, 9/27; search terms ‘Susan Wolf asymmetrical freedom’]

Second paper due Sunday november 5 at 11:59 p.m.

11/6 [12.1.33] Thomas Nagel on Moral Luck

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 373-380

SECTION 4—PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

11/8 [12.2.34] St. Anselm’s ontological argument and St. Thomas Aquinas’s five ways; William Rowe on the cosmological argument

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 709-719

11/10 [12.3.35] David Hume’s Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, Parts II-VII

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 719-735

11/13 [13.1.36] David Hume’s Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, Parts X-XII

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 735-751

11/15 [13.2.37] David Hume on miracles

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 772-784

11/17 [13.3.38] ] Blaise Pascal’s wager; William James on the will to believe, Bernard Williams on deciding to believe

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 784-6, 792-811

11/20 [14.1.39] Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, John Mackie, and Peter van Inwagen on the problem of evil

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 757-771

11/22-11/26 Thanksgiving recess

11/27 [15.1.40] Marilyn McCord Adams on Hell and divine justice

Reading: Available through USC Libraries [see ‘How to access’ instructions above, 9/27; search terms ‘Marilyn McCord Adams hell god justice’ ]

11/29 [15.2.41] Daniel C. Dennett on evolution as a universal acid

Reading: Adler & Elgin, pp. 285-295

12/1 [15.3.42] Philosophical inquiry and the shape of contemporary philosophy

Reading: Jonathan Adler & Catherine Elgin, ‘Introduction’, Adler & Elgin, pp. xiii- xviii; W. K. Clifford, ‘The Ethics of Belief’, Adler & Elginn pp. 786-791

TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM DUE MONDAY DECEMBER 11, 10:00 a.m.

**Course policies**

**Students with disabilities**

Any student who has registered with the office of Disability Services and Programs (DSP) and who has been certified by DSP as needing specific accommodations will gladly be afforded those accommodations. Please meet with the instructor as early as possible in the semester to discuss the best ways of providing these accommodations. I am very glad to work with you to tailor course requirements to your specific needs subject to considerations of general fairness for all students in the class.

**Paper submission, deadlines and format**

Please submit your papers through Turnitin via Blackboard; the Preceptor may ask you to directly submit to him an electronic version via e-mail and/or a printed hardcopy as well, but you must in any case also submit an electronic version through Blackboard. Please format your papers as follows: at least 12 point font, double-spaced, at least one inch margins all around, your name and your section meeting time on the top right hand corner of the first page. All electronically submitted papers must have a filename of the format ‘<yourname> PHIL 100 First paper’ where <yourname> is replaced by your name as it appears in the course roster. Do not include your student ID number or any other possibly sensitive identifying information on your papers or in any correspondence with the instructors. The take-hime final examination will also be submitted through Turnitin.

Late papers, if accepted, will have their grade reduced by .5 of a grade point for each class session beyond the due date. Of course, documented emergencies may be a basis for a request for extension of the due date.

**Classroom protocol**

1. During quizzes or examinations: All books, notes, and screened devices (including laptop computers, tablets, smartphones, and smartwatches) must be stowed away out of the line of sight of anyone in the classroom for the duration of the writing exercise, with all devices powered off. If you do not have the means to stow these materials out of sight (e.g. in a backpack or other bag, or under a sweater, etc.) you may bring them to the front of the classroom and retrieve them at the end of the writing exercise. Additionally, no earphones may be worn during the period of the writing exercise. Violations of these prohibitions constitute an academic integrity violation.
2. During lectures and discussion sections: If you want to use screened devices (laptop computers, tablets, smartphones, or smartwatches) during the class session, please seat yourself in the last three rows of the classroom. This will remove a source of distraction for students who want to focus on the lecture and discussion.

**Communication**

We will strive to respond promptly to your e-mail inquiries, comments, etc. Given the volume of e-mail we receive daily, and since each of us is also teaching other courses, it will help us if you will begin the subject line of your messages with ‘PHIL 100’ Examples: ‘PHIL 100 request for a meeting’ or ‘PHIL 100 question about the lecture’. Given time constraints we can only answer questions that can be answered briefly.

**Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

**Academic Conduct:**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable.  See additional information in *SCampus*and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

**Support Systems:**

*Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. [engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling)

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255*

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/)

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. [engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/)

*Sexual Assault Resource Center*

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: [sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu/)

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086*

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. [equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu/)

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/)

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs*

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. [dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu/)

*Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710*

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/)

*Diversity at USC*

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. [diversity.usc.edu](https://diversity.usc.edu/)

*USC Emergency Information*

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

*USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.*

Provides overall safety to USC community. [dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu/)