

Philosophy

CTY Course Syllabus

Day 1: What is philosophy?

Morning

- Informal logic primer: Argument form
- Deductive and Inductive arguments
- Brainstorming philosophical questions
- Introduction to the practice and aims of philosophy:
 - Reading: Plato, *Euthyphro*
 - Students create and present a philosophical dialogue
- Activities:
 - Introduce the course
 - Icebreaker: two lies and a truth
 - Pre-assessment
 - Lecture, group work on dialogues.
 - Logic exercises

Afternoon

- Evaluating deductive arguments:
 - Soundness and validity
 - Formal and informal fallacies
- Activities:
 - Lecture and logic exercises

Evening

- Reading: Plato, *Apology*
- Activities:
 - Individual work
 - Short essay

Day 2: Logic and philosophical methodology

Morning

- Socrates' defense and its philosophical significance
- Introduction to truth-functional logic:
 - Logical paraphrase
 - Connectives
 - Truth Tables
- Activities:
 - Discussion
 - Lecture and logic exercises

Afternoon

- Truth functional logic continued:
 - Implication
 - Equivalence
 - Rules of Inference
- Philosophical definition:
 - Necessary and sufficient conditions
- Necessity, possibility, contingency
- Activities:
 - Lecture and logic exercises

Evening

- Reading: Flew, Hare and Mitchell, *A Symposium on Theology and Falsification*
- Activities:
 - Group reading and discussion

Day 3: Faith and Reason

Morning

- Major views on the relation between faith and reason
- Activities:
 - Discussion of Flew, Hare and Mitchell
 - In-class reading of selections from Crane, *Mystery and Evidence*, Clifford, *The Ethics of Belief*, James, *The Will to Believe*, and Kierkegaard, *Faith and Truth*

Afternoon

- Film screening: *The Seventh Seal*

Evening

- Exemplifications of faith in *The Seventh Seal*
- Reading:
 - Aquinas, *The Five Ways*
 - Paley, *The Argument from Design*
- Activities:
 - Discussion
 - Individual reading

Day 4: Arguments for God's existence

Morning

- Written assignment on faith and reason
- Pascal's Wager
- The Cosmological Argument
- Criticism of the Argument
- Activities:
 - Discussion
 - Group work and presentations
 - Reading: Edwards, *Critique of the Ontological Argument*

Afternoon

- The Teleological Argument
- Criticism of the Argument (focus on Hume's objections)
- Activities:
 - Discussion
 - Reading: Gould, *The Panda's Thumb*

Evening

- Reading: Perry, *Dialogue on Good, Evil, and the Existence of God*

Day 5: The ontological argument and the problem of evil

Morning

- The Problem of Evil
- Types of theodicy
- Activities:
 - Lecture
 - Discussion
 - Assignment on theodicies

Afternoon

- The Ontological Argument
- Major criticisms
- Activities:
 - Reading: Anselm, from *Proslogion*
 - Discussion
 - Lecture

Evening

- Readings:
 - Short story "The Meeting"
 - Perry, *Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality*

Day 6: Personal identity and the prospect of immortality

Morning

- Numerical vs. qualitative identity
- The practical significance of personal identity
- Souls
- Activities:
 - Lecture
 - Large and small group discussions

Afternoon

- Animalism
- Psychological Approaches to Identity
- Eliminativism about Persons
- Activities:
 - Readings:
 - Locke , *Personal Identity*
 - Parfit, *Personal Identity*
 - Clips on brain hemispherectomy and commissurotomy
 - Lecture
 - Debate on personal identity

Evening

- Readings:
 - Campbell, *In Defense of Free Will*
 - Stace, *A Compatibilist Account of Free Will*

Day 7: Freedom and determinism

Morning

- Determinism
- Hard Incompatibilism
- Libertarianism
- Activities:
 - Film screening: *Minority Report*
 - Lecture
 - Large group discussion

Afternoon

- Compatibilism
- Activities:
 - Lecture
 - Debate of free will

Evening

- Readings:
 - Descartes, *Meditation VI*
 - Smart, *Sensations and Brain Processes*

Day 8: The mind-body problem

Morning

- Introducing the problem
- Physicalism
- Dualism
- Activities:
 - Lecture
 - Small group assignment on Smart

Afternoon

- Functionalism
- Activities:
 - Reading: Fodor: *Mind-Body Problem*
 - Discussion

Evening

- Readings:
 - Searle, *Is the Brain's Mind a Computer Program?*
 - Jackson, *What Mary didn't Know*

Day 9: Intentionality, consciousness and arguments for dualism

Morning

- Intentionality and consciousness as marks of the mental
- Naturalizing content? Searle's Chinese Room thought experiment
- Activities:
 - Film screening: *The Measure of a Man*
 - Group assignment: verdicts
 - Discussion of Searle

Afternoon

- Naturalizing Consciousness?
- Nagel's bat
- Jackson's Mary
- Activities:
 - Reading: Block, *Troubles with Functionalism*
 - Lecture
 - Discussion

Evening

- Short essay on the mind-body problem

Day 10: Knowledge and skepticism

Morning

- Defining Truth, Justification and Knowledge
- Activities:
 - Small group assignment: What is your theory of truth?
 - Reading: Plato, *Thaetetus*
 - Lecture and large group discussion

Afternoon

- High stakes accounts of justification and knowledge
- Skepticism
- Descartes' methodological skepticism
- Activities:
 - Reading: Descartes, *Meditation I*
 - Worksheet on Descartes
 - Discussion

Evening

- Reading: Descartes, *Meditation II and III*

Day 11: The nature and origin of justification

Morning

- Internalism vs. Externalism
- Foundationalism vs. Coherentism
- Descartes' Rationalism
- Activities:
 - Lecture and discussion
 - Build a model of Descartes' foundationalism using Jenga blocks

Afternoon

- Lowering the stakes: Locke's theory of knowledge
- Locke's empiricism
- Rationalism vs. Empiricism
- Activities:
 - Reading: Locke, Excerpts from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*
 - Worksheet on Locke
 - Discussion
 - Quiz on rationalist and empiricist modes of justification

Evening

- Reading: Hume, Excerpts from *Enquiry*

Day 12: Undermining and transforming claims to knowledge—Hume's instrumentalism, Kant's idealism, Berkeley's phenomenalism

Morning

- Hume's skepticism about knowledge of causal relations.
- Kant's transcendental response to Hume
- Activities:
 - Lecture and discussion
 - Group assignment: which view is better?

Afternoon

- Berkeley's Phenomenalism
- Activities:
 - Group reading and discussion of excerpts from Berkeley, *Three Dialogues*

Evening

- Wrap-up of the epistemology module
- Readings:
 - Rachels, *The Challenge of Cultural Relativism*
 - Feiberg, *Psychological Egoism*
- Activities:
 - Epistemology jeopardy

Day 13: Challenges to ethics—relativism and egoism

Morning

- Cultural relativism
- From cultural to ethical relativism
- Psychological egoism
- Ethical egoism
- Activities:
 - Lecture and discussion

Afternoon

- Evaluating the tenability of relativism and egoism
- Activities:
 - Debate

Evening

- Readings:
 - Mill, Excerpts from *Utilitarianism*
 - Kant, Excerpts from the *Groundwork*
 - Aristotle, Excerpts from *Nicomachean Ethics*
- Activities:
 - Short paper topics distributed

Day 14: Major ethical theories

Morning

- Moral consequentialism
- Utilitarianism as a form of consequentialism
- Deontology
- Kantian deontology
- Activities:
 - Lecture and discussion
 - Assignment on trolley cases

Afternoon

- Virtue Ethics
- Begin work on short paper
- Activities:
 - Discussion of Aristotle
 - Ethics skits

Evening

- Continue work on short paper
- Readings:
 - Singer, *Famine, Affluence, and Morality*
 - O'Neill, *The Moral Perplexities of Famine Relief*

Day 15: Major ethical theories

Morning

- The Utilitarian and the Kantian response to Famine
- Wrap up and submit short paper
- Activities:
 - Debate on *Singer vs. O'Neill*