

COURSE INFORMATION

Summer 2011: Introduction to Philosophy (Basic Problems)
 PHIL001: 202 [MTWRF 2.20-3.35]: [220 Thomas]

CONTACT INFORMATION

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TEXTS	
John W. Carroll Ned Markosian	2010. <i>An Introduction to Metaphysics</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Morris, Michael	2007. <i>An Introduction to the Philosophy of Language</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

PART 1 — METAPHYSICS	
June 29–July 1	Carroll and Markosian, Chapter 1, Introduction, pp.1–19 <i>Voicethread Comment #1 (Introduction)</i>
July 5–July 8	July 6th – No Class Carroll and Markosian, Chapter 3, Freedom and Determinism, pp.45–78 <i>Voicethread Comment #2, Quiz #1</i>
July 11–July 15	Carroll and Markosian, Chapter 5, Personal identity, pp.103–132 Carroll and Markosian, Chapter 6, Mental states, pp.133–155 <i>Voicethread Comment #3</i>
July 18–July 22	Carroll and Markosian, Chapter 8, Material Objects, pp.184–226 <i>Quiz #2, Short Paper #1</i>
PART 2 — PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE	
July 25–July 29	Morris, Introduction, pp.1–4 Morris, Chapter 1, Locke and the nature of language, pp.5–20 <i>Voicethread Comment #4, Quiz #3</i>
Aug 1 – Aug 5	Morris, Chapter 2, Frege on Sense and reference, pp.21–48 Morris, Chapter 3, Russell on definite descriptions, pp.49–73
Aug 8 – Aug 10	Morris, Chapter 4, Kripke on proper names, pp.74–93 <i>Quiz #4</i>
Aug 12	<i>Short Paper #2 + Digital Presentation</i>

1. Course Description

This is a first course in philosophy. It assumes no prior experience in philosophy. In the course, we will investigate a number of topics in two central areas of contemporary philosophy: metaphysics and the philosophy of language. The primary goals of this course are to develop the ability to articulate, well-reasoned, and defensible answers to the above questions: (1) What is metaphysics? (2) Is freedom compatible with determinism? (3) How does a person persist through time? (4) How does the mind relate to the body? (5) What is a physical object and how do the parts of a physical object relate to the whole? (6) How do words refer to things? The secondary goals of this course are to develop the ability (1) to write in a concise and academically professional manner and (2) to engage in dialogue using social media.

2. Grade Evaluation, Scale, Breakdown

Grades will be rounded up from the *second* decimal point, e.g. 90.95 rounds up to 91.0 while 90.94 rounds down to 90.90. In the event that eLION does not allow for a particular grade (e.g. D+), you will simply be given the letter grade (e.g. if you have a D+ then you will receive a D, and if you have a C–, you will receive a C).

A: 91–100%;	C+: 79.0–79.9	F: 0–59.9
A–: 90.0–90.9	C: 71.0–77.9	INCOMPLETE
B+: 89.0–89.9	C–: 70–70.9	DROP
B: 81.0–88.9	D+: 69.0–69.9	
B–: 80–80.9	D: 60.0–68.9	

3. Explanation of Evaluation

There are four components to this course:

- (1) Participation / Attendance,
- (2) Online / Classroom Quizzes,
- (3) Two Short Papers,
- (4) Production of a voicethread plus regular voicethread participation.

3.1. Participation / Attendance / Voicethread Comments (20%)

Since the course is a combination of lecture and seminar format, regular and active participation is required. Although it is not essential that you have mastered the text, you are expected to have read the assignment before attending class and have made notes for which passages, terms, or arguments you think are important. In addition to being prepared for class, this course will require some amount of participation online through [voicethreads](#). Voicethread is a software that allows you to present information and comment on the work of others. You will be asked to comment on videos that introduce various topics through audio-recording devices (e.g. microphone, telephone) or webcam. In addition, you should feel free to comment on any voicethreads that your fellow classmates post.

3.2. Online / Classroom Quizzes (36%)

Assignments in the form of an examination (online or in-class) will be assigned periodically throughout the course. These quizzes will test a very rudimentary understanding of the philosophical texts and your comprehension of writing skills learned in this course. In preparation for quizzes, it is necessary that you have done the reading and have a general idea of its major claim(s), along with the mainline of its supporting argument. Some quizzes will allow you to make use of the text in question (and your notes), so it is to your advantage if you (1) bring the relevant texts to class and (2) mark or highlight the major claims/arguments of the text.

3.3. Two Short Papers (34%)

You will be asked to write two, short (2500 words) papers for this course. Each paper is geared around a writing workshop which is designed to develop your ability in summarize a text, argue for a particular thesis, or organize your thoughts. This paper should include at least the following four components: (1) the use of metadiscourse, (2) a bibliography, (3) at least one clearly identifiable argument, and (4) the effective use of quotations. A handout detailing these components will be made available via ANGEL. While the exact claim and theme of the paper is subject to your discretion, your paper must relate to one of the principal topics/reading of the course. In addition, you will be required to attend a peer-review session before you turn in your paper.

3.4. Digital Presentation (10%)

For one of your papers (Short Paper #1 or #2), you will be asked to create a digital presentation, upload it to voicethreads, and post a link to the voicethread on the classroom blog ([Philosophical Germs](#)). The goal of the presentation is to provide an overview of the topic and main argument of your paper. Ideally, you will want to create a presentation that (i) introduces your topic, including the main theories on that topic, and (ii) clearly articulate your thesis or stance on the issue, and (iii) roughly outline your argument for that position. A rubric and workflow file will be provided for you in class.

4. Late Work

If you are planning on taking a **Quiz/Notebook/Paper** late, you will need to clear this with the instructor *before* the day and time of the test. If the instructor is not informed that you will be taking the test late, a grade reduction of one letter grade is incurred for every day the test/notebook/paper is late. So if the due date is Tuesday at 3p.m. and you email me on Tuesday at 3.01p.m., you will lose a letter grade. You will not lose an additional letter grade until 3.01p.m. the next day (i.e. Wednesday).

5. Guides to Philosophical Literature

In preparing your final paper, you may find it necessary to do a minimal amount of additional research / reading. A number of supplementary essays can be found in ANGEL, but below are a number of general guides to philosophical literature.

5.1 General Guides

Bynagle, Hans E. 1986. *Philosophy, a guide to the reference literature*. Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
Tice, Terrence N. and Thomas P. Slavens. 1983. *Research guide to philosophy*. Chicago: American Library Association.

5.2 Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, & Biographical Sources

The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy. 1999. Ed. Robert Audi. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
The Oxford Classical Dictionary. 1996. Ed. Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Encyclopedia of Classical Philosophy. 1997. Ed. Donald J. Zeyl. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
The Encyclopedia of Philosophy. 1967. Ed. Paul Edwards. New York: Macmillan.
Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Supplement. 1996. Ed. Donald M. Borchert. New York: Simon & Schuster.
The Oxford Companion to Philosophy. 1995. Ed. Ted Honderich. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy. 1998. Ed. Edward Craig. New York: Routledge.
Biographical Dictionary of Twentieth-Century Philosophers. 1996. Eds. Stuart Brown, Diane Collinson, Robert Wilkinson. London and New York: Routledge.
The Dictionary of Eighteenth-Century British Philosophers. Eds. John W. Yolton, John Vladimir Price, and John Stephens. Bristol: Thoemmes Press.
Hypatia's Daughters: Fifteen hundred years of women philosophers. 1996. Ed. Linda Lopez McAlister. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Medieval Philosophers. 1992. Ed. Jeremiah Hackett. Detroit: Gale Research.

5.3 Directories for Journal Articles

Année Philologique, 1969–Present
ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials
DigiZeitschriften: The German Digital Journal Archive
FRANCIS
Historical Abstracts
IBZ: Internationale Bibliographie der Zeitschriftenliteratur
International Medieval Bibliography
Iter: Gateway to the Middle Ages and Renaissance
JSTOR
MLA Bibliography
Philosopher's Index, 1940–Present

5.4 Undergraduate Journals in Philosophy

After receiving comments and suggestions on your work, you may be interested in submitting your paper to a conference or an undergraduate journal. If this is something you are interested in pursuing, don't hesitate to contact me via email.

Aporia: <http://aporia.byu.edu/site.php?id=current>

Episteme: <http://www.denison.edu/academics/departments/philosophy/episteme.html>

The Lyceum: <http://lyceumphilosophy.com/>

6. Additional Administrative Information

6.1. Academic Misconduct

The general principles and policy relating to cheating and plagiarism, which are enforced in this class, can be found in the Penn State policy on academic misconduct. *Academic Integrity*: Academic dishonesty encompasses a wide range of activities, whether intentional or unintentional, that includes, but is not limited to: all forms of fraud, plagiarism, and any failure to cite explicitly all materials and sources used in one's work. Sanctions for these activities include, but are not limited to, failure in a course, removal from the degree program, failure in a course with an explanation in the permanent transcript of the cause for failure, suspension, and expulsion. If you are unclear about whether you or someone you know is engaging in academic misconduct, read the following: [University Statement on Academic Integrity](#)

6.2 Other Resources on Academic Misconduct

[PSU Academic Integrity](#)

[PSU ITS:](#)

[Plagiarism Tutor](#)

[Turnitin](#)

[PSU Teaching & Learning with Technology](#)

6.3. Disability

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the campus disability liaison as soon as possible. For additional information, check the university web site for [Disability Services](#).

6.4. Resources to Help with Research, Writing, Documentation, and Citation

[Information Literacy Tutorial](#)

[University Learning Center](#)

[Writing Center](#)

6.5. Use of Angel and email communication

Please check the webpage on the [ANGEL](#) website regularly. An online version of the syllabus is available there, and you will be notified of any cancellation of a course meeting there. If you need to contact me, send a well-constructed email to dwa132@psu.edu with an appropriate subject line (e.g. P120 Question) and with an appropriate address (e.g. "Dear David"). Failure to do either, or emailing me with multiple links attached ("check this youtube link") will result in your instructor deleting your email. Students are responsible for activity on their computer accounts so only send emails pertinent to the course. Also, please do not send correspondence from cellular telephones (e.g. Blackberries, etc.).

6.6. Drop procedures and Incompletes

Students who simply stop attending class, for whatever reason, without officially withdrawing from the course, will receive the grade of F. If you expect a refund, be aware that the date the withdrawal form is processed by Penn State registrar's office determines the amount of refund.

Consult the Register site for [drop procedures](#)

Consult the Handbook for taking an [Incomplete \(D/F\)](#)

6.7. Student Guidance, Discrimination, Sexual Harassment

If you are in need of psychological counseling, please do not hesitate to contact Penn State's [Counseling & Psychological Services](#) (phone: 814-863-0395). For any problem related to your studies, university policies and procedures, do not hesitate to seek the help of the [Student Affairs Services](#), your Academic Advisor, or arrange a meeting with your instructor who will help you obtain assistance through one of the above, or another, agency. Finally, if you think you may be a victim (or know someone who is a victim) of harassment, you may want to contact [Student Affairs Services](#), the [Affirmative Action Office](#), or the [Center for Women Students](#).

6.8. Classroom Environment

A number of factors figure into creating a healthy classroom environment. In order to facilitate such an environment, I ask you to obey the following: (1) the use of cell phones in any capacity is prohibited (please turn ringers/buzzers off, no text-messaging during class), (2) please do not begin to 'pack up' your belongings before your instructor has *explicitly* dismissed you, (3) please come to class rested, sleeping in class is strictly prohibited, (4) please do not do other work in class. If you are incapable of performing (1)–(4) or are disruptive in class, you will kindly be asked to leave the classroom.

6.9. Challenge Examination

For some courses, students may request a [challenge examination](#) as a substitute for completing the usual requirements of a course. If the examination is successfully completed the credits received are described as "credits by examination" ([policy 42-50](#)).

Elements of this syllabus are subject to modification due to unforeseen variables, catastrophic events, or other factors. The instructor will announce any of these changes in class.