



Nanchang University
PHI11: Introduction to Philosophy
(Last Updated in Jan. 2025)

Credit: 4

Contact Hours

This course is composed of 24 lecture sessions, 3 tutorial sessions and 9 office hours. Each lecture session takes 2 contact hours in length; each tutorial session takes 3 contact hours in length; There will be a Q-A review session (3 contact hours) and Final Exam (3 contact hours) at the end of this term. This course has 72 contact hours in total.

Course Description

In this course, you will read, discuss, and write about classical and contemporary texts in Western philosophy. The course covers important topics in philosophy, including (i) the existence of God, (ii) skepticism, (iii) ethics, (iv) free will, (v) personal identity, and (vi) the meaning of lie. During the term, you will write short weekly assignments, two longer papers, and a final exam.

Note: This Syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class.

Required Textbook

Textbook: *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, 5th edition, edited by John Perry, Michael Bratman, and John Fischer. Oxford University Press.

Grading

•Participation	10%
•Weekly Writing	10%
•Paper 1	25%
•Paper 2	35%
•Final Exam	20%

A+	96-100	A	90-95	A-	85-89
B+	82-84	B	78-81	B-	75-77
C+	71-74	C	66-70	C-	62-65
D	60-61	F	< 60		



Course Schedule

The course has 24 class sessions in total. All sessions are 2 contact hours in length. At the end of this term, there will be a Q-A review session(3 contact hours) and Final Exam (3 contact hours).

*Note: the course outline and required readings are subject to change.

Class 1:

Introduction

Class 2:

Plato *Euthyphro*

Pryor 'Guidelines on Reading Philosophy'

Class 3:

Plato *Crito*

Perry, et al. 'Logical Toolkit' 9-14

Class 4:

Overview of other Greek Philosophers

Class 5:

M Aquinas 'The Existence of God' 44-46

Class 6:

M Aquinas 'The Existence of God' 44-46 (Cont.)

(Paper 1 due in class)

Class 7:

Russel 'Why I am Not a Christian' selection: The First Cause Argument 55-56

Class 8:

Pryor 'Guidelines on Writing Philosophy'

Class 9:

Paley 'Natural Theology' 46-51

Class 10:

Russel 'Why I am Not a Christian' selection: The Argument from Design 57

Class 11:

Hume Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (selection)

Class 12:

Hume Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (selection)



Class 13:

Descartes Meditation 1

Class 14:

Descartes Meditations 2 & 3

Class 15:

Descartes Meditations 4 & 5

(Paper 2 due in class)

Class 16:

Descartes Meditation

Class 17:

Rachels 'The Challenge of Cultural Relativism'

Class 18:

Bentham 'The Principle of Utility' 457-460

Carritt 'Some Criticisms of Utilitarianism' 47-479

Class 19:

W Singer 'Famine, Affluence, and Morality' 495-503

R Perry, et al. The Trolley Problem

Class 20:

Frankfurt 'Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person' 430-439

Class 21:

*Holbach 'The Illusion of Free Will' Chisholm 'Human Freedom and the Self' 392-399

Class 22:

Paradox Day! Heap, Liar, and Surprise Exam

Class 23:

Perry 'A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality' night 1, 326-333

Perry 'A Dialogue...Immortality' nights 2 & 3, 333-346

Class 24:

W Dennett 'Where am I?' 385-392

R Nagel 'The Absurd' 768-774

Attending Policy

Regular and prompt attendance is required. Under ordinary circumstances, you may miss two



times without penalty. Each absence over this number will lower your course grade by a third of a letter and missing more than five classes may lead to a failing grade in the course. Arriving late and/or leaving before the end of the class period are equivalent to absences.

Policy on “Late Withdrawals”

In accordance with university policy, appeals for late withdrawal will be approved ONLY in case of medical emergency and similar crises.

Academic Honesty

All students are expected to do their own work. Instructors will fail assignments that show evidence of plagiarism or other forms of cheating, and will also report the student's name to the University administration. A student reported to the University for cheating is placed on disciplinary probation; a student reported twice is suspended or expelled.

General Expectations:

Students are expected to:

- Attend all classes and be responsible for all materials covered in class and otherwise assigned;
- Complete the day's required reading and assignments before class;
- Review the previous day's notes before class and make notes about questions you have about the previous class or the day's reading;
- Participate in class discussions and complete required written work on time;
- Refrain from texting, phoning or engaging in computer activities unrelated to class during the class period;
- While class participation is welcome, even required, you are expected to refrain from private conversations during the class period.

Special Needs or Assistance

Please contact the Administrative Office immediately if you have a learning disability, a medical issue, or any other type of problem that prevents professors from seeing you have learned the course material. Our goal is to help you learn, not to penalize you for issues which mask your learning.