

# UCOR 2500: Philosophy of the Human Person

Spring 2016

## Overview:

In this course, we will examine some of the most interesting topics in the Western philosophical tradition. Intended as a general introduction to philosophy, this course introduces students to its methods, some of its canonical source material, and some of its key questions. During the term, we will consider such topics as whether we can have knowledge of the external world; the nature of justice; how the mind figures in the physical world; whether we are truly free; and how we ought to live our lives. Not only will the course be devoted to these topics, it will also be a “tutorial” of sorts for students who may be interested in pursuing philosophy as a major or a minor. For example, it will address “what is philosophy?” and “how does one go about doing it?” For the non-majors (or for those who don’t yet know what they want to do yet), we will connect what we learn in the class with other disciplines, and recognize how philosophical modes of thinking and arguing (with its focus on clarity, criticism, and rigor) can be used to great effect in other disciplines.

## Course Objectives:

- Become Familiar with Different Areas of Philosophy Through Key Works
- Learn How to Read and Interpret Philosophical Texts
- Identify Different Forms of Argumentation
- Develop Strategies for Critically Evaluating Philosophical Positions
- Construct Arguments in Support of a Particular Position

**Required Materials:** Andrew Bailey, “First Philosophy: Concise Edition” 2nd edition (Broadview Press, 2011) **ISBN-13:** 978-1554810574 or **ISBN-10:** 1554810574  
*Electronic readings to supplement the text will be supplied.*

## Overview of Requirements:

Reading responses (10 @ 5 points each)	50 points
Participation	65 points
Paper 1	45 points
Paper 2	45 points
Final Paper	60 points
Exam 1	60 points
Exam 2	75 points
Final Exam	100 points
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	Total 500 points

**Reading Responses:** Reading Response Questions will be provided the weekend prior to class. Students should use the assigned reading to formulate answers to the questions. The answers should be printed out and brought to class the day of the assigned reading. The responses will be assessed for completion and content. The point of the reading responses is to get the student to engage with the text and participate in class discussion/activities. **Thus, the responses cannot be submitted by e-mail or dropped off.**

**Participation:** Students are expected to actively participate in class. This can be accomplished by actively listening, asking good questions, participating in class discussion/exercises, and attending office hours. In addition, it is important to be respectful of others. Allow people to speak and do not talk while others (including the instructor) is talking. Some of the topics in philosophy can be controversial, it is critical that we engage arguments and not people. Group work cannot be made up and the use of electronics, such as phones/computers/music players during class, may result in a lower participation grade. **Missed participation exercises cannot be made up.**

**Paper 1 & Paper 2:** Students are expected to write a 3-4 page critical paper, which will be assigned during class (see syllabus for dates). These papers will be submitted for a grade.

**Critical Paper (Final Draft):** The final paper is a revised version of either Paper 1 or Paper 2. It is worth 60 points and should be no longer than 6 pages. This paper is due June 2nd in class. It should be printed out, stapled, and be typed in 12 point font.

**Exams:** All exams will be taken in class. The format of the exams will vary and may include true and false, multiple choice, matching, short answer, and essay. I will discuss the format of each exam prior to its date. Note the dates of the exams on the calendar- these cannot be missed and will require documentation to make up. The final exam may be comprehensive.

### **Scales and Criteria for Grading:**

When converting total points to decimal grades the following scale will be used. To determine your overall class grade, add up all of the points you earned for each assignment, **multiply the total by two**, and use the following chart to determine your final grade for the course.

**Total Assignment/Decimal Points**

Letter Grade	Total Points Ranges
A	930-1000
A-	900-929
B+	870-899
B	830-869
B-	800-829
C+	770-799
C	730-769
C-	700-729
D+	670-699
D	630-669
D-	610-629

F	0-599
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**There will be no curves and no extra credit in this class.** You will not be graded relative to your fellow students. What this means is that it is possible for *everyone* to get an A (4.0) or an E (0.0) or anything in-between. **In order to pass the course you must complete all assignments with an additive percentage of 60% or higher.**

## General Information

**Attendance and Participation:** After the first two weeks, attendance will not be taken. However, attendance is very important for doing well in this course. We will be discussing numerous cases, examples, issues, and theories. In addition, philosophy cannot be done adequately in isolation. Thus, attendance, participation, discussion, and asking questions, are all very important for academic success. In addition, be on time and stay for the entire class. If you must leave early, do not disrupt the class. **Should any circumstances cause you to miss more than one week of class, you should consider retaking the course at a more convenient time- since you will miss too much of the material to grasp content or meet learning expectations.**

**Cheating and Plagiarism:** You are responsible for upholding the College's standards of academic honesty. Therefore, you should avoid engaging in illegitimate forms of help, looking at copies of exams from current and previous years, and/or peeking at someone else's work during an exam. If you are caught violating the College's standards of academic honesty, you will be reported to the appropriate channels regarding Academic Conduct.

**Electronic Devices:** *All* electronic devices may only be used in the classroom with the permission of the instructor or Disability Services to meet an accommodation. Activities that are not related to the course, such as checking e-mail, texting, on-line gaming, and social networking, are disruptive to the class.

**Snacks:** Beverages and/or snacks are allowed in class. Please notify the instructor if you have a food allergy or religious observation/restriction that needs to be considered. Be considerate and clean up any spills/messes.

**E-mail Policy:** I reserve the right to have 24 hours to respond to student e-mails, especially if the e-mail is over the weekend or late at night.

**Students Seeking Accommodation:** ADA statement- if you believe that you qualify for course adaptations or special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, it is your responsibility to contact Disability Support Services Coordinator and provide the appropriate documentation. If you have already documented a disability or other condition or if you have emergency medical information or special needs that I should know about, please notify me the first week of class.

# TENTATIVE COURSE READINGS AND CALENDAR

*I reserve the right to change the syllabus or schedule for any reason.*

## Week 1      **CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS**

- 03/29** Introduction, Syllabus, Welcome Exercise  
What is Philosophy?      Bailey pp. 1-4
- 03/31** A Brief Introduction to Arguments      Bailey pp. 5-11  
Introductory Tips on Reading      Bailey pp. 12-14  
and Writing Philosophy

## Week 2      **PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION- Does God exist?**

- 04/05** Introduction & St. Anselm *Proslogion*      Bailey pp. 21-23  
Guanilo's Objection (Paragraph 6)      Bailey pp. 25-26  
St. Anselm's Reply 3      Bailey p. 28  
**Paper 1 Assigned**
- 04/07** St. Aquinas *Summa Theologiae (3<sup>rd</sup> article)*      Bailey pp. 41-42  
J.L. Mackie "Evil and Omnipotence"      Bailey pp. 84-91

## Week 3      **SOCIAL/POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY- Issues of Justice**

- 04/12** Thomas Hobbes *Leviathan*      Bailey pp. 557-568
- 04/14** John Stuart Mill *On Liberty*      Bailey pp. 608-618  
Iris Marion Young "Five Faces of Oppression" pdf

## Week 4      **ETHICS- How Ought We to Live Our Lives?**

- 04/19**      **Exam 1**
- 04/21** Plato *Republic*      Bailey pp. 601-617

## Week 5      **ETHICS, cont.**

- 04/26** Mill and Kant-      Bailey pp. 458-460 top paragraph  
Utilitarianism & Deontological Ethics      Bailey pp. 475-480 top paragraph
- 04/28** Virginia Held      Bailey pp. 515-518  
"Fem. Transformations of Moral Theory"  
**Paper 1 Due**

## Week 6      **ANIMAL ETHICS**

- 05/03** Mary Midgley "Is a Dolphin a Person?"      Bailey pp. 527-534
- 05/05** Video "Earthlings"      No Assigned Reading  
**Paper 2 Assigned**

Week 7	<b>METAPHYSICS - Are we truly free?</b>	
	<b>05/10 Exam 2</b>	
	<b>05/12</b> Paul Rée <i>The Illusion of Free Will</i>	Bailey pp. 337-348
Week 8	<b>METAPHYSICS, cont.</b>	
	<b>05/17</b> C. A. Campbell "On Selfhood and Godhood"	Bailey pp. 351-362
	<b>05/19</b> A. J. Ayer "Freedom and Necessity"	Bailey pp. 365-370
Week 9	<b>EPISTEMOLOGY- Is the external world the way it appears to be?</b>	
	<b>05/24</b> René Descartes <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> <b>Paper 2 Due</b>	Bailey pp. 122-128
	<b>05/26</b> Descartes, cont.	Bailey pp. 135-139
Week 10	<b>EPISTEMOLOGY TODAY</b>	
	<b>05/31</b> Linda Martín Alcoff "Sotomayor's Reasoning"	pdf
	<b>06/02 Review</b> <b>Final Paper Due</b>	
Week 11	<b>Finals Week</b>	