

WARNING: THIS CLASS WILL MAKE YOU THINK

Phil 11001: Introduction to Philosophy

Deborah C. Smith (Dr. Deb), Professor of Philosophy

Spring 2024

MW 12:30-1:45, BOW 206

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Dr. Deb's Office Hours: MW 9:30-11:00, MW 2:00-3:00, and by appointment.

<http://www.kent.edu/philosophy>

Required Texts and Readings:

Philosophical readings made available electronically via Canvas.
Handouts made available in hardcopy in class.

Course Description: Does God exist? In the absence of good evidence either way, is it rational to believe that God exists? Is free will compatible with causal determination? Is free will compatible with sub-atomic indeterminacy? What is the nature of the mind? How is the mind related to the body? Is artificial intelligence possible? How do I know that I am not dreaming right now or that I am not alone in the universe? How is it possible to know anything about the external world? Is skepticism a reasonable view to hold? This course will examine some of the many different ways philosophers have answered these questions. We will examine not only the answers given by various philosophers both historical and contemporary, but also their reasons for providing the answers that they give. In addition, students will be encouraged to develop and defend their own reasoned answers to these and other philosophical questions.

Diversity Element: In this course, we will examine how non-Western approaches to philosophy differ from Western approaches with a special emphasis on the role of a practice and the notion of beginner's mind in Zen philosophy.

Outcomes: Recognize diverse methods and subject areas of philosophy. Demonstrate an understanding of how to examine questions and issues from diverse perspectives. Demonstrate exposure to and knowledge of main views and issues covered.

NOTICE OF MY COPYRIGHT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS. *Any intellectual property displayed or distributed to students during this course (including but not limited to powerpoints, notes, quizzes, examinations) by the professor remains the intellectual property of the professor. This means that the student may not distribute, publish or provide such intellectual property to any other person or entity for any reason, commercial or otherwise, without the express written permission of the professor.*

Course Requirements:

Reading:

- You are expected to complete all of the assigned reading by class time on the day for which it is assigned.
- Most of the reading assignments are listed in the schedule of readings and assignments below. However, I reserve the right to add additional readings.
- There is quite a lot of reading assigned in this course and some of it can be quite technical. Expect to have to read it very slowly and to spend a relatively long time doing the reading.
- You should read the assigned material at least twice (once before we discuss it in class and once after) to make sure that you understand it.
- It is highly recommended that you take notes on the reading and write down any questions you have so that I can answer them in class.
- *You are responsible for all material covered in the assigned readings whether or not it is explicitly covered in class.*
- The class handouts are meant to accompany the lecture and should be read more carefully afterward.
- You are expected to bring all relevant handouts with you to class and have access to the relevant readings in class.

Note: it is generally expected that a University student will spend two hours outside of class for every hour spent in class doing the reading, thinking about the material, and studying for exams. In this case, that amounts to an average of six hours a week outside class devoted to such activities by the average student.

Attendance and engagement in class meetings:

- You are expected to attend every class meeting and be positively engaged with the material being discussed. Such engagement includes but is not limited to, taking notes, asking questions, explicating passages of the reading, providing critical analysis of the reading, and participating in class discussion. Note that you cannot make a positive contribution to discussion if you have not done the assigned reading.
- I will hand out a sign-up sheet or otherwise take note of those present at the beginning of class.
- If, for any reason, you cannot avoid missing a class meeting, it is your responsibility to contact me *before* the class so that we can arrange for you to make up any assignments scheduled for that day. I also highly recommend that you borrow lecture notes from a classmate should you miss a class.
- Do not make a habit of coming to class late or leaving early. This is not only disruptive to the other students, but may also cause you to miss an important part of the lecture.
- Make sure that phones and other electronic devices are turned off prior to the start of class. Tablets or laptops should be used only for the purpose of taking notes or accessing course materials.
- Unless you have received my explicit permission to do so, refrain from recording the lecture in any way.

- In the event of a campus closure or instructor quarantine/isolation, we will meet virtually via Teams. You will be informed of such an occurrence via email and provided a Teams link.
- From time to time and for various reasons (e.g., university closure, instructor illness, to catch up if we fall too far behind), I may record a lecture and post it in Canvas. Students will be notified of any posted recordings via email and are expected to view such recordings prior to the next in-person class.
- *You are responsible for all material covered in class whether or not it is explicitly covered in the readings.*
- Attendance and engagement will account for 10% of your grade in this course.

Meditation practice:

- In connection with our reading of *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, all students will be expected to engage in a practice of meditation.
- The type of meditation we will practice in this course is a version of the secular (non-religious) mindfulness meditation developed at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center for the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program.
- On a few occasions, we will engage in a guided group meditation in class. However, students are expected to continue and expand upon their practice outside of class. Details are listed in the schedule of readings and assignments below.
- Questions on quizzes and exams will ask you to reflect on your meditation practice and the insights you have gained from it concerning the nature of non-Western approaches to philosophy.

Graded Material:

There will be weekly quizzes, two midterm exams, and a final exam. The details are as follows:

- **Weekly Quizzes:** quizzes will be given at the beginning of class on either Monday or Wednesday (never both). Quizzes will generally be true/false quizzes on the reading. Each quiz will be worth 10 points. However, only your highest ten scores will count toward your final grade. So, there will be a total of 100 points coming from weekly quizzes. Unless you have spoken with me previously, if you miss class or come too late to take the quiz, you will not be allowed to make it up.
- **Midterm Exams:** Each midterm exam will cover the material on which you have not been previously tested. Part of the exam will be short answer (true/false, matching, or fill in the blank) and part of the exam will be essay questions. Each midterm exam will be worth 100 points. So, there will be a total of 200 points coming from midterm exams. Be prepared to take the exams on the date listed in the schedule of readings and assignments. If you have an acceptable reason for missing the scheduled exam, see me *before* the exam date to make arrangements for a make-up exam.
- **Final Exam:** The final exam will be a comprehensive exam administered on the day scheduled for our final. Part of the exam will be short answer (true/false, matching, or fill in the blank) and part of the exam will be essay questions. Although the exam is cumulative, expect there to be more questions on the material on which you have not previously been tested. The final will be worth 150 points.

- In addition to the points coming from quizzes, midterm exams, and the final, **there will be 50 points reserved to reflect your attendance and engagement in class meetings.** Students who miss six or more class sessions during the semester (whether or not the absence was excused) should expect to receive a 0 for attendance and engagement. *No student with a 0 score for attendance and participation will receive an A grade in this course.*

You must take both midterm exams and take the final exam to pass this course with a D or higher. However, doing so does not guarantee a passing grade.

Your final grade will be determined by your total points (out of 500) in the course as follows:

A	450-500	(90%+)
A-	425-449	(85%+)
B+	400-424	(80%+)
B	375-399	(75%+)
B-	350-374	(70%+)
C+	325-449	(65%+)
C	300-324	(60%+)
C-	275-299	(55%+)
D	250-274	(50%+)
F	0-249	(<50%)

Note that you can calculate your grade at any time by dividing your total points by the total possible points at that time. (Once you've taken 10 or more quizzes, remember to include only your highest 10 quiz scores) The result is a percentage that can be located on the scale above.

There are no extra credit points available. *Come see me during office hours or schedule an appointment as soon as you feel that you are having difficulty with any of the course material.*

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

(This schedule is tentative. You are responsible for knowing about any changes announced in class.)

What is Philosophy?

Week 1 (January 14-20):

- M *No Class, Monday, January 15, Martin Luther King Jr. Day*
- W *Introduction to the Course; What is Philosophy? I*
Reading: Syllabus (familiarize yourself with course requirements)

Week 2 (January 21-27):

- M *What is Philosophy? II*
Reading: Curd, *Introduction to Argument and Analysis*
 Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (hereafter 'ZM'), preface, introduction,
 and prologue, pp. 9-22

Reason and Religious Belief

W *Deductive Arguments for the Existence of God: the Ontological Argument*
Reading: Anselm, “The Ontological Argument,” Chapters 2-5 of the *Proslogium*

Week 3 (January 28-February 3):

M *Deductive Arguments for the Existence of God: the Cosmological Argument*
Reading: Aquinas, “The Five Ways,” Vol I. pt. I, q. II, art. III of the *Summa Theologica*
ZM: “Posture,” “Breathing,” “Control,” pp. 25-34
Practice: 5 minute sitting meditation at least three times this week: mindfulness of breathing

W *Inductive Arguments for the Existence of God: the Teleological (Design) Argument*
Reading: Paley, “The Argument from Design,” Chapters 1, 2, and 5 from *Natural Theology*
Gould, “The Panda’s Thumb”

Week 4 (February 4-10):

M *The Problem of Evil*
Reading: Mackie, “Evil and Omnipotence”
ZM: “Mind Waves,” “Mind Weeds,” “The Marrow of Zen,” pp. 34-38
Practice: 10 minute sitting meditation at least three times this week: mindfulness of breathing

W *Continue the Problem of Evil; Begin Pascal’s Wager*
Reading: Pascal, “The Wager”

Week 5 (February 11-17):

M *Continue Pascal’s Wager*
Reading: ZM: “No Dualism,” “Bowing,” “Nothing Special,” pp.39-49
Practice: 10 minute sitting meditation at least three times this week: 5 minutes mindfulness of breathing and 5 minutes of mindfulness of body

W *Reason and Religious Belief Catch Up and Review*

Week 6 (February 18-24):

M **First Midterm Exam**
Practice: 10 minute sitting meditation at least three times this week: 5 minutes mindfulness of breathing and 5 minutes of mindfulness of body

The Paradox of Free Will and Moral Responsibility

- W *The Paradox of Free Will; Incompatibilism (“Hard Determinism”)*
Reading: Pereboom, “Why We Have No Free Will and Can Live Without It”
ZM: “Single-Minded Way,” “Repetition,” “Zen and Excitement,” pp. 53-59

Week 7 (February 25-March 2):

- M *The Libertarian Theory of Free Will*
Reading: Chisholm, “Human Freedom and the Self,” pp. 418-425
ZM: “Right Effort,” “No Trace,” “God Giving,” pp. 59-71
Practice: 15 minute sitting meditation at least three times this week: 5 minutes mindfulness of breathing, 5 minutes of mindfulness of body, 5 minutes mindfulness of sounds

- W *The Compatibilist Theory of Free Will (“Soft Determinism”)*
Reading: Ayer, “Freedom and Necessity”

Week 8 (March 3-9):

- M *Freedom and Moral Responsibility*
Reading: Wolf, “Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility”
ZM: “Mistakes in Practice,” “Limiting Your Activity,” “Study Yourself,” pp. 71-79
Practice: 15 minute sitting meditation at least three times this week: 5 minutes mindfulness of breathing, 5 minutes of mindfulness of body, 5 minutes mindfulness of sounds

Mind and Its Place in Nature

- W *The Mind/Body Problem: Mind/Body Dualism*
Reading: Gertler, “In Defense of Mind-Body Dualism”

Week 9 (March 10-16):

- M *The Mind/Body Problem: the Identity Theory*
Reading: Carruthers, “The Mind is the Brain”
ZM: “To Polish a Tile,” “Constancy,” “Communication,” pp. 80-89
Practice: 15 minute sitting meditation at least three times this week: 5 minutes mindfulness of breathing, 5 minutes of mindfulness of body, 5 minutes mindfulness of sounds; eat at least one meal mindfully

- W *The Mind/Body Problem: Functionalism and Eliminative Materialism*
Reading: Churchland, “Functionalism and Eliminative Materialism”

Week 10 (March 17-23):

M *Minds and Machines*

Reading: Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence"

ZM: "Negative and Positive," "Nirvana, the Waterfall," pp. 90-95

Practice: 15 minute sitting meditation at least three times this week: 5 minutes mindfulness of breathing, 5 minutes of mindfulness of body, 5 minutes mindfulness of sounds; eat at least one meal mindfully

W *Continue Minds and Machines*

Reading: Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs"

Week 11 (March 24-30): *Spring Break, No Classes*

Week 12 (March 31-April 6):

M *Personal Identity*

Reading: Sider, "Personal Identity"

ZM: "Traditional Zen Spirit," "Transiency," "The Quality of Being," pp. 99-107

Practice: 15 minute sitting meditation at least three times this week: 5 minutes mindfulness of breathing, 5 minutes of mindfulness of body, 5 minutes mindfulness of sounds; eat at least one meal mindfully

W *Continue Personal Identity*

Reading: Perry, "A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality"

Week 13 (April 7-13):

M *Continue Personal Identity; Mind and Its Place in Nature Catch Up and Review*

Reading: Daniel Dennett, "Where Am I?"

ZM: "Naturalness," "Emptiness," "Readiness, Mindfulness," pp. 107-115

Practice: Do at least one 30 minute sitting meditation this week; continue daily mindfulness

W **Second Midterm Exam**

Human Knowledge: Its Grounds and Limits

Week 14 (April 14-20):

M *The Nature of Human Knowledge and the Problem of Skepticism*

Reading: Descartes, "Meditations on First Philosophy" (first Meditation)

Pollock, "A Brain in a Vat"

Chisholm, "The Problem of the Criterion"

ZM: "Believing in Nothing," "Attachment, Non-attachment," "Calmness," pp. 116-123

Practice: 15 minute sitting meditation at least three times this week; 10 minute walking meditation at least one time this week

W *Non-Skeptical Epistemologies: Descartes*

Reading: Descartes, "Meditations on First Philosophy" (Meditations 2-6)

Week 15 (April 21-27):

M *Non-Skeptical Epistemologies: Locke*
Reading: Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* Book II, Chapter VIII
Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* Book IV, Chapter XI
ZM: “Experience, Not Philosophy,” “Original Buddhism,” “Beyond
Consciousness,” pp. 123-130
Practice: 15 minute sitting meditation at least three times this week; 10 minute
walking meditation at least one time this week

W *Non-Skeptical Epistemologies: Berkeley*
Reading: Berkeley, “Of the Principles of Human Knowledge,” Sections 1-50 (pp. 11-
24)

Week 16 (April 28-May 4):

M *Non-Skeptical Epistemologies: Moore and Russell;*
Science, Skepticism, and Explanation
Reading: Moore, “Proof of an External World,” pp. 145-150
Russell, “Appearance, Reality” and “The Existence of Matter” (Chapters I
and II of *The Problems of Philosophy*)
Salmon, “An Encounter with David Hume”
ZM: “Buddha’s Enlightenment,” “Epilogue: Zen Mind,” pp. 131-138
Practice: 15 minute meditation in the “corpse” position at least three times this week;
do at least one 30 minute sitting meditation this week

W *Continue Science, Skepticism, and Explanation; Reflections on Philosophy*

Final exam: Wednesday, May 8th, 10:15-12:30

Official Syllabus Statements

PHIL 11001: Introduction to Philosophy Spring 2024: MW 12:30-1:45 EST

Deborah C. Smith, Professor of Philosophy

Office: Bowman 320K

Email: dcsmith1@kent.edu

Office Hours: MW 9:30-11:00, 2:00-3:00, and by appointment

Course Specific Statements:

Attendance Policy: I will hand out a sign-up sheet or otherwise take note of those present at the beginning of class. Attendance and participation will account for 10% of your grade.

Final Exam: The final exam will be cumulative, but will emphasize the material covered since the last midterm and on which you have not previously been tested. The final exam in this course is worth 30% of your grade.

For more information about course content and requirements, see the detailed course syllabus.

General Statements:

Notice of My Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights: Any intellectual property displayed or distributed to students during this course (including but not limited to PowerPoints, recordings of lectures, notes, content handouts, quizzes, examinations) by the professor remains the intellectual property of the professor. This means that the student may not distribute, publish or provide such intellectual property to any other person or entity for any reason, commercial or otherwise, without the express written permission of the professor. Additionally, students may not distribute or publish recordings and/or links to live classroom presentations, lectures, and/or class discussions.

Students with Disabilities: University policy 3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through Student Accessibility Services (contact 330-672-3391 or visit www.kent.edu/sas for more information on registration procedures).

Academic Complaints: The Philosophy Department Grievance Procedure for handling student grievances is in conformity with the Student Academic Complaint Policy and Procedures

set down as University Policy 3342-16 in the *University Policy Register*. For information concerning the details of the grievance procedure, please see the departmental chairperson.

Academic Dishonesty: University policy 3-01.8 deals with the problem of academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism. None of these will be tolerated in this class. The sanctions provided in this policy will be used to deal with any violations. If you have any questions, please read the policy at

http://www.kent.edu/policyreg/policydetails.cfm?customel_datapageid_1976529=2037779.

Religion Accommodations: The University welcomes individuals from all different faiths, philosophies, religious traditions, and other systems of belief, and supports their respective practices. In compliance with University policy and the Ohio Revised Code, the University permits students to request class absences for up to three (3) days, per term, in order to participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or spiritual organization. Students will not be penalized as a result of any of these excused absences.

The request for excusal must be made, in writing, during the first fourteen (14) days of the semester and include the date(s) of each proposed absence or request for alternative religious accommodation. The request must clearly state that the proposed absence is to participate in religious activities. The request must also provide the particular accommodation(s) you desire.

You will be notified by me if your request is approved, or, if it is approved with modification. I will work with you in an effort to arrange a mutually agreeable alternative arrangement. For more information regarding this Policy you may contact the Student Ombuds (ombuds@kent.edu).

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement: Kent State University is committed to the creation and maintenance of equitable and inclusive learning spaces. This course is a learning environment where all will be treated with respect and dignity, and where all individuals will have an equitable opportunity to succeed. The diversity that each student brings to this course is viewed as a strength and a benefit. Dimensions of diversity and their intersections include but are not limited to: race, ethnicity, national origin, primary language, age, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, mental and physical abilities, socio-economic status, family/caregiver status, and veteran status.

Land Acknowledgement Statement: We acknowledge that the lands of Kent State University were the previous homes of people who were removed from this area without their consent by the colonial practices of the United States government. Before removal, these groups created networks that extended from Wyoming to the Florida Coast and Appalachia and to the northern reaches of Lake Superior. These societies included people of the Shawnee, Seneca-Cayuga, Delaware, Wyandots, Ottawa and Miami. We honor their lives – both past and present – and strive to move beyond remembrance toward reflection and responsibility through honest accounts of the past and the development of cultural knowledge and community.