

Instructor: Dr. Wai-hung Wong

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Office hours: MWF 10:00-11:00 & 12:00-1:00

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a General Education course, satisfying Area C3. The aim of this course is to introduce students to some of the main philosophical problems by engaging them in critical thinking. The leading idea is that the best way to learn philosophy is to learn to *philosophize*, rather than to memorize facts about philosophers and their arguments. To achieve this aim, there have to be small group discussions and presentations besides lectures. The course focuses on philosophical problems in the theory of knowledge, metaphysics, and the philosophy of mind; topics covered include:

- the nature of philosophical doubt (how far can you doubt your own beliefs, including the most ordinary ones that you rely on in your everyday life?)
- rationalism versus empiricism (what is the ultimate source of knowledge? reason or experience?)
- materialism versus dualism (is everything that exists material? what is the relation between mind and body?)
- arguments for the existence of God
- free will and determinism (given that the physical world is governed by causal laws, can our will and our action still be free?)
- personal identity (what is it for you now and you ten years ago to be the very same person?)

TEXTS

- Adam Morton, *Philosophy in Practice: An Introduction to the Main Questions*, 2nd edition (Blackwell 2004)
- Additional material posted on WebCT

GRADING

Your course grade is based on the score you get out of a total of 200 points:

- (i) 40 points for attendance: you may miss 3 classes with no penalty; after that, you lose 2 point for each class you miss unless you have very good reason for missing that class.
- (ii) 100 points for 5 quizzes: you get at most 20 points for each quiz.
- (iii) 20 points for two reading reports: you get 10 points for each report.
- (iv) 40 points for a final paper of about 1,200 words.

* *This class has no final exam.*

Grade conversion:

181-200 points : A	171-180 points : A-	161-170 points : B+
151-160 points : B	141-150 points : B-	131-140 points : C+
121-130 points : C	111-120 points : C-	101-110 points : D
100 and below : F		

Lecture Schedule

1/28-2/1	The Contract (pp.xii-xv) Certainty and Doubt: 1.1-1.5, 1.7
2/4-2/8	Jonathan Glover, "Acceptance: The Case of Jim Keegstra" Certainty and Doubt: 1.9- 1.11, 1.14
2/11-2/15	Sources of Conviction: 2.1-2.11 Richard Dawkins, "Good and Bad Reasons for Believing" <i>First quiz on 2/18</i>
2/18-2/22	Rationalism: 3.1-3.13 <i>Reading report on Dawkins article due on 2/25</i>
2/25-2/29	Induction and Deduction: 5.1-5.5, 5.7
3/3-3/7	Induction and Deduction: 5:8-5:12 <i>Second quiz on 3/10</i>
3/10-3/14	The Retreat from Certainty: 6.1-6.5, 6.10
3/24-3/28	Empiricism: 9.1-9.12 <i>Third quiz on 4/2</i>
4/2-4/4	Beyond Empiricism: 10.1, 10.3-10.8
4/7-4/11	Beyond Empiricism: 10.9, 10:11-10.13
4/14-4/18	Materialism and Dualism: 12.1-12.4; 12.6 Daniel Dennett, "Where Am I?" <i>Fourth quiz on 4/21</i>
	<i>Reading report on the Dennett article due on 4/21</i>
4/21-4/25	Materialism and Dualism: 12.4, 12.6, 12.8-12.12
4/28-5/2	The Metaphysics of Color: 14.1-14.3
5/5-5/9	Free will and Determinism: 14.4-14.7 <i>Fifth quiz on 5/12</i>
5/12-5/16	Personal Identity: 14.8-14.10 Meanings of Lives: 14:11 <i>Final paper on Jonathan Haidt, "The Pursuit of Happiness" due on 5/16</i>