

Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness

Spencer Paulson

Table of Contents:

- I. Teaching Statement
- II. Course Evaluations and Student Testimonials
- III. Sample Syllabi
- IV. Diversity Statement

I. Teaching Statement

Plato said that Philosophy begins in wonder. I don't disagree, but I would add that, when acknowledged, cognitive dissonance is a kind of wonder. I try to generate wonder by generating a healthy form of cognitive dissonance.

When teaching undergraduates, my job is to help the students develop their philosophical acumen. Thinking philosophically is hard work, so it is important to get the students in a frame of mind where they want to put in the work. To this end, I leverage the plasticity of the discipline to my advantage. With other disciplines, you have to play by the rules or not play at all. In philosophy, everything is up for grabs. I illustrate this point in my 100-level "Philosophy & Persons" by using the syllabus to tell a story about metaphilosophy. The recurring motif throughout the story is the question: which questions should philosophers be asking and how should they go about trying to answer them? Each module of the course focuses on a different answer and a different reason to do philosophy. Along the way we consider answers to many classic first-order philosophical questions, but we do so just as much to learn about what philosophy is and what it could be as we do to answer those questions themselves. In fact, students are encouraged to ask why we are considering those questions rather than others. Once they begin to ask questions of this sort, they are doing philosophy. This tactic enables me to draw a diverse array of students into the conversation. I draw them in by showing them the malleability of the discipline, part of which involves showing them how it can be used to address the questions that concern them. I have found that when teaching undergraduates, many of them are remarkably good at anticipating counterarguments that are wellknown among professional philosophers. I use this to my advantage to build their confidence. Some empirical work (e.g., Lindsay 2015; Wellington 2010) indicates that interest in philosophy strongly correlates with the sense that one is good at it. One way I promote self-confidence in the classroom is by acknowledging, when appropriate, their contribution as the sort that a professional might make.

I hope to do something similar with the design of future courses. Much recent work in Epistemology has had as much to do with the state of the discipline as answers to first-order philosophical questions. Epistemology is an under-explored frontier, and I think I can get students

excited about it by getting them to think about it in that way. Something similar applies in the areas of Philosophy of Mind that interest me most.

Asking metaphilosophical questions is a good way to draw people in because students skeptical of the value of philosophy have inchoate metaphilosophical beliefs. If I can get them to articulate those beliefs, then I can show them that they don't really dislike philosophy, just a particular way of doing it. Relatedly, other disciplines sneak a fair amount of philosophy in through the back door. A good way of drawing the skeptical economics student (for example) into the conversation is to show them that they are already committed to some substantive philosophical theses (e.g., about what rationality is). These theses may be true, but like every philosophical thesis, they are incompatible with other things that seem obviously true. Just showing a student that is sometimes enough to show them both what philosophy is and why it is worthwhile.

The merits of a question-centered approach to pedagogy have been confirmed empirically (see Wood 2003). By structuring curricula around an open-ended problem, students become more involved because they no longer see the course material as moves to be rehearsed and mastered for an exam, but rather as a set of problems they can venture (along with the authors of the assigned reading) to solve.

I should note, however, that my pedagogy is a work in progress, and I am always eager to experiment with new approaches. For example, I have seen others have success with in-class debates and some empirical work appears to support its viability (e.g., Brogan & Brogan 1995). Soon I will begin to introduce in-class debate assignments into the course mechanics of my courses at junctures where there are relatively intuitive arguments for and against a particular answer to the question under consideration.

Sources Cited:

Brogan, B.R. and Brogan, W.A. (1995). The Socratic Questioner: Teaching and Learning in the Dialogical Classroom, *The Educational Forum*, 59/3: 288-296.

Lindsay, S. (2015). What Works for Doctoral Students in Completing Their Thesis? *Teaching in Higher Education* 20 (2): 183-96.

Wellington, J. (2010). More than a Matter of Cognition: An Exploration of Affective Writing Problems of Postgraduate Students and Their Possible Solutions'. *Teaching in Higher Education* 15 (2): 135-50.

Wood, D.F. (2003). ABC of Learning and Teaching in Medicine: Problem Based Learning. *BMJ* 326 (7384): 328-330.

II. Course Evaluations and Comments

Instructor of Record

Course	<i>Philosophy 130 Philosophy & Persons Fall 2021</i>	<i>Philosophy 130 Philosophy & Persons Fall 2022</i>
Instructor effectively presented content	4	4.4
Instructor clearly articulated standards of performance	4.1	4.5
Instructor provided guidance with difficulties/questions	4.1	4.5
Instructor provided constructive feedback	4.3	4.3
The course developed critical thinking	4.1	4.1
The course content was effectively organized	3.9	4.3

5-point scale: 1=unsatisfactory; 2=fair; 3=good; 4=very good; 5=excellent.

Teaching Assistant

Course	<i>Philosophy 313 Kant's Critique of Pure Reason Fall 2019</i>	<i>Philosophy 210 Early Modern Philosophy Spring 2020</i>	<i>Philosophy 255 Theory of Knowledge Spring 2022</i>
TA was able to answer questions adequately	5.22	5.58	5.13
TA was well prepared for each section	4.67	5.42	5.25
TA communicated ideas in a clear manner	5.11	5.18	4.75
TA showed strong interest in teaching the course	4.78	5.58	5.38

6-point scale: 1=Very Low, 6=Very High

Student Testimonials

As Teaching Assistant

PHIL 313 (Kant's Critique of Pure Reason)

“Mr. Paulson has a great ability to answer questions from different angles and he can always provide source materials to help students further solidify and expand their grasp of the class topics. Mr. Paulson also has the indispensable ability to reference philosophers (ancient and modern) that students are already familiar with to help us better learn.”

“Spencer was an extremely valuable component for the teaching of the material.”

“I think Spencer did a great job of explaining the text in a way that is actually comprehensible. and that is honestly incredible because [the Professor] could barely do that.”

“Spencer was great at translating Kant into understandable English for us when discussing the course material (and that's no small feat either. Hats off to you, Spencer). He also had bountiful recommendations for secondary source material to help contextualize Kant's writings.” “Spencer

was extremely helpful in explaining Kant's ideas, as it was impossible to understand from the lectures alone.”

PHIL 210 (Early Modern Philosophy)

“Spencer is a fun and engaging TA who took the hard task of leading a discussion section for an intro philosophy class over zoom and actually succeeded. We had some great conversations, he really helped us understand the material, and he left some great feedback on the papers he graded for us!”

“He helped a lot one on one. Also, I like the strategy of asking students to ask questions in discussion groups.”

PHIL 255 (Theory of Knowledge)

“Spencer is a fantastic TA. He ran discussions based on what the students wanted to talk about, and the activities and topics for conversation that he prepared were always interesting and relevant. He was very clear with his policies from the beginning, and he made sure to communicate his availability and even shared with us materials that we could explore outside the course. I met with Spencer twice to talk about my midterm and final essays, and both times he spent over an hour talking to me to make sure I understood the concepts I was writing about. Spencer is great, and he is going to be an amazing professor one day!”

“Good at leading discussions and explaining complicated ideas. He is also good at understanding students' ideas even when they are not well versed.”

“He led great discussions and really helped us understand course ideas. He was also helpful outside of class in responding to emails.”

As Primary Instructor

Philosophy and Persons

“Paulsen (sic) is obviously extremely passionate about philosophy and makes the class more interesting by using real-world examples, having clear grading criteria, and engaging in lively discussion about relevant topics in class.”

III. Sample Syllabi

Introduction to Ethics

PHIL 275-001

Instructor: Spencer Paulson (spaulson@luc.edu)

T, Th 4:15-5:30

Cuneo Hall 202

Office Hours By Appointment

Introduction

What makes right acts right? What is the relation between the right and the good? Are morale requirements rules meant to bring about good outcomes? Or are they side-constraints on how we may pursue the goods? What is the relation between properties of character (e.g., honest; just) and properties of acts (e.g., telling the truth on a particular occasion)? These questions will guide our study of prominent moral theories including cultural relativism; divine command theory; utilitarianism; deontological ethics; social contract theory; ethical intuitionism; virtue ethics and feminist care ethics.

Course Mechanics

Prerequisites: None

Required Reading: We will read Julia Driver's *Ethics: The Fundamentals*; David Gauthier's *Morals by Agreement*; and T.M. Scanlon's *What We Owe to Each Other*.

Required Work Overview

1. Reading responses
2. A mid-term examination
3. A cumulative final examination

Required Work and Grading

Reading responses are graded on a ten-point scale, the mid-term is 100 points and the final is 133. At the end of the term, I will calculate the numerical score for each student according to the weights listed below. This calculation will determine the student's letter grade. I use the following scale to assign letter grades to course scores: 93-100, A; 90-92, A-; 87-89, B+; 83-86, B; 80-82, B-; 77-79, C+; 73-76, C; 70-72, C-; 67-69, D+; 60-66, D; 59 and below, F.

1. Reading Responses _____ 30%
 - a. Online discussions will be structured as responses to questions posed by the instructor. Each week I will ask a question about the reading assigned for Monday. Answers will be submitted online **as a word document**. They may be no longer than 200 words. Answers are due on **Monday at 5 PM CST**.

2. Mid-term 30%
 - a. The midterm exam will consist of true/false, multiple choice, and brief essay questions. Each student is required to complete the midterm exam.
3. Final Exam 40%
 - a. The final exam will consist of true/false, multiple choice, and brief essay questions. Each student is required to complete the final exam.

Reading Responses, Attendance, Participation

I use the reading responses instead of grading attendance and participation. That said, excellent participation in the course has the potential to positively impact your grade. This works in the following way: suppose you have a B+ at the end of the course that is just behind the A- threshold (e.g., 89.5%). If you have offered quality contributions consistently throughout the course, I will take that into account when entering your final grade and bump you up to an A-. Great participation can take many forms (e.g., in-class discussion, discussion during office hours). I will occasionally post extra discussion boards on the course website where open-ended questions about the readings we have already discussed in lecture can be addressed.

I will mention here that although participation and attendance are not graded separately, it is very hard to succeed in this course without both attending regularly and participating often. I will sometimes introduce vocabulary in the lectures that does not appear in the reading. Some of this vocabulary will appear on exams.

Late Reading Responses

Late reading responses will not be accepted. However, at the end of the quarter, the two lowest grades on reading responses will be dropped.

Exams

The examinations will consist of mixtures of true-false, multiple-choice, short-answer, and shortessay problems. The dates of both exams can be found on the schedule below which is tentative and subject to change. Students will have one hour to complete each exam. Results and grades will not be available until after the exam is closed for all students.

Makeup Exams

Makeup exams (if any) may, at my discretion, be entirely long-essay exams. They will be offered only to those who have appropriate excuses and appropriate documentation. I will determine the nature of the appropriate documentation on a case-by-case basis. Students should contact me within forty-eight hours of missing an exam, if they wish to take a makeup exam and they think they have a good reason for receiving one.

Topics and Tentative Schedule

The following is a list of assigned readings for each day of each week of the course. You are strongly encouraged to keep up with the readings. I will provide each of the articles listed below online in pdf form. The books will be available in the campus bookstore. The readings are subject to change, though I will make every effort to provide a one-week advanced notice prior to changing a reading assignment. “*” indicates that a reading response is due **the night before**.

August 30th- Syllabus/ Course Introduction

September 1- *Ethics: The Fundamentals* Chapter 1: “The Challenge to Moral Universalism”- Julia Driver

September 6*- *Euthyphro*- Plato

September 8- *Ethics: The Fundamentals* Chapter 2: “God and Human Nature”- Julia Driver

September 13*- *Utilitarianism* (excerpts)- John Stuart Mill

September 15- *Ethics: The Fundamentals* Chapter 3: “Classical Utilitarianism”- Julia Driver

September 20*- “Sidgwick & Utilitarianism”- Henry Sidgwick

September 22- *Ethics: The Fundamentals* Chapter 4: “Contemporary Consequentialism”- Julia Driver

September 27*- “Rule Utilitarianism”- Dale E. Miller; “Act Utilitarianism”- Ben Eggleston

September 29- *Ethics: The Fundamentals* Chapter 5: “Kantian Ethics”- Julia Driver

October 4- “Kantian Ethics”- Marcia Baron

October 6- *An Introduction to Kant’s Ethics* (Introduction; Chapter 1)- Roger Sullivan

October 11*- “Black Radical Kantianism”- Charles Mills

October 13- **Mid-Term Exam**

October 18*- *Ethics: The Fundamentals* Chapter 6: “Social Contract Theory”- Julia Driver

October 20- *Morals by Agreement* (Introduction; Chapter 1)- David Gauthier

October 25*- *Morals by Agreement* (Chapters 2, 3)- David Gauthier

October 27- *Morals by Agreement* (Chapters 4; 5)- David Gauthier

November 1*- *What We Owe to Each Other* (Introduction; Chapter 1)

November 3- *What We Owe to Each Other* (Chapter 2, 3)

November 8*- “A Critique of Scanlon’s Contractualism”- Ashley Purdy

November 10- *Ethics: The Fundamentals* Chapter 7: “Intuitionism”- Julia Driver

November 15- “The Doctrine of Double Effect: Problems of Interpretation”- Nancy Ann Davis

November 17- “Doing Away with Double Effect”- Alison McIntyre **Break**

November 29*- *Ethics: The Fundamentals* Chapter 8: “Virtue Ethics”- Julia Driver

December 1- *On Virtue Ethics* (excerpts)- Rosalind Hursthouse

December 6*- *Ethics: The Fundamentals* Chapter 9: “Feminist Ethics”- Julia Driver

December 8- “Recent Work in Feminist Ethics”- Samantha Brennan

December 13 – “Moral Progress & Human Agency”- Michelle Moody-Adams

Learning Outcomes and Assessments

The goal of the course is to help students learn to identify the strengths and weaknesses of arguments that have been important in the history of philosophy. This involves being able to identify the key premises of the arguments and state them succinctly. It also involves the ability to recognize the difficulties that they encounter and possible ways of addressing those difficulties.

Student Accommodations

Loyola University Chicago is committed to providing the necessary materials for students in need of accommodations to succeed. In order to receive the accommodations you require, you must first register with student accessibility center (<http://www.luc.edu/sswd>) and then present your accommodation letter to the instructor within the first two weeks of class.

Academic Integrity

Don't cheat and don't plagiarize. I have a zero-tolerance policy for academic integrity issues. At a minimum, violations of the academic integrity policy will result in a zero for the assignment. Serious violations may result in a zero for the course. For more information on academic integrity, go here <https://www.luc.edu/cas/advising/academicintegritystatement/>.

Electronic Devices

I reluctantly allow electronic devices because many students use them to access the readings instead of buying paper books. Electronic devices may only be used for the purposes of accessing course materials/note-taking and may not be used for non-academic purposes or other classes during lecture. Electronic devices must be silenced before the beginning of class.

Introduction to Political Philosophy

PHIL 360-001

Instructor: Spencer Paulson (spaulson@luc.edu)

T, Th 4:15-5:30

Cuneo Hall 202

Office Hours: Mundelein Commons, Monday, 11 AM

Introduction

We are free and equal, capable of autonomously deciding what to do. So, what gives the government the right to intervene in our lives? Relatedly, what kinds of reasons must be provided in order to justify such intervention?

In this course, we will consider these questions through the lens of Liberalism. “Liberalism” is said in many ways, not all of which come to precisely the same thing. However, a common thread of the liberal project is a sense that there is a presumption in favor of liberty and the role of the government is to preserve the conditions necessary for the full exercise of our liberties. In this course we will begin by considering two different ways one might argue for Liberalism. On the first one, liberal governments are justified because they promote the utility of their citizens better than alternative forms of government. On the second one, liberal governments are justified by a hypothetical social contract. We will then see how each form of liberalism places different constraints on how one must go about justifying government action. An important theme throughout the course will be public reason. Given that we are free and equal, the government must act on the basis of reasons that we will find compelling (or so it might seem). We will inquire into what these reasons might consist in, given the diversity of background commitments we citizens have in a liberal democracy. Relatedly, we will take an interest in the extent to which the government must remain neutral on questions about value, given how much disagreement there is about how to answer them.

After considering some attempts to develop a liberal political system, we will consider objections to the liberal framework. The first objection (or rather, family of objections) will center on the idea that the liberal justificatory framework is committed to an inadequate account of the individual; one that is pre-social and atomistic in ways that fail to come to terms with our nature as social beings. The second objection (or rather, family of objections) comes from feminist and critical race theory. Its proponents claim that the liberal justificatory is too abstract to deal with the most pressing societal concerns: racism and sexism.

Course Mechanics

Prerequisites: None

Required Reading: Assigned will be made available on the course website.

Required Work Overview

4. A mid-term examination
5. A cumulative final examination
6. An Argumentative Essay

Required Work and Grading

Reading responses are graded on a ten-point scale, the mid-term is 100 points and the final is 133. At the end of the term, I will calculate the numerical score for each student according to the weights listed below. This calculation will determine the student's letter grade. I use the following scale to assign letter grades to course scores: 93-100, A; 90-92, A-; 87-89, B+; 83-86, B; 80-82, B-; 77-79, C+; 73-76, C; 70-72, C-; 67-69, D+; 60-66, D; 59 and below, F.

4. Mid-term 33%
 - a. The midterm exam will consist of true/false, multiple choice, and brief essay questions. Each student is required to complete the midterm exam.
5. Final Exam 33%
 - a. The final exam will consist of true/false, multiple choice, and brief essay questions. Each student is required to complete the final exam.
6. Argumentative Essay 33%
 - a. You will receive a set of prompts near the end of the semester. You will select one and answer the question it poses in 1,500 words (+/- 250 words, w/o bibliography).

Exams

The examinations will consist of mixtures of true-false, multiple-choice, short-answer, and shortessay problems. The dates of both exams can be found on the schedule below which is tentative and subject to change. Students will have one hour to complete each exam. Results and grades will not be available until after the exam is closed for all students.

Makeup Exams

Makeup exams (if any) may, at my discretion, be entirely long-essay exams. They will be offered only to those who have appropriate excuses and appropriate documentation. I will determine the nature of the appropriate documentation on a case-by-case basis. Students should contact me within forty-eight hours of missing an exam, if they wish to take a makeup exam and they think they have a good reason for receiving one.

Topics and Tentative Schedule

The following is a list of assigned readings for each day of each week of the course. You are strongly encouraged to keep up with the readings. I will provide each of the articles listed below online in pdf form. The books will be available in the campus bookstore. The readings are subject to change,

though I will make every effort to provide a one-week advanced notice prior to changing a reading assignment.

August 30th- Syllabus/ Course Introduction

September 1- *On Liberty* (Chapter 1)- John Stuart Mill

September 6- *On Liberty* (Chapter 2)- John Stuart Mill

September 8- *On Liberty* (Chapter 3)- John Stuart Mill

September 13- *On Liberty* (Chapter 4)- John Stuart Mill

September 15- *On Liberty* (Chapter 5)- John Stuart Mill

September 20- *Political Liberalism* (Introduction; Chapter 1)- John Rawls

September 22- “Contractualism & Utilitarianism”- T.M. Scanlon

September 27- *Political Liberalism* (Chapter 2)- John Rawls

September 29- *Political Liberalism* (Chapter 3)- John Rawls

October 4- “The Moral Foundations of Political Neutrality”- Gerald Gaus

October 11- *Liberalism Beyond Perfection* (Chapter 1)- Jonathan Quong

October 13- ...

October 18- **Mid-Term Exam**

October 20- *Liberalism & the Limits of Justice* (Introduction; Chapter 1)- Michael Sandel

October 25- ...

October 27- *Liberalism & the Limits of Justice* (Chapter 2)

November 1- *Sources of the Self* (excerpts)- Charles Taylor

November 3- ...

November 8- *Liberals & Communitarians* (excerpts)- Stephen Mulhall

November 10- *The Sexual Contract* (Introduction; Chapter 1)- Carol Pateman

November 15- *The Sexual Contract* (Chapter 2)- Carol Pateman

November 17- *The Racial Contract* (Introduction; Chapter 1)- Charles Mills

Break

November 29- *The Racial Contract* (Chapter 2)

December 1- *Liberalism, Neutrality, and the Gendered Division of Labor* (excerpts)- Gina Shouten

December 6- “Afro-Analytical Marxism and the Problem of Race”- Tommie Shelby

December 8- “Black Radical Kantianism”- Charles Mills

December 13 – **Final Exam 4:15 Cuneo Hall 202**

Learning Outcomes and Assessments

The goal of the course is to help students learn to identify the strengths and weaknesses of arguments that have been important in the history of philosophy. This involves being able to identify the key premises of the arguments and state them succinctly. It also involves the ability to recognize the difficulties that they encounter and possible ways of addressing those difficulties.

Student Accommodations

Loyola University Chicago is committed to providing the necessary materials for students in need of accommodations to succeed. In order to receive the accommodations you require, you must first register with student accessibility center (<http://www.luc.edu/sswd>) and then present your accommodation letter to the instructor within the first two weeks of class.

Academic Integrity

Don't cheat and don't plagiarize. I have a zero-tolerance policy for academic integrity issues. At a minimum, violations of the academic integrity policy will result in a zero for the assignment. Serious violations may result in a zero for the course. For more information on academic integrity, go here <https://www.luc.edu/cas/advising/academicintegritystatement/>.

Electronic Devices

I reluctantly allow electronic devices because many students use them to access the readings instead of buying paper books. Electronic devices may only be used for the purposes of accessing course materials/note-taking and may not be used for non-academic purposes or other classes during lecture. Electronic devices must be silenced before the beginning of class.

Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind

PHIL 350-001

Instructor: Spencer Paulson (spaulson@luc.edu)

T, Th 4:15-5:30

Cuneo Hall 202

Office Hours: Mundelein Commons, Monday, 11 AM

Introduction

Is the mind physical? If not, how (if at all) does it interact with the body? If yes, what is the relation between the mind and the body? Are they identical to one another? Or does the former realize the latter (in the way hardware realizes software)? Can we dispense with talk of mental states (e.g., beliefs and desires) entirely and say everything we want to say about it in straightforwardly physical language (e.g., in terms of dopamine, neural populations, etc.). Does cognitive science, for the most part, confirm our common-sense understanding of the mind? Or does it call into question our fundamental commitments regarding who we are and how we relate both to ourselves and one another? What is the relation between the mind and the self? Are they the same thing, or is the mind a component of the self?

These are the questions that will guide our course. Along the way we will get a better sense of what the possible answers are and how difficult it is to square all our pre-theoretical beliefs about the mind and its place in nature.

Course Mechanics

Prerequisites: None

Required Reading: Assigned will be made available on the course website.

Required Work Overview

7. Reading responses
8. A mid-term examination
9. A cumulative final examination
10. An Argumentative Essay

Required Work and Grading

Reading responses are graded on a ten-point scale, the mid-term is 100 points and the final is 133. At the end of the term, I will calculate the numerical score for each student according to the weights listed below. This calculation will determine the student's letter grade. I use the following scale to assign letter grades to course scores: 93-100, A; 90-92, A-; 87-89, B+; 83-86, B; 80-82, B-; 77-79, C+; 73-76, C; 70-72, C-; 67-69, D+; 60-66, D; 59 and below, F.

7. Reading Responses 25%

- a. Online discussions will be structured as responses to questions posed by the instructor. Each week I will ask a question about the reading assigned for Monday. Answers will be submitted online **as a word document**. They may be no longer than 200 words. Answers are due on **Monday at 5 PM CST**.
8. Mid-term 25%
 - a. The midterm exam will consist of true/false, multiple choice, and brief essay questions. Each student is required to complete the midterm exam.
9. Final Exam 25%
 - a. The final exam will consist of true/false, multiple choice, and brief essay questions. Each student is required to complete the final exam.
10. Argumentative Essay 25%
 - a. You will receive a set of prompts near the end of the semester. You will select one and answer the question it poses in 1,500 words (+/- 250 words, w/o bibliography).

Reading Responses, Attendance, Participation

I use the reading responses instead of grading attendance and participation. That said, excellent participation in the course has the potential to positively impact your grade. This works in the following way: suppose you have a B+ at the end of the course that is just behind the A- threshold (e.g., 89.5%). If you have offered quality contributions consistently throughout the course, I will take that into account when entering your final grade and bump you up to an A-. Great participation can take many forms (e.g., in-class discussion, discussion during office hours).

I will mention here that although participation and attendance are not graded separately, it is very hard to succeed in this course without both attending regularly and participating often. I will sometimes introduce vocabulary in the lectures that does not appear in the reading. Some of this vocabulary will appear in exams.

Late Reading Responses

Late reading responses will not be accepted. However, at the end of the quarter, the two lowest grades on reading responses will be dropped.

Exams

The examinations will consist of mixtures of true-false, multiple-choice, short-answer, and shortessay problems. The dates of both exams can be found on the schedule below which is tentative and subject to change. Students will have one hour to complete each exam. Results and grades will not be available until after the exam is closed for all students.

Makeup Exams

Makeup exams (if any) may, at my discretion, be entirely long-essay exams. They will be offered only to those who have appropriate excuses and appropriate documentation. I will determine the nature of the appropriate documentation on a case-by-case basis. Students should contact me within forty-eight hours of missing an exam, if they wish to take a makeup exam and they think they have a good reason for receiving one.

Topics and Tentative Schedule

The following is a list of assigned readings for each day of each week of the course. You are strongly encouraged to keep up with the readings. I will provide each of the articles listed below online in pdf form. The books will be available in the campus bookstore. The readings are subject to change, though I will make every effort to provide a one-week advanced notice prior to changing a reading assignment. “*” indicates that a reading response is due **the night before**.

There are two days scheduled for general review at the end of the semester. These will only be used for review in the event that no classes are canceled. If some classes need to be canceled, then these days will be used to cover the materials designated for the days on which class needed to be canceled.

August 30th- Syllabus/ Course Introduction **Is the Mind Physical?**

No

Do the Mind and Body Causally Interact?

Yes

September 1- *Descartes* Meditation VI

September 6- Gyekye, “The Akan Concept of a Person”; Gertler “In Defense of...Dualism”

No

September 8- Jackson “What Mary Didn’t Know”

September 13- Lewis “What Experience Teaches”; Loar “Phenomenal States”

Recommended: Conee “Phenomenal Knowledge”; Zimmerman “From Property Dualism...”

Suppose the Mind is Physical, What is the Relation between the Mind and the Body?

Reduction/Elimination

September 15- Ryle “The Concept of Mind” (excerpts)

September 20- Churchland “Eliminative Materialism and Propositional Attitudes”

Recommended: Slagle “Yes, Eliminative Materialism is Self-Defeating”;

Ramsey “What Eliminative Materialism Isn’t”; Wright “Eliminative Materialism: Going...”

Non-Reduction

September 22- Fodor “Disunity of the Sciences as a Working Hypothesis”

Recommended: Oppenheim & Putnam “Unity of Science as a Working Hypothesis”

Identity

September 27- Smart “Sensations and Brain Processes”

September 29- Feigl “The ‘Mental and the ‘Physical’”

Realization

October 4- Putnam “Psychological Predicates”

Recommended: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry for “Multiple Realizability”

October 6- Fodor “Propositional Attitudes”

Are Psychophysical Relations A Priori or A Posteriori?

A Priori

October 11- Lewis “Psychophysical and Theoretical Identifications”

October 13- Lewis, Continued

October 18- **Mid-Term Exam**

October 20- Armstrong *A Materialist Theory of Mind* (Introduction, Chapter 1)

A Posteriori

October 25- Block “Troubles with Functionalism”

October 27- Block, Continued

November 1- Stich *From Folk-Psychology to Cognitive Science* (Introduction)

November 3- Stich *From Folk-Psychology to Cognitive Science* (Chapter 1)

November 8- Horgan & Tienson “Folk Psychology is Here to Stay”

What is the Relation Between the Mind and the Self

November 10- Parfit “Reductionism and Personal Identity”

Recommended: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Entry for “Personal Identity”

November 15- James “Feminism in Philosophy of Mind: The Question of Personal Identity”

November 17- Appiah “Talking Identity”

Break

November 29- Strawson “The Sense of the Self”

December 1- Extra Day for Mind/Self

December 6-Extra Day for General Review

December 8- Extra Day for General Review

December 13 – Final Exam 4:15 Cuneo Hall 202

Learning Outcomes and Assessments

The goal of the course is to help students learn to identify the strengths and weaknesses of arguments that have been important in the history of philosophy. This involves being able to identify the key premises of the arguments and state them succinctly. It also involves the ability to recognize the difficulties that they encounter and possible ways of addressing those difficulties.

Student Accommodations

Loyola University Chicago is committed to providing the necessary materials for students in need of accommodations to succeed. In order to receive the accommodations you require, you must first register with student accessibility center (<http://www.luc.edu/sswd>) and then present your accommodation letter to the instructor within the first two weeks of class.

Academic Integrity

Don't cheat and don't plagiarize. I have a zero-tolerance policy for academic integrity issues. At a minimum, violations of the academic integrity policy will result in a zero for the assignment. Serious violations may result in a zero for the course. For more information on academic integrity, go here <https://www.luc.edu/cas/advising/academicintegritystatement/>.

Electronic Devices

I reluctantly allow electronic devices because many students use them to access the readings instead of buying paper books. Electronic devices may only be used for the purposes of accessing course materials/note-taking and may not be used for non-academic purposes or other classes during lecture. Electronic devices must be silenced before the beginning of class.

Introduction to Philosophy

PHIL 130-036

Instructor: Spencer Paulson (spaulson@luc.edu)

T, Th 4:15-5:30

Cuneo Hall 202

Office Hours By Appointment

Introduction

We have obligations to other persons that differ from our obligations to non-persons. Similarly, persons can be held responsible in a way that non-persons cannot. In virtue of what are these things true? Perhaps it has something to do with our distinctive cognitive capacities, perhaps our unique relation to a deity. So, to better understand who we are as persons and how we fit into the broader scheme of things, we will look into questions about what we can know and, in particular, whether we can know that God exists. We will also consider the question of what makes me (for example) the same person I was yesterday. Along the way we will get a sense of how philosophical methodology works.

Course Mechanics

Prerequisites: None

Required Reading: We will be reading Plato's *Apology* and *Euthyphro*, David Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* and John Perry's *Dialogues On Personal Identity and Immortality*. These titles should be available in the campus bookstore. Everything else assigned will be made available on Sakai.

Required Work Overview

1. Reading responses
2. A mid-term examination
3. A cumulative final examination

Required Work and Grading

Reading responses are graded on a ten-point scale, the mid-term is 100 points and the final is 133. At the end of the term, I will calculate the numerical score for each student according to the weights listed below. This calculation will determine the student's letter grade. I use the following scale to assign letter grades to course scores: 93-100, A; 90-92, A-; 87-89, B+; 83-86, B; 80-82, B-; 77-79, C+; 73-76, C; 70-72, C-; 67-69, D+; 60-66, D; 59 and below, F.

11. Reading Responses 30%

- a. Online discussions will be structured as responses to questions posed by the instructor. Each week I will ask a question about the reading assigned for Monday. Answers will be submitted online **as a word document**. They may be no longer than 200 words. Answers are due on **Monday at 5 PM CST**.

12. Mid-term 30%

- a. The midterm exam will consist of true/false, multiple choice, and brief essay questions. Each student is required to complete the midterm exam.

13. Final Exam 40%

- a. The final exam will consist of true/false, multiple choice, and brief essay questions. Each student is required to complete the final exam.

Reading Responses, Attendance, Participation

I use the reading responses instead of grading attendance and participation. That said, excellent participation in the course has the potential to positively impact your grade. This works in the following way: suppose you have a B+ at the end of the course that is just behind the A- threshold (e.g., 89.5%). If you have offered quality contributions consistently throughout the course, I will take that into account when entering your final grade and bump you up to an A-. Great participation can take many forms (e.g., in-class discussion, discussion during office hours).

I will mention here that although participation and attendance are not graded separately, it is very hard to succeed in this course without both attending regularly and participating often. I will sometimes introduce vocabulary in the lectures that does not appear in the reading. Some of this vocabulary will appear on exams.

Late Reading Responses

Late reading responses will not be accepted. However, at the end of the quarter, the two lowest grades on reading responses will be dropped.

Exams

The examinations will consist of mixtures of true-false, multiple-choice, short-answer, and shortessay problems. The dates of both exams can be found on the schedule below which is tentative and subject to change. Students will have one hour to complete each exam. Results and grades will not be available until after the exam is closed for all students.

Makeup Exams

Makeup exams (if any) may, at my discretion, be entirely long-essay exams. They will be offered only to those who have appropriate excuses and appropriate documentation. I will determine the nature of the appropriate documentation on a case-by-case basis. Students should contact me within forty-

eight hours of missing an exam, if they wish to take a makeup exam and they think they have a good reason for receiving one.

Topics and Tentative Schedule

The following is a list of assigned readings for each day of the course. You are strongly encouraged to keep up with the readings. I will provide each of the articles listed below online in pdf form. The books will be available in the campus bookstore. The readings are subject to change, though I will make every effort to provide a one-week advanced notice prior to changing a reading assignment.

“*” indicates that a reading response is due **the night before**.

August 30th- Syllabus/ Course Introduction

September 1- Plato's *Apology*

September 6*- Plato's *Euthyphro*

September 8- "The *Euthyphro* Dilemma" (Mawson)

September 13*- *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Part I, II)

September 15- *DCNR* (III-V)

September 20*- *DCNR* (Part VI, Part VII)

September 22- *DCNR* (Part VIII, Part IX)

September 27*- *DCNR* (Part X-XII)

September 29- Mid-Term Exam

October 4- Descartes Background (No Reading Assigned)

October 6- *Meditation I*

October 11*- Mid-Semester Break, No Class (But reading responses are still due on October 10)

October 13- *Meditation II*

October 18*- "Non-Cartesian Sums" (Mills)

October 20- *Meditation III*

October 25*- *Meditation IV*

October 27- "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person" (Frankfurt)

November 1*- "Incompatibilism" (Kane, find in *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics*, 7.1 on Sakai)

November 3- "Compatibilism, Incompatibilism & Impossibilism" (Vihvelin, find in *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics*, 7.2 on Sakai)

November 8*- *Meditation VI*

November 10- "Epiphenomenal Qualia" (Jackson)

November 15*- "Multiple Drafts Versus the Cartesian Theater" (Dennett)

November 17- *Dialogues Concerning Personal Identity and Immortality*, First Night

Break

November 29*- *DPII* (Second Night)

December 1- *DPII* (Third Night)

December 6*- "Persons and their Bodies" (Thomson, find in *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics*, 4.1 on Sakai)

December 8- "Happiness and Meaning: Two Aspects of the Good Life" (Wolf), "The Absurd" (Nagel)

December 13 – Final Exam 4:15 Cuneo Hall 202

Learning Outcomes and Assessments

The goal of the course is to help students learn to identify the strengths and weaknesses of arguments that have been important in the history of philosophy. This involves being able to identify the key premises of the arguments and state them succinctly. It also involves the ability to recognize the difficulties that they encounter and possible ways of addressing those difficulties.

Student Accommodations

Loyola University Chicago is committed to providing the necessary materials for students in need of accommodations to succeed. In order to receive the accommodations you require, you must first register with student accessibility center (<http://www.luc.edu/sswd>) and then present your accommodation letter to the instructor within the first two weeks of class.

Academic Integrity

Don't cheat and don't plagiarize. I have a zero-tolerance policy for academic integrity issues. At a minimum, violations of the academic integrity policy will result in a zero for the assignment. Serious violations may result in a zero for the course. For more information on academic integrity, go here <https://www.luc.edu/cas/advising/academicintegritystatement/>.

Electronic Devices

I reluctantly allow electronic devices because many students use them to access the readings instead of buying paper books. Electronic devices may only be used for the purposes of accessing course materials/note-taking and may not be used for non-academic purposes or other classes during lecture. Electronic devices must be silenced before the beginning of class.

IV. Diversity Statement

I am a straight, white male. Insofar as my demographic is concerned, I contribute little to diversity. However, I recognize the importance of diversity. So, I need to find non-obvious ways to promote it when possible.

Charles Mills has written about the “conceptual whiteness” of academic philosophy. His point is not that most of the canonical authors were white, but rather that the subject matter of their work is white. It is white insofar as it abstracts away from the real-world conditions that negatively affect non-white people. It is taken for granted that philosophy is to be done at an altitude where race doesn’t show up. It concerns thinking substances and extended substances, properties and universals: things too general to bear on racial issues. A similar point could be made about issues bearing on gender or class.

I confess that in addition to being white, my work is largely the kind of work that Mills was talking about. Nonetheless, in my teaching I emphasize that philosophy needn’t be done in this way. To the extent possible, I design my curriculum to emphasize metaphilosophical choice points. I think one of the most intriguing aspects of philosophy is that even core commitments can be placed in jeopardy. This opens up room for considerable conceptual diversity in the discipline. If Mills is right, the lack of demographic diversity in the discipline is largely a byproduct of a lack of conceptual diversity in how philosophical problems are framed and investigated. Although I can’t contribute directly to demographic diversity, I can (and do) make an indirect contribution by centering my pedagogy and syllabi on methodological choice points.

I have taught as a TA at the University of Houston and Northwestern University, and I have taught my own course twice now at Loyola University Chicago. As a result, I have interacted with an incredibly diverse population of students and developed the ability to adapt my pedagogy as needed to suit the needs of the students in my class. My experiences at such different universities with widely varying student demographics have made the inequities in the education system apparent. Not only are there inequities with

respect to access to higher education, but also with the amount of preparatory material that has been made available to one before arriving. Furthermore, due in part to the lack of diversity in higher education, faculty often become overly accustomed to teaching the demographics they most regularly encounter, which in turn reinforces the lack of diversity.

One factor that varies considerably (but not uniformly) based on demographic is which application of the theory under discussion the students care most to inspect. Suppose I am teaching Utilitarianism. White male students are most likely to ask abstract questions about the possibility of interpersonal comparisons of utility, epistemological difficulties about measuring utility, etc. Black students are more likely to ask about whether the theory ultimately justifies the oppression of less numerous groups for the benefit of more numerous groups. Many students ask how the theory bears on the permissibility of partiality, but female students raise this question more often than male students in my experience. What follows from this is that Utilitarianism is relevant to things these students care about and my job is to help them think through how it is relevant. My commitment to diversity stems from my conviction that philosophy does, in fact, speak to issues that matter. My job is to make this apparent to a variety of students whose priorities vary.

Although philosophical issues bear on demographics differently, it is important not to simply assume that a student will have certain interests because of their demographic. There may be statistical co-relations between demographics and interest in different aspects of philosophy, but cultural competency is not exhausted by knowledge of these co-relations. In fact, it requires that we avoid relying on them excessively. For this reason, I try to build rapport with my students. Sometimes this involves making small talk before the lecture begins or by continuing discussion of the course material out in the hallway after the class meeting has ended. The only way to know which issues matter to my students is to talk to them about it.