

PHILOSOPHY 101: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY
FALL 2018

Professor Eric Swanson
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Office hours: Tuesdays 1:30–3:30, and by appointment.

Many important debates involve such profound disagreements that it's hard to know who we should believe. What should we do when we're faced with such a debate? When we learn that people's views are different from ours, should our own views change? If so, in what ways? Might we have wrong views that we can't change, no matter how hard we try? Can two people disagree about so much that it's impossible for one to understand the other's position? Could some truths be literally unbelievable? What does it even mean to say that something is true, or to say that something is true for you but not true for me?

We will discuss all these questions in this course, focusing on how they arise when we think about freedom, morality, justice, science, prejudice, consciousness, and ideology. Reading, thinking, talking, and writing about these philosophical issues is exciting and important work. But the skills you will develop by doing this work are valuable in other contexts as well, helping you think and write more clearly, ask more insightful questions, and become more creative at solving problems.

TEXTS

Thinking It Through: An Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy, by Kwame Anthony Appiah

Blade Runner: The Final Cut, dir. Ridley Scott (available on Google Play, YouTube)

Thelma & Louise, dir. Ridley Scott (available for rental on Amazon Video, Google Play, iTunes, YouTube)

Aguirre: The Wrath of God, dir. Werner Herzog (available for rental on Amazon Video, Google Play, iTunes)

The House I Live In, dir. Eugene Jarecki (available for rental on Amazon Video, Google Play, iTunes, YouTube)

Rashomon, dir. Akira Kurosawa (available for rental on Amazon Video, iTunes)

Run Lola Run, dir. Tom Tykwer (available for rental on Amazon, Google Play, iTunes, YouTube)

Links to other texts and media will be available on Canvas: <https://umich.instructure.com/courses/253598>

COURSE WEB SITE

Canvas: <https://umich.instructure.com/courses/253598>

Please use Piazza, which is available through Canvas, to ask questions that aren't specific to you!

LECTURE

Tuesdays and Tuesdays 9:00–9:48, in Auditorium D, Angell Hall

SECTIONS

002, Thursdays and Tuesdays at 10, 1024 Dana Building, with Briana Akani (akanib@umich.edu)

003, Thursdays and Tuesdays at 4, 3254 LSA Building, with Briana Akani (akanib@umich.edu)

004, Thursdays and Tuesdays at 10, 3242 LSA Building, with Abigail DeHart (deharta@umich.edu)

005, Thursdays and Tuesdays at 5, G115 Angell Hall, with Abigail DeHart (deharta@umich.edu)

006, Thursdays and Tuesdays at 10, 1448 Mason Hall, with Eric Swanson (ericsw@umich.edu)

GRADING

15%: mid-term exam, in class on 11/1

15%: two short (two to three page) papers, due 10/7 and 11/25

35%: final exam, from 1:30 to 3:30 on 12/14

10%: responses to the *upcoming* reading (or viewing), graded pass / fail. (E.g., your 9/9 reading response will respond to sections 1.6–1.13 of Appiah's book; your 9/16 reading response will respond to *Blade Runner*.) These don't have to be long—one paragraph which clearly articulates one question or comment is fine. For a pass your response has to make it *clear* that you did the reading and thought about it. Reading responses are not required for the Sundays on which papers are due, so you have more time for your paper. Late responses will not be accepted, since the GSIs and I use these responses to help us prepare for lecture and sections.

10%: your section grade, including participation in section, surprise quizzes if necessary, etc. Truly excellent reading responses and answers on Piazza, regularly submitted, will boost your section grade.

EXPECTATIONS

Keep up with the readings. They demand close attention and careful thought, and we'll always be integrating different topics in philosophy. If you fall behind you'll miss much of what's going on for the rest of the semester.

We'll be discussing many controversial issues in this course, and challenging our beliefs throughout. Be polite, respectful, and charitable in discussion with your classmates and teachers.

Read carefully University of Michigan's policy on academic integrity, available at:

<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity>

We encourage you to discuss the material with your classmates, but all work you turn in must be your own. Cheating or plagiarism will result in a grade of 0 for that assignment and disciplinary action by the University.

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; ssd.umich.edu) typically recommends accommodation through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

Use of laptops in class can distract the user, other students, and teachers. Lots of research has shown that many students learn better if they take notes by hand. See, for example:

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>

However, some students absolutely have to use laptops, and do benefit from them. If you need to use a laptop in lecture, please sit to the left (as you face the front of the room). If laptops distract you, please sit in the center or on the right. No texting, phone calls, etc. in class.

Missed exams can be made up only with ample appropriate documentation—for medical reasons, a signed and dated doctor's note; for the death of a loved one, a signed and dated letter from a funeral home; etc. We will be more flexible with late papers, but you must contact your GSI in advance to ask for an extension, and you must stand by your agreement with your GSI.

So you can all pay attention to all of lecture, I will finish by 9:48 sharp, leaving at least two extra minutes for you to pack up your things. But I ask you to be fully present for our discussion until 9:48.

SCHEDULE

Tuesday 9/4	Organizational meeting
Thursday 9/6	Lecture on Appiah, Preface, Introduction, and Sections 1.1–1.5: Mind
Sunday 9/9	Reading response due
Tuesday 9/11	Lecture on Appiah, Sections 1.6–1.13: Mind
Thursday 9/13	Lecture on Patricia Churchland, “The Hornswoggle Problem”
Sunday 9/16	Reading response due
Tuesday 9/18	Lecture on <i>Blade Runner: The Final Cut</i> , directed by Ridley Scott
Thursday 9/20	Lecture on Appiah, Sections 2.1–2.5: Knowledge
Sunday 9/23	Reading response due
Tuesday 9/25	Lecture on Appiah, Sections 2.6–2.10: Knowledge
Thursday 9/27	Lecture on Appiah, Chapter 3: Language (focus on sections 3.1–3.4 and 3.12–3.14)
Sunday 9/30	Reading response due
Tuesday 10/2	Lecture on <i>Thelma & Louise</i> , directed by Ridley Scott
Thursday 10/4	Lecture on Appiah, Sections 4.1–4.8: Science
Sunday 10/7	First paper due
Tuesday 10/9	Lecture on Appiah, Sections 4.9–4.14; Thomas Kuhn, <i>The Structure of Scientific Revolutions</i> (excerpts); and Steve Reich, <i>Come Out</i>
Thursday 10/11	Lecture on Appiah, Sections 5.1–5.5: Morality
Tuesday 10/16	Reading response due; reading period (no class)
Thursday 10/18	Lecture on Appiah, Sections 5.6–5.13: Morality
Sunday 10/21	Reading response due
Tuesday 10/23	Lecture on Sarah McGrath, “Moral Disagreement and Moral Expertise”
Thursday 10/25	Lecture on <i>Aguirre: The Wrath of God</i> , directed by Werner Herzog
Sunday 10/28	Reading response due
Tuesday 10/30	Lecture on Appiah, Sections 6.1–6.8: Politics
Thursday 11/1	Mid-term exam (no sections)
Sunday 11/4	Reading response due
Tuesday 11/6	Lecture on Appiah, Sections 6.9–6.17: Politics
Thursday 11/8	Lecture on Charles Mills, <i>The Racial Contract: Overview</i> ; and Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, “Come Out” (from <i>Fase</i>)
Sunday 11/11	Reading response due
Tuesday 11/13	Lecture on Appiah, Chapter 7: Law
Thursday 11/15	Lecture on <i>The House I Live In</i> , directed by Eugene Jarecki
Sunday 11/18	Reading response due
Tuesday 11/20	Lecture on Appiah, Chapter 8: Metaphysics (focus on sections 8.1–8.2 and 8.7–8.13)
Thursday 11/22	Thanksgiving Recess
Sunday 11/25	Second paper due
Tuesday 11/27	Lecture on <i>Rashomon</i> , directed by Akira Kurosawa
Thursday 11/29	Lecture on Appiah, Sections 9.1–9.9: Philosophy
Sunday 12/2	Reading response due
Tuesday 12/4	Lecture on Sally Haslanger, “But Mom, Crop-Tops Are Cute!”
Thursday 12/6	Lecture on Appiah, Sections 9.10–9.13: Philosophy
Sunday 12/9	Reading response due
Tuesday 12/11	Lecture on <i>Run Lola Run</i> , directed by Tom Tykwer
Friday 12/14	Final exam

