

PHI 101 (Fall 2010): INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

1. Contact Information:

NAME: Professor [Douglas W. Portmore](#), Ph.D.

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E-MAIL: douglas.portmore@asu.edu (Please put “PHI 101” in the subject line. Use email for only quick logistical questions about the course. Questions about the philosophical material must be raised in class or during office hours.)

OFFICE HOURS: See “Contacts” under the course’s Blackboard website at myASU Courses (<http://myasucourses.asu.edu>).

2. Teaching Assistants: The teaching assistants are Parker Crutchfield (Parker.Crutchfield@asu.edu), who will be grading Section 1 of each exam, Gerald Marsh (Gerald.Marsh@asu.edu), who will be grading Section 2 of each exam, and Mayra Valadez (mvaladez@asu.edu), who will be grading Section 3 of each exam. See “Contacts” under the course’s Blackboard website at myASU Courses (<http://myasucourses.asu.edu>) for the TAs’ office hours.

3. Required Texts: Most of the required readings will be available for free under the “Online Readings” section of Blackboard. These will be PDF files that require [Adobe Reader](#), which can be downloaded for free by clicking on the link provided. There is, however, one small and inexpensive required text:

- John Perry, *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978) – ISBN: 0915144530.

Please purchase it from the bookstore or some other source.

4. Blackboard: Blackboard/myASUCourses (<http://myasucourses.asu.edu>) is one of ASU's Course Management Systems. You'll need to access this site to obtain important course content: handouts, announcements, lecture outlines, and contact information for the professor. You are expected to check the course’s Blackboard website at least twice a week. If you need help using Blackboard, please see: <http://help.asu.edu/search/node/bb9>.

5. Course Description: The aim of the course is to introduce students to the practice of thinking critically and analytically about some of the most fundamental questions. Some of the questions that will be explored in this course include: (1) Does God exist? (2) Is each of us both a mind and a body? If so, how is it that such radically different substances are able to interact with each other in the way that they clearly seem to in each of us? (3) What is it to remain one and the same person over time? What would it mean, and is it possible, to survive one’s bodily death? (4) Do we have free will? (5) Do we have knowledge of a world that exists independently of our perceiving it? (6) And, lastly, what is the nature of morality? Is it objective, and does it depend on God?

6. Course Objectives: One of the central aims of the course is to challenge students to think critically about their own beliefs. The course requirements aim to develop students’ abilities to think clearly, critically, and analytically as well as to foster reading, writing, and oral communication skills.

7. Course Requirements and Grading Policy:

Points will be allocated as follows:

- | | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| ▪ Exam I: | 100 Points |
| ▪ Exam II: | 100 Points |
| ▪ Exam III: | <u>100 Points</u> |

- Total Points Possible:

300 Points

NO EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE OFFERED!

The plus/minus system will be used. Course grades will be assigned according to the following point distributions:

A+	300-291	Points	(100-97%)
A	290.9-279	Points	(96.9-93%)
A-	278.9-270	Points	(92.9-90%)
B+	269.9-261	Points	(89.9-87%)
B	260.9-249	Points	(86.9-83%)
B-	248.9-240	Points	(82.9-80%)
C+	239.9-225	Points	(79.9-75%)
C	224.9-210	Points	(74.9-70%)
D	209.9-180	Points	(69.9-60%)
E	179.9-0	Points	(59.9-0%)

8. Classroom Etiquette: You are expected to observe proper classroom etiquette (see the following bulleted list). Failure to do so may result in your being involuntarily withdrawn from the course by the instructor with a mark of “E” or “W” for the course—see item 16 below.

- Raise your hand and wait to be called on before speaking.
- Make every effort to avoid coming in late or leaving early. If you ever are late for class, enter in complete silence and avoid walking between the class and the professor.
- Never leave during class unless you absolutely must. Leaving for a short break and then returning is not acceptable.
- Talking with classmates while the professor (or another student) has the floor is unacceptable.
- Visible and/or noisy signs of restlessness or inattentiveness are rude as well as disruptive to others—this includes, for instance, sleeping, reading the newspaper, listening to music, and using your laptop to check your email or surf the web. If you cannot sit still, stay awake, and pay attention, you should not be taking a college class and you may be asked to leave.
- Do not begin packing up your things or otherwise indicate that you think it is time for class to come to an end; wait for the professor to dismiss the class.
- Always address others in the class (including your fellow students) in a respectful manner.
- Failing to turn off pagers and cell phones before coming to class is unacceptable.

9. Lectures: My lectures go well beyond just an explication of the readings. I will often critically assess the arguments presented in the readings, and I will often introduce arguments, definitions, and distinctions that can't be found in the readings. Doing the readings cannot, therefore, substitute for coming to class. However, it is essential to do the readings and to do so on time. Otherwise, you will not be adequately prepared for the lectures.

I use PowerPoint presentations during class. Redacted versions of these PowerPoint presentations are available on Blackboard under “Lecture Outlines.” These lecture outlines are made available to you to facilitate your note-taking. The lecture outlines are available in Rich Text Format (.rtf) so that you can manipulate them using a word processor. Some students print them out and take notes on them during class. Other students take notes on their laptops in class, using these lectures outlines as their starting points. Note, though, that the lecture outlines are redacted, such that certain crucial words, phrases, and examples are missing. These omissions are indicated in the lecture outlines by the following: “[Redacted].” You should do more than just fill in the redacted portions of the outlines. The PowerPoint presentations are,

after all, only *outlines*. You should take notes on the entire lecture, using these outlines as organizational guides. I do not distribute my PowerPoint presentations to students under any circumstances.

At the end of each lecture outline, you'll find a tentative list of all the possible exam questions pertaining to that lecture.

10. If you miss class...: If you miss class, even for a legitimate reason, you'll need to ask one of your fellow students for the notes that you missed. Do this in-person. DO NOT email your fellow students, asking them for the notes that you missed. Alternatively, you can come to office hours and ask questions about the material that you missed. We do not, however, distribute the PowerPoint presentations under any circumstances.
11. Exams: There will be three exams. A week before each exam, I will pass out a finalized sheet of possible questions for that specific exam. These will be taken (with perhaps a few corrections and/or clarifications) from the lists of possible exam questions that appear at the end of each lecture outline. Each exam will consist in a subset of questions taken from these finalized lists. Each exam will cover only the material subsequent to the previous exam (or, in the case of the first exam, the material subsequent to the start of the semester). Please see item 19 below for the dates of the exams.

Important instructions regarding the exams:

1. BRING YOUR OFFICIAL ASU ID WITH YOU to the exam. You may be asked to present your ID at any time during the exam and/or when you turn in your exam.
2. USE A PEN THAT WRITES IN PERMANENT INK. You must write in permanent ink. If you write in pencil or in erasable ink, you forfeit the right to contest your score on that exam.
3. The exam will consist of three sections with a separate sheet of paper for each section. YOU MUST WRITE YOUR NAME AND ASU ID NUMBER ON EACH OF THESE SHEETS OF PAPER, as different TAs will be grading different sections—see item 2. There will be a space provided for your name and ASU ID number in the upper left-hand corner of each sheet. If you fail to write your name and ASU ID number on any of these sheets, you will not receive any credit for the answers contained on those sheets.
4. The use of a pager, a computer, a calculator, a cell phone, or any other unauthorized electronic device during the exam will be construed as cheating. All unauthorized electronic devices should be turned off and stowed away out of sight. The visible presence of notes or books on or around your desk will be construed as cheating. All books, papers, and notes should be stowed away out of sight in some closed-up bag. YOU SHOULD HAVE ONLY THE FOLLOWING THREE THINGS WITH YOU WHILE TAKING THE EXAM: (1) THE EXAM, (2) A PEN, AND (3) YOUR ASU ID.

If necessary, the exam scores will be curved with the mean and/or median falling somewhere around a 75. I reserve the right to determine how best to curve the exam, but I will do so in a manner that does not lower anyone's score. If you have a problem with the way one of your exams is scored, you should first see the TAs responsible for scoring the relevant sections of the exam. If after discussing it with them you still want to appeal your score, you must direct your appeal to me. I will score your exam and adjust your score up or down, depending on which I deem appropriate. My decision is final.

12. Policy on Missed Exams: Ordinarily, no make-up exams will be given. However, exceptions will be granted if there are genuinely extenuating circumstances for which the student can provide supporting documentation. In the event of such circumstances arising, please contact me by e-mail as soon as possible—preferably before the regularly scheduled exam time. Those who fail to contact me within 48 hours of the exam will normally receive an "E" on the exam. The make-up exam will consist in a comprehensive final exam taken during the regularly scheduled final exam. The score received on this comprehensive final exam will substitute for the zeros received on any missed exams from which the

student has been excused. You do not have to take the final exam unless you miss, and are excused from, one or more of Exams I-III. You may not take the final exam unless either you have been excused from one or more of the first three exams or you meet the conditions specified in item 13.

If you have to miss one of Exams I-III due to some genuinely extenuating circumstances, then you'll be excused from that exam only if you provide me (the instructor) with some sort of written documentation, such as a doctor's note or a written affidavit in the following form:

I, _____[print your name and ASU ID Number], was unable to take the exam on the morning of _____[give the date of the exam] due to the fact that _____[fill in the relevant extenuating circumstances].

Signed _____[sign your name] Dated _____[record the date]

13. A Second Chance for Those Who Do Poorly on Exam I: Since I don't offer any extra credit assignments and since some students are caught off guard by the rigors of college, I offer the following one-time special deal for those who do poorly on Exam I. If your *curved* score on Exam II is both (a) a 65 or higher and (b) 15 or more points higher than your *curved* score on Exam I, then you may take the comprehensive final exam to substitute for your Exam I score. If you do, your score on the comprehensive final exam will replace your score on Exam I whether it is higher or lower than your original score on Exam I. This means that even those who do poorly on Exam I can still possibly get an A in the class. Nevertheless, students should be realistic; your score is not going to dramatically improve unless your study habits dramatically improve. Those who want to improve should see item 21 below for tips on how to succeed in this course. This deal is for only Exam I. No deal of any kind will be available for Exam II or Exam III.

14. Policy on Academic Dishonesty and Violations of the Student Code of Conduct: Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. My policy is to impose a failing grade for *the course* as a sanction for any violation of ASU's [Academic Integrity Policy](#). If a student guilty of a violation tries to withdraw from the course with a 'W' to avoid my sanction of an 'E', I will have the student reinstated in the course. I will also report any violation to the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs using the following form: [Faculty Academic Integrity Violation Form](#). Depending on the circumstances, I may, in addition to imposing a failing grade for the course, recommend a more severe sanction, such as an XE for the course (failure due to academic dishonesty, which will be noted on the student's transcript), suspension, or expulsion. The Assistant Dean may also impose an additional and more severe sanction even if I don't recommend one.

You should carefully review the policies and resources on the following two websites: <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity> and <http://clas.asu.edu/students/ai>. The following is quoted from the [Student Obligations to Academic Integrity](#) section of the [Academic Integrity Policy](#): "Each student must act with honesty and integrity, and must respect the rights of others in carrying out all academic assignments. A student may be found to have engaged in academic dishonesty if, in connection with any Academic Evaluation or academic or research assignment (including a paid research position), he or she:

- A. Engages in any form of academic deceit;
- B. Refers to materials or sources or uses devices (e.g., computer disks, audio recorders, camera phones, text messages, crib sheets, calculators, solution manuals, materials from previous classes, or commercial research services) not authorized by the instructor for use during the Academic Evaluation or assignment;
- C. Possesses, reviews, buys, sells, obtains, or uses, without appropriate authorization, any materials intended to be used for an Academic Evaluation or assignment in advance of its administration;
- D. Acts as a substitute for another person in any Academic Evaluation or assignment;
- E. Uses a substitute in any Academic Evaluation or assignment;

- F. Depends on the aid of others, including other students or tutors, in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment to the extent that the work is not representative of the student's abilities;
- G. Provides inappropriate aid to another person in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment, including the unauthorized use of camera phones, text messages, photocopies, notes or other means to copy or photograph materials used or intended for Academic Evaluation;
- H. Engages in [Plagiarism](#);
- I. Uses materials from the Internet or any other source without full and appropriate attribution;
- J. Permits his or her work to be submitted by another person in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment, without authorization;
- K. Claims credit for or submits work done by another;
- L. Signs an attendance sheet for another student, allows another student to sign on the student's behalf, or otherwise participates in gaining credit for attendance for oneself or another without actually attending;
- M. Falsifying or misrepresenting hours or activities in relationship to an internship, externship, field experience, clinical activity or similar activity; or
- N. Attempts to influence or change any Academic Evaluation, assignment or academic record for reasons having no relevance to academic achievement."

Students must also comply with the "[Student Code of Conduct](#)" and abide by the policies set forth in this syllabus, the university catalog, the schedule of classes, and the [Student Affairs web site](#). Misconduct will be reported to university authorities for appropriate action.

- 15. Policy on Incompletes: Incompletes are given only when a student who is doing otherwise satisfactory work is unable to complete a course because of illness or other conditions beyond his or her control. These are only given under the most extenuating of circumstances. For more information on university policy on the grade of "I" (incomplete), please see <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/usi/usi203-09.html>.
- 16. Withdrawing from the Course: An instructor may withdraw a student from the course with a mark of "W" or a grade of "E" in cases of disruptive classroom behavior.¹ The student may also withdraw him- or herself from the course. These "course withdrawals may be processed without college approval through the tenth week of fall and spring semesters.... Refer to the [University Registrar's Office Semester Calendar](#) for specific deadline dates." For more information, please [ASU's general policy on withdrawal from classes](#). A student who withdraws from the course in an attempt to avoid an 'E' (or 'XE') that was imposed as a sanction for a violation of the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) will be reinstated in the course and receive an 'E' (or 'XE'), not a 'W', for the course.
- 17. Disability Accommodation: If you have a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical, or learning disability that may impact on your ability to carry out assigned course work, I encourage you to contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC)—see <http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/>. The DRC will review your concerns and will work with you to determine what accommodations are necessary and appropriate for you. All information and documentation of your disability is confidential and will not be released without your permission.
- 18. Honors Contracts: This course may be taken for honors credit by students in the Honors College. In order to receive honors credit for my PHI 101, the student must write a 2,000-3,000 word thesis-defense paper on an

¹ As stated in the [University Student Initiatives Manual](#) (USI), "[a]n instructor may withdraw a student from a course with a mark of 'W' or 'E' when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process. Disruptive classroom behavior for this purpose is defined by the instructor." See USI 201-10.

assigned paper topic and earn a B+ or better on that term paper. The student is expected to consult with the instructor during office hours or by appointment about specific requirements, possible topics, and potential additional related readings by the seventh week of classes. If they don't, they will not receive honors credit. These contract requirements are not integrated with the course requirements. The professor will grade the term paper. It's the student's responsibility to file the necessary petitions and by the appropriate deadlines.

19. Important Dates:

08/20/10: First class.

09/06/10: Labor Day Holiday—no class.

09/17/10: Finalized list of possible questions for Exam I distributed.

09/24/10: **Exam I.**

10/22/10: Finalized list of possible questions for Exam II distributed.

10/29/10: **Exam II.**

11/03/10: Course Withdrawal Deadline

11/26/10: Thanksgiving Holiday—no class.

11/29/10: Finalized list of possible questions for Exam III distributed.

12/06/10: **Exam III.** Last class.

There will also be a make-up exam (a comprehensive final exam) for those who have been excused from one or more of Exams I-III during the regularly scheduled final exam time, which is I believe on Friday, December 10, 2010, from 9:50-11:40 AM in our regular room. Please see the [Final Exam Schedule](#) to confirm this.

20. Assigned Readings: These are the assigned readings in the likely order that we will read them. Due dates for the assigned readings will be announced on Blackboard. The list is tentative and subject to change. I may need to make additions, deletions, and/or substitutions as we proceed through the semester depending on the pace at which students are learning.

a. Paley's "The Teleological Argument."

b. Either Gould's "The Panda's Thumb" or Gould's "Male Nipples and Clitoral Ripples."

c. Miller's "Life's Grand Design."

d. Swinburne's "The Problem of Evil."

e. Russell's "Why Doesn't God Intervene to Prevent Evil."

f. D'Holbach's "Chapter XI: Of the System of Man's Free Agency," from *The System of Nature*.

g. Excerpt from Stace's *Religion and the Modern Mind*.

h. Taylor's "Freedom and Determinism."

i. Descartes's "First Meditation" and "Second Meditation" from *Meditations on First Philosophy*.

j. Perry's *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality* (The First Night)

k. Perry's *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality* (The Second Night)

l. Perry's *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality* (The Third Night)

m. Rachels's "Does Morality Depend on Religion?"

n. Rachels's "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism."

21. Keys to Succeeding in this Course:

(1) Attend class faithfully, sit up toward the front of the room, pay attention, participate in class discussions, and don't have any distractions in front of you during class, such as a newspaper, a magazine, or your laptop with your email client or web browser open.

(2) Print out the lecture outlines before coming to class, and take thorough notes during class using the lecture outlines as a guide. Be sure to do more than just fill in the redacted portions of the lecture outlines.

- (3) After each class, review the relevant possible exam questions that are to be found at the end of each lecture outline and write up responses to the questions that we covered in that class BEFORE the start of the next class. If you have any questions regarding how to best respond to those questions, be prepared to ask your questions at the start of the next class and/or to bring your written responses to our office hours so that we can look them over to ensure that you are adequately understanding the material. We are happy to look over written-up answers to the possible exam questions during office hours, but only if it's more than eight days prior to the exam. Within the eight days prior to an exam, we are happy to help you with the possible exam questions, but we won't read over any written responses.
 - (4) Adopt the attitude that studying for the exam is an ongoing process, something that you should be spending at least 4 hours each week doing. It is not sufficient to cram a day or two before the exam; you will not be able to absorb all the material in that amount of time.
 - (5) If you're having trouble with the material, then come see us immediately. If you did poorly on an exam (or just didn't do as well as you would like), then come see us immediately and bring your exam and all the notes and materials that you used to prepare for that exam with you so that we can figure out how you can best improve. Note that if you wait until after Exam II to come see us because you're not doing well, there will be little that we can do at that point to help you turn things around. So please come see us early on. Again, there is no extra credit offered in the course, so if you don't turn things around early on, there may be nothing that you can do to salvage a decent grade in the course.
22. Sensitive Material: The course will cover material that some may consider sensitive. This includes but is not limited to the definition of 'adultery' and whether it encompasses fellatio with someone other than one's lawful spouse, the evolutionary origins of male nipples and the female clitoris, the possibility that God doesn't exist and that you don't have an immortal soul, and other such potentially sensitive topics. The professor will call into question certain religious beliefs and will challenge students to think critically about their religious beliefs. The professor may also sometimes use profanity if it seems useful in illustrating some point.