

Bentley College
Fall semester, 2004
PH 101: Problems of Philosophy
Section 003 (90355): MW, 11:20 a.m.–12:35 p.m., Jennison 407
Section 007 (90359): MW, 5:00 p.m.–6:15 p.m., Jennison 407
Instructor: Miles Rind
September 8, 2004

PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY

SYLLABUS

Description: This course will introduce you to the discipline of philosophy using writings of Plato and various later authors. We shall examine questions of the nature and value of philosophical inquiry, the rationality or irrationality of belief in God, the difference between knowledge and mere belief or opinion, the possibility of non-empirical knowledge, the bases of moral, legal, and political obligation, the nature of justice and other moral virtues, the relation between soul and body, and the value or disvalue of life and death.

Learning objectives: This course aims to improve your ability to:

- read philosophical texts with understanding.
- analyze and evaluate philosophical theories and arguments.
- appreciate the presuppositions and implications of common concepts and beliefs.
- recognize and explain philosophical problems.
- develop an argument in support of a philosophical position.

About the instructor:

Name: Miles Rind, Ph.D., Adjunct Lecturer in Philosophy. My surname rhymes with “grinned,” not with “grind.”

E-mail: <rind@brandeis.edu>. You can also reach me through my Bentley address, <mrind@bentley.edu>, from which mail will be forwarded to my Brandeis account.

Office telephone: 781-891-6319

Office: Morison 114

Office hours: Monday and Wednesday, 10:10–11:10 a.m.; and by appointment. (I am on campus every Monday and Wednesday, and will be spending a large part of the time between my two classes in my office, so you will often be able to find me there.)

Required texts:

1. Plato, *Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo*, translated by G. M. A. Grube and John M. Cooper, 2nd edition (Indianapolis and Cambridge, Mass.: Hackett, 2002).

2. Plato, *Gorgias*, translated by Donald J. Zeyl (Indianapolis and Cambridge, Mass.: Hackett, 1987).

3. Plato, *Republic*, translated by G. M. A. Grube and C. D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis and Cambridge, Mass.: Hackett, 1992).

4. Anthony Weston, *A Rulebook for Arguments*, 3rd edition (Indianapolis and Cambridge, Mass.: Hackett, 2000).

Readings from other sources will be made available in electronic form, usually in PDF (Adobe Acrobat) files, in the course web site (see below). You are expected to print these documents out and to have them with you in the class sessions for which they are assigned.

Recommended text:

Douglas J. Soccio, *How to Get the Most out of Philosophy*, 5th ed. (Belmont, Cal.: Thomson Wadsworth, 2004).

Course web site:

I have set up a site for the course in my Brandeis web space at the following address: <http://people.brandeis.edu/~rind/bentley>. All materials that are distributed in class will be made available there, as well as all assigned readings that are not contained in the books listed above. Assignments for each class session will also be posted there.

Course requirements and grade components:

1. Class participation, in-class work, and short assignments, 12%.
2. Two papers, 22% each.
3. Mid-term examination, 22%.
4. Final examination, 22%.

Papers: Specific assignments for papers will be given over the course of the semester. General guidelines for papers are given in the document entitled "Composition Guide." Unless you have made other arrangements with me, papers must be submitted in print and in class on the assigned dates. I may grant you an extension of the deadline, or permit you to submit your paper electronically or by leaving it in my mailbox, but only if you apply to me at least 48 hours in advance of the deadline. Papers not submitted on time will receive a penalty of two thirds of a letter grade for each class day by which they are late. Papers submitted on the due date but not in class may be counted as late if you have not made appropriate arrangements with me.

Rewrite option: You may, under certain conditions, submit a rewritten version of one or both of your papers. If you do so, you will receive a grade for each version of the paper, and the contribution of the paper to your grade for the course will be split between the two versions (i.e., 11% for each version). The conditions under which you

may submit a rewritten paper are the following: (1) The first version of the paper must have been submitted on time. (2) You must resubmit the graded first version of the paper along with the rewrite. (3) The rewritten version must be submitted no later than the third class session following the one in which I returned the graded original paper, or offered to do so (if you were absent or for any other reason failed to collect it).

Academic integrity: The written work that you submit for this course must be your own. To use the words or ideas of others without attribution constitutes plagiarism and is a violation of the Bentley Honor Code. Serious violations will be reported to the Academic Integrity Coordinator. Further information is contained in the Bentley Student Handbook under the heading “Academic Integrity.”

For students with disabilities: Any student with a documented disability who requires accommodation should make arrangements with me outside of class. To receive accommodation for a disability, you need to be registered with the Office of Disability Services, part of the Counseling and Student Development Office (see below).

Services for students at Bentley College:

Counseling, tutoring, and disability services:
Counseling and Student Development
LaCava Campus Center 166
781-891-2274
<http://ecampus.bentley.edu/dept/counsel>

Academic advising and study skills:
Office of Academic Services
Morison 200
781-891-2803
<http://ecampus.bentley.edu/dept/oas/day>

Help with academic writing:
Writing Center
Baker Library, Ground Level
781-891-3173
<http://ecampus.bentley.edu/dept/en/index/research.htm>

For international students:
Office of International Services
Student Center 350
781-891-2829
<http://ecampus.bentley.edu/dept/iss>

For “multicultural” students:
Multicultural Center
Student Center 360
781-891-2132
<http://ecampus.bentley.edu/dept/mlc>

Schedule: The following schedule is preliminary in nature, not only in that it covers only the first unit of the course but also in that its details are subject to change. Detailed and up-to-date reading and writing assignments will be found in the course web site. You should, therefore, always rely on the course web site for daily assignments rather than on this schedule.

Texts designated by “E” (for “electronic”) will be found on the course web site.

DATE		TOPIC AND READING
W	9/8	Introduction to the course
M	9/13	A sample of philosophical inquiry Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> (in <i>Five Dialogues</i>) Bertrand Russell, “The Value of Philosophy” (E)
W	9/15	Divine commands and moral obligations Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> William Paley, from <i>The Principles of Moral and Political Obligation</i> (E) A. C. Ewing, from “The Autonomy of Ethics” (E)
M	9/20	Arguments for the existence of God Saint Thomas Aquinas, from <i>Summa Theologica</i> (E) Anthony Weston, <i>A Rulebook for Arguments</i> , pp. xi–xiv (Introduction), 1–9 (ch. 1), and 40–52 (ch. 6)
W	9/22	The charges against Socrates Aristophanes, <i>The Clouds</i> (E) Plato, <i>Apology</i> (in <i>Five Dialogues</i>)
M	9/27	Is Socrates guilty of impiety? Plato, <i>Apology</i> Weston, <i>A Rulebook for Arguments</i> , pp. 53–70 (chs. 7–9)
W	9/29	The rights and wrongs of belief William Clifford, from “The Ethics of Belief” William James, from “The Will to Believe”
M	10/4	First paper due Reading TBA

Other important dates:

Mid-term examination, Wednesday, October 27 (projected).

Second paper, Monday, November 23 (projected).

Final examinations (dates and times fixed by the college): for section 3, Friday, December 17, 9:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m.; for section 7, Thursday, December 16, 9:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m.