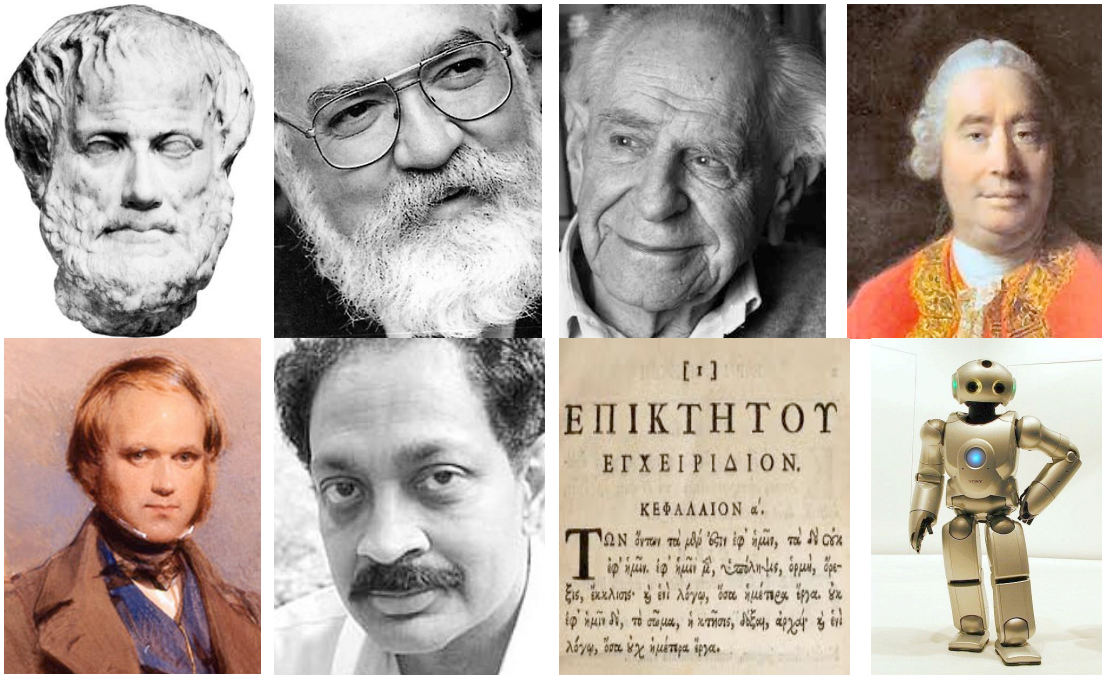


\*

\* UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS, BOSTON \*  
**INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY**

*Philosophy 100: Spring 2011*  
*MWF 1.00 – 1.50pm, Room W/1/64*



## SYLLABUS

Prof. Adam Beresford

Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 2.15-4.15pm, or by appointment; Wheatley 5<sup>th</sup> floor, room 11

Phone: 617 2876554; email: [adam.beresford@umb.edu](mailto:adam.beresford@umb.edu)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

We will look at introductory texts in the following broad areas of philosophy: (1) *the nature and point of philosophy* (2) *Philosophy of Religion (some arguments over the existence of God)* (3) *Philosophy of Mind (the nature of mind and consciousness)* (4) *Philosophy of science* (5) *Ethics*. Your task is to read the texts carefully and understand them, so that you can talk about them and write about them intelligently and coherently. The aim of this course is not for you to memorise the contents of these particular texts, but *to acquire a sense of what philosophy is and how it is done*.

## T E X T S

*All readings referred to in the schedule will be provided in handouts, electronically, by email or on my website. I have two unbreakable rules: (1) You must print out the readings and bring them to class; (2) You must make every conceivable effort to read the texts before class. If you fail to bring a reading to class, you will be sent away to get it. If you do this repeatedly, you will be asked to drop the class. If you don't read the texts before class, you will not be able to participate in the class. The most foolproof method is to make sure you have the readings for the whole week printed out in advance, and already in your folder in hard copy.*

## C O U R S E   R E Q U I R E M E N T S

1. **Papers.** You will write two five-page-minimum papers and a third *in-class* essay in the 8<sup>th</sup> week of semester, right after Spring Break. Questions will be distributed in class one month before each paper is due. Questions for the mid-term will also be given to you in advance, so that you can prepare your essay. If you are at all unsure of what is required of you for philosophical papers, *please, please make full use of my office hours for discussing your writing in detail.* Papers must be handed in on time. Papers handed in one class late will be automatically docked 10%. I will not accept papers after that. I will accept papers sent to me by email, but it is *your* responsibility to make sure that it reaches me in a readable format. Anyone who can foresee that they will not be able to complete a paper on time *must come and see me immediately.*

2. **Preparation/ Participation.** It is essential that you *read the texts carefully before each class.* It is an extremely good idea to *take notes* on whatever you read, and to re-read the material at least once. Philosophy articles and texts tend to be fairly short but dense, and cannot be read in the same way as literature, news, or history. Often we will only discuss *ten pages or less* in one class, and you can therefore easily read the relevant section of text more than once in a reasonable amount of preparation time. *Come to class familiar with the material* and prepared to ask questions about things that you did not understand, or did understand and thought were absurd, wrong, bizarre, etc.

3. **Attendance.** I will take attendance every class. If you miss more than four classes after Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>, for whatever reason, your grade will be affected.

5. **Office Hours:** Make use of my office hours. Come and talk to me about things you have not understood in class, and for help with your papers. I am happy to help you plan your papers. (If you are generally a quiet student in class, you can also make up for this by talking to me in these meetings.)

**Break down of the grade:** First paper: 25%; In-class essay: 30%; Second paper: 35%; Preparation for class and participation: 10%

## SCHEDULE

This schedule gives you a week-by-week account of which topics and texts we will be reading. You will have to keep track of exactly where we are on a class by class basis. Please at least make sure you have covered the main reading for the week in advance.

Week 2 (1.31, 2.2, 2.4)	Russell, <i>The Value of Philosophy</i> , Plato's <i>Apology of Socrates</i>
Week 3 (2.7, 2.9, 2.11)	<i>Apology</i> (cont.) Epicurus 'Letter to Menoecus', and Nozick's experience machine; one class on how to write a philosophy paper ( <i>if time</i> , given recent snow day)
Week 4 (2.14, 2.16, 2.18)	Plato's <i>Euthyphro</i>
Week 5 (only 2.23, 2.25)	Aquinas, 5 ways; Dennett on Locke, Hume & the Argument from Design (excerpt from 'Darwin's Dangerous Idea'); Reverse argument from design
Week 6 (2.28, 3.2, 3.4)	Karl Popper 'The Principle of Leadership'; Plato, <i>Protagoras</i> (excerpt) — on the principles of democracy  FIRST 5-PAGE PAPER DUE ON FRIDAY 4TH
Week 7 (3.7, 3.9, 3.11)	Peter Singer, 'Tit for Tat'; Pinker <i>Hotheads</i> — on the evolution of fairness and other parts of our nature
	Spring Break
Week 8 (3.21, 3.23, 3.25)	Philosophy of Mind 1: Plato, <i>Meno</i> ; Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> 1  MID-TERM EXAM, FRIDAY
Week 9 (3.28, 3.30, 4.1)	Philosophy of Mind 2: Searle, Nagel (Bats); Turing; Chinese Room, etc.
Week 10 (4.4, 4.6, 4.8)	Philosophy of Mind 3: Dennett ('We are Robots'); Ramachandran (on Phantom limbs and your inner zombie)
Week 11 (4.11, 4.13, 4.15)	Hume <i>on Miracles</i>
Week 12 (only)	

4.20, 4.22)	Aristotle, <i>Ethics</i> , Bk 1 & 2 (extracts) — SECOND 5-PAGE PAPER DUE ON FRIDAY 22 <sup>ND</sup>
Week 13 (4.25, 4.27, 4.29)	Epictetus, <i>Handbook</i>
Week 14 (5.2, 5.4, 5.6)	Karl Popper, <i>Conjectures and Refutations</i> —on the nature of science and pseudo-science
Week 15 (5.9, 5.11)	<i>Short</i> final in class exam

#### A C A D E M I C   H O N E S T Y

When it comes to writing papers *please make sure everything you give me is your own work*. If you quote somebody, you have to say clearly where the quote comes from. I approve of and encourage the use of internet resources for researching around this material. But please make sure that any material that you use in your papers gets properly cited. I would like to stress that it is *very easy* to spot papers that have been written by someone else and acquired (i.e., bought) on-line, and that anyone who hands in a pre-fabricated of that sort paper *automatically fails the course, at the very least*. I know there are hundreds of sites offering these papers. *Don't go anywhere near those sites*. Also, don't cut and paste whole paragraphs or sentences from someone else's work. Small quotations are acceptable as long as they are properly flagged. Please take note of regulations on academic dishonesty.

You can view them here: [www.umb.edu/student\\_affairs/programs/judicial/procedures](http://www.umb.edu/student_affairs/programs/judicial/procedures)