Class One: What is Philosophy? (Jan. 15)
- How is philosophy different from mythology? religion? science?
- What does it mean to say that the “love of wisdom” is concerned with the justification of opinions?
- Why is giving reasons for your beliefs important regarding the main areas of philosophy (e.g., metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, and logic)?

Class Two: The Activity of Philosophy and The Life of Reason [two readings] (Jan. 17)
- How is appealing to reason different from appealing to authority, emotion, and self-interest?
- What are the criteria for determining whether your reasons for doing or believing something are justified (i.e., “good” reasons)?
- According to Socrates, “the unexamined life is not worth living”: why?—especially since it is obvious that human beings are not essentially or inherently rational.
- How can reason be used to resolve conflicts in feelings and among different people?
- Why is appealing to reason preferable to relying on authority or allowing people to believe whatever they want about the world?

Class Three: Knowledge and Skepticism (Jan. 22)
- How does Clifford’s insistence on having evidence highlight the moral significance of distinguishing belief and knowledge?
- What are the three necessary conditions for knowledge? Give an example of a Gettier-case exception—that is, a case of meeting these conditions that is still not knowledge.
- How are skepticism, empiricism, and rationalism different?
- What is the difference between global and local skepticism?
- What is Descartes’ method of doubt, and why does he adopt it?
- For Descartes, why can’t we trust knowledge based on sense experience?
- For Descartes, how are doubts raised by dreaming more profound than doubts about sensations?
- How are the thought experiments of the evil demon, the brain in the vat, or the matrix even more profound than doubts about sense experience or dreaming?
- How are skepticism, solipsism, and fallibilism possible responses to Descartes’ doubts?

Class Four: Huemer on Skepticism (Jan. 24)
- Why are there no justified foundational (i.e., indubitable) beliefs?
- Why can’t we think that certain beliefs are innate or necessarily true (known a priori)?
- Why are there no justified criteria (e.g., reason, sense experience, introspection, memory) for determining reliable methods to establish certainty?
- Why can’t we know that our ideas (“sense data”) are caused by external objects or that there is a world “out there” at all that causes us to have ideas?
- Why doesn’t our ability to distinguish being awake and dreaming not help us know the difference between having real experiences and brain-in-a-vat experiences?
Essay One: Descartes on Knowledge (Jan. 27)

How does Descartes use doubts about sense experience, dreaming, and reason itself to know (at least in a qualified sense) that he and objects in the world (e.g., wax) exist?

Class Five: Empiricism and Hume on Induction [two readings] (Jan. 29)
- For empiricists, how can our awareness of the world be contingent and a posteriori and still be considered knowledge?
- What are the standard objections to naive realism?
- How does Locke’s primary-secondary quality distinction exemplify indirect realism?
- How does Berkeley’s response to Locke allow for error and commonsense?
- For Hume, what is the problem of induction, and why is inductive reasoning not only not certain but also not even probable?
- Why is it significant that our knowledge of the cause-effect relation is not a priori?
- Even if we can’t know that the future will resemble the past or that what we experience (“sensible qualities”) is “intuitively” linked to the “secret powers” of things—so what?

Class Six: Berkeley’s Idealism (Jan. 31)
- For Berkeley, why can’t the objects we perceive exist apart from our ideas? and how is such existence based on the doctrine of abstract ideas?
- How are spirits or minds (i.e., substances) different from ideas, and why can’t we have ideas of spirits?
- What is Berkeley’s point in claiming that “an idea can be like nothing but an idea”?
- How are primary qualities (e.g., extension, figure, motion) like secondary qualities (e.g., colors, tastes) in that both exist only in the mind?
- How is the notion of matter or corporeal substance (as that which “supports” accidents or qualities) not only contradictory but also incomprehensible?
- How do the laws of nature reveal the distinction between ideas of sense (“real things”) and ideas of imagination?

Class Seven: Rationalism and Kant [two readings] (Feb. 5)
- How is knowledge, for rationalists, necessary and a priori, universal and necessary?
- Does knowledge based on self-evident (analytic) truths tell us anything about the world?
- Can some a priori truths (e.g., injustice is wrong, all events have causes) tell us anything about the world or how it has to be?
- Are such “truths” really knowledge about the world, and are scientific “laws” necessary?
- How is the distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments different from the distinction between a priori and a posteriori propositions?
- How does Kant’s explanation of what makes synthetic a priori propositions possible amount to a Copernican Revolution in epistemology?
- How does Kant’s reconciliation of the central insights of rationalism and empiricism come at the cost of knowing things as they are in themselves?

Class Eight: Free Will/Hard Determinism (Feb. 7)
- How is causality at the heart of the determinist denial of human freedom?
- What is the difference between hard determinism and fatalism?
- What role does the principle of sufficient reason play in the determinist account?
How is moral responsibility used to deny hard determinism? and what is the hard determinist response to that challenge?

What is indeterminism? and how is moral responsibility used as an objection to it?

How are hard determinism, indeterminism, and libertarianism incompatibilist (vs. compatibilist) theories?

Class Nine: Compatibilism & Libertarianism (Feb. 12)
- What are the central claims and arguments of traditional compatibilism?
- What is deep self-compatibilism? and what distinguishes the arguments against it (the consequence argument vs. the argument using the principle of alternative possibilities)?
- How do libertarians use the distinction between agent causation and event causation to explain how human beings are free?
- What are three objections to libertarianism?

Class Ten: Strawson on Freedom & Responsibility (Feb. 14)
- According to Strawson, why are we not morally responsible for any of our actions based on our choices? How is this the “Basic Argument”?
- Why can't we say that we cause our actions in virtue of being the causes of ourselves?
- How does the compatibilist argument for moral responsibility fail because it relies on an indeterministic (i.e., chance, random) account of ourselves as causae sui?
- If being free is a requirement for moral responsibility, why not simply assume we are free or that free acts are indeterminate?
- Why not think that our “real” self is free (i.e., a causa sui), even if our character or personality is determined by genetics or environment?

Essay Two: Sartre on Freedom (Feb. 17)

For Sartre, how does belief in God undermine human authenticity and the hopeful prospect of freedom by minimizing the existential experience of anguish, abandonment, and despair?

Class Eleven: Personal Identity (Feb. 19)
- Why is the issue of persistence through time central in discussing personal identity?
- What is the illusion theory of identity, and what are the main objections against it?
- What is the body theory of identity?
- How are the prospects of an afterlife, body switching, total amnesia, or duplicate copies arguments against the body theory?
- What is the soul theory of identity?
- How is the possibility of multiple personalities in the same soul, the same consciousness in multiple souls, or fundamental changes in a soul, all arguments against the soul theory?
- What is the memory theory of identity?
- How does memory theory allow for reincarnation and multiple personalities?
- How does memory theory account for holding people morally responsible?
- Why think that memory theory could be inconsistent? The memory theorist’s reply?
- How is memory theory circular because of its focus on real memories?
Class Twelve: Mind-Body Dualism (Feb. 21)

- How do physicalists, dualists, and idealists differ on solving the mind-body problem?
- How are (1) afterlife, (2) out-of-the-body experiences, (3) the conceivability of having no body, and (4) intentionality each arguments for substance dualism?
- What objections can be raised against each of those four arguments?
- Why is interaction a problem for dualism, and how are parallelism and occasionalism attempts to respond to that problem?
- What does it mean to say that mind-body dualism is based on a category mistake?

Class Thirteen: Behaviorism & Identity Theory (Feb. 26)

- What does it mean to say that, for the physicalist, minds not only depend on bodies but are explained solely in terms of bodies?
- What is the difference between methodological and logical behaviorism?
- How does the behaviorist account of minds/mental states solve the interaction problem?
- What are three objections to behaviorism, and how could behaviorists reply to them?
- How does the mind-body identity theorist explain what the mind and mental states are?
- What are the arguments for identity theory?
- How are (1) the subjective character of mental states and (2) not having to have a human brain to think arguments against identity theory?
- How could an identity theorist respond to those objections?

Class Fourteen: Functionalism & Eliminative Materialism (Feb. 28)

- How are mental activity and mind defined by the functionalist?
- How is the Turing Test central for the functionalist in defining mind?
- How does Searle use his Chinese Room argument to show that syntactic organization of symbols is not the same as (semantic) understanding (and thus mind)?
- Why do critics of functionalism invoke the conceptual possibility of robots and zombies?
- How could functionalists reply to Searle and the robot/zombie objectors?
- What is the eliminative materialist position on mind, and what are the arguments for it?
- What are two objections that can be raised against eliminative materialism?

Class Fifteen: Jackson on “Epiphenomenal Qualia” (Mar. 5)

- How does our knowledge of qualia undermine physicalism?
- According to the modal argument, it is possible that physical organisms just like us have no conscious mental life: why is that significant?
- Why are physicalists not concerned with understanding what it is like to be a bat?
- How could the qualia of pain (e.g., hurtfulness) not be physical but an epiphenomenon (i.e., a by-product) of something physical that is unconnected to our survival?

Class Sixteen: Mid-Semester Exam (Mar. 7)

1. How does the existence of qualia supposedly undermine functionalist accounts of mind in a way that is similar to how skeptical challenges undermine rationalism and empiricism?

2. Which theory of personal identity (illusion, body, soul, memory) is more consistent with a compatibilist view of human freedom rather than a determinist or libertarian view? Why?
Class Seventeen: Religious Experience, Cosmological Argument (Mar. 19)
- How is fideism based on subjective commitment and not objective fact?
- What objections can be raised against fideism?
- How do classical theists, pantheists, and new age believers differ on the concept of God?
- How do theists, atheists, and agnostics differ about rational arguments for the existence of God?
- What distinguishes a posteriori, a priori, and pragmatic arguments for God’s existence?
- How are arguments against God’s existence (e.g., the existence of evil) different from those arguments for God’s existence that fail?
- What’s wrong with using religious experiences to justify belief in God’s existence?
- How are the following objections aimed at the cosmological argument:
  - if God is necessary, why not the universe?
  - composition fallacy: just because individual things have causes, why think the universe a whole has a cause?
  - why think everything has a cause or reason?
  - why couldn’t the universe result from the big bang due to a quantum vacuum?
- Why think that a finite universe proves anything about an all-good, all-powerful God who cares about his creation?

Class Eighteen: Design Argument, Hume’s Critique [two readings] (Mar. 21)
- How is the design argument proposed as the best explanation for the universe’s intricacy?
- How is the theory of evolution a challenge to the design argument?
- How is Intelligent Design a response to the evolutionary explanation, and what are the evolutionary replies to this alternative?
- For Hume, why can’t we conclude that, if parts of nature have causes, the whole of nature is caused?
- Why think that the supposed order of the universe has to be modeled on human reason?
- How does our not having experienced the origin of universes undermine the design proponent’s appeal to analogy (i.e., the principle that “like effects prove like causes”)?
- How does Hume show that, using analogy, we cannot conclude that the creator of the universe is wise, one, incorporeal, good, or even still existing?

Essay Three: Kierkegaard on Faith [two readings] (Mar. 24)

Why, for Kierkegaard, can’t the existence of God be proven objectively (i.e., as acceptable to “the crowd”) precisely because God is presupposed as the Unknown, the limit of reason?

Class Nineteen: Ontological and Wager Arguments (Mar. 26)
- What is Anselm’s version of the ontological argument?
- What are Hume’s two objections to the ontological argument?
- What is Kant’s objection to the ontological argument?
- How is Pascal’s wager an attempt to show how it is more reasonable to believe that God exists than not to believe?
- What are two objections to the Wager?
- What conclusions can we draw from not being able to prove rationally that God exists?
Class Twenty: The Problem of Evil (Mar. 28)
- What is the logical problem of evil?
- How is (a) seeing evil as part of God’s plan (which we don’t understand), (b) needing some evil to build character, and (c) allowing for the possibility of evil for freedom attempts to respond to this problem?
- What is the evidential problem of evil?
- How does noting that natural evils (e.g., natural disasters, disease) cause undeserved suffering support the claim that it is unlikely that there is no all-good, all-powerful God?
- Other theodicies include claims that (a) evil is not real, (b) evil is a punishment for sin, (c) evil is needed so that we recognize the good; (d) evil is caused by the devil, and (e) evil is a test by which those who pass merit heaven. What are the replies to each of these?
- How could theism or atheism be preferable to agnosticism?

Class Twenty-One: Ethical Relativism, Divine Command Theory (Apr. 2)
- What is the point of appealing to moral principles?
- What is the subjectivist version of ethical relativism, and what are some objections to it?
- What is the cultural version of ethical relativism, and what are some objections to it?
- How are moral values using the divine command theory of ethics?
- What are at least four objections to the divine command theory?
- How could a divine command theorist reply to these objections?
- How could a critic respond to the replies given by the divine command theorist?

Class Twenty-Two: Utilitarianism (Apr. 4)
- Why is utilitarianism sometimes referred to as hedonistic consequentialism?
- How do Bentham and Mill differ on their appeal to the hedonistic calculus?
- According to the utilitarian, why be moral (i.e., promote general happiness)?
- How does utilitarianism seem merely to be expedient (and contrary to our intuitions) as well as a justification for ignoring people’s rights?
- What are the utilitarian replies to these objections?
- Why do utilitarians find promise-keeping a challenge, and how could they respond to it?
- How are supererogation and special obligations to family issues for utilitarianism?

Class Twenty-Three: Act/Rule Utilitarianism (Apr. 9)
- What is the point behind Mill’s remark that “It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied”?
- How does utilitarianism conflict with respect for rights, duties to others, and justice?
- How is rule utilitarianism different from act utilitarianism?
- Why wouldn’t a form of rule utilitarianism that allows for exceptions protect rights?
- What is the point of acting virtuously if it does not necessarily promote happiness?

Class Twenty-Four: Kantian/Duty Ethics (Apr. 11)
- In Kantian deontology, what makes an action morally valuable?
- Why base morality on a priori laws of conduct rather than inclinations or happiness?
- How is a “good will” not determined by consequences but on fulfilling moral (i.e., rational, universal) obligations?
- What is the difference between a hypothetical and a categorical imperative?
- How does the categorical imperative focus on the form of moral maxims?
• How are suicide, promise breaking, and failure to develop one’s talents or help those in need immoral based on the categorical imperative?
• How does treating oneself & others as rational agents embody the categorical imperative?
• How is the golden rule not an expression of Kant’s categorical imperative?

**Essay Four: Virtue Ethics [two readings] (Apr. 14)**

How does virtue ethics shift discussions about morality away from universally defensible acts to the “tragic protagonists” who rely on traditions to guide their pursuit of the good?

**Class Twenty-Five: Rawls & Nozick on Justice (Apr. 16)**

• For Rawls, why would a person in the “original position” (behind the “veil of ignorance”) adopt the principles of (a) equal liberty, (b) equality of opportunity, and (c) difference?
• How is Rawlsian contractarianism different from utilitarianism and Kantian ethics?
• For Nozick, how does a “pattern-based system of justice” like Rawls’ violate rights?
• How is Nozick’s theory of justice “libertarian”?
• How do Hobbes and Locke differ on the source of rights in the social contract?
• For Nozick, why doesn’t “minimal state” existence violate individual rights?

**Class Twenty-Six: Nietzsche on Morality (Apr. 18)**

• How is life negated by slave morality’s promotion of “good and evil”?
• How can the master morality’s creation of values—the “self-overcoming of man”—be noble and yet “egoistic”? 
• How is the morality of utility an example of slave morality?
• How is the justified “egoism” of the master different from the misplaced vanity of the slave, in that the master does not endorse universal selfishness?
• How do the master and slave differ in accounting for the origins of moral obligations?

**Class Twenty-Seven: Epictetus on the Meaning of Life (Apr. 23)**

• According to the Stoics Marcus Aurelius and Seneca, how can we live meaningful lives?
• For Epictetus, how does knowing which things are within your control and which are not affect your freedom and well-being?
• Why does an educated person blame neither others nor himself for his troubles?
• If you can influence the outcome, should you attempt to do things; or should you not engage in such attempts?
• How can “no other person hurt you unless you will it”?
• How should we think of God(s) if good and evil apply only to things that are up to us?
• How are answering what, why, and how the three essential topics in philosophy?

**Class Twenty-Eight: Nagel on the Absurdity of Life (Apr. 25)**

• If life is absurd, would living longer or continuing to exist in an afterlife make our lives any less absurd?
• For Nagel, how is self-consciousness necessary for thinking that our lives are absurd?
• Why can’t contributing to a larger purpose give meaning to our lives?
• How does a skeptical attitude toward the meaning of life result in a sense of irony?
• Nagel says that our response to the absurdity of life should not be heroism or despair but irony. What do we need to recognize in order to pull this off?
Final Exam Questions (Friday, May 3, 12:30-2:30; in class)

1. How does the wager argument for believing in God differ from the cosmological argument in a way similar to how act and rule utilitarians differ regarding how we respect rights?

2. How is Kant’s ethics based on views about freedom and duty similar to those adopted by the Stoics and implicit in Rawls’ theory of justice?

3. How does the ironic prospect of life’s being absurd draw on Nietzschean insights in a way that undermines both the design argument and arguments that highlight the problem of evil?