

PHILOSOPHY 001:  
INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS – SSI, 2014  
MTW 4:10 P.M. - 6:25 P.M., WELLMAN 229

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**1 Basic course information:**

INSTRUCTOR: Ted Shear  
CONTACT: ebshear@ucdavis.edu  
OFFICE: 239 Social Sciences and Humanities  
OFFICE HOURS: W 2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M. (or by appointment)

**2 Topic and goal of the course:**

*I am sitting with a philosopher in the garden; he says again and again “I know that that’s a tree”, pointing to a tree that is near us. Someone else arrives and hears this, and I tell them: “This fellow isn’t insane. We are only doing philosophy.” [Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, p. 467]*

This course will explore some classic problems of philosophy in an attempt to give students a rich understanding of the field of philosophy and how it is practiced. A central unifying question that we will investigate throughout the course will be the metaphilosophical question: “What is philosophy and how does it differ from other pursuits of knowledge?” In an attempt to answer this question, we will proceed by considering several different questions in various areas of philosophy.

Topics will include problems surrounding arguments for the existence of God (philosophy of religion/metaphysics), the moral standing of actions (moral philosophy), induction (philosophy of science and epistemology), the analysis of knowledge (epistemology), and paradoxes (philosophical logic).

GE credit: ArtHum, Wrt | AH, WE. — I, II, III.

**3 Evaluation criteria and policies:**

No late assignments will be accepted unless a medical note is provided or permission is granted by the instructor *prior to the due date*. If you do not turn in your assignment on time and have not received an extension, you will receive no credit.

It is the sole responsibility of the student to attend lecture, keep up with the reading, and be aware of the course policies and deadlines.

ASSIGNMENT	WEIGHT	DATE
Précis 1:	10%	See below
Précis 2:	10%	See below
Précis 3:	10%	See below
Participation	10%	—
Midterm Paper	25%	7/16/14
Final Paper:	35%	7/31/14

### 3.1 Précis

You will be required to write *three* 250 word précis on readings from the course. These assignments will be due electronically on SmartSite on by Friday at midnight on the week in which the reading was assigned. You may choose to write on whichever three readings you would like.

The goal of a précis is to briefly outline the reading. You will be expected to give a clear and concise statement of the main thesis of the reading, provide a sketch of the argument provided for that thesis, and explain author's argument. You will not be expected to provide any critical analysis of the author's argument or position.

### 3.2 Papers

There are two required papers for this course. The first is a 750-1000 word paper due before midnight on 7/11/14 and the final paper will be a 1000-1250 word paper due by midnight on 7/30/14. Topics will be distributed one week in advance for both papers and should be submitted electronically through SmartSite before midnight on the due date.

More information and guidance about how to write these papers will be provided when the assignment is posted.

### 3.3 Anonymized grading:

All assignments will be graded anonymously. This means that I will not know the identity of the student when grading. In order to facilitate this practice, it is essential that you do not put your name on the front of your work or in any place that would be visible during grading. Instead, you should attach a separate sheet to the back of your assignment that includes your name and student ID number.

### 3.4 Academic honesty:

Suspected cases of any sort of academic dishonesty are, without question, reported to Student Judicial Affairs (SJA). See the following website for more information on the university's policy and procedure regarding academic honesty.

<http://sja.ucdavis.edu/>

If you are unsure about whether a particular practice counts as academic dishonesty, refer to the SJA's policy and procedure first. Contact me if you are still unsure.

While you are *strongly* encouraged to discuss the material from this course with your peers, all of your written work must be completed without the aid of outside help.

### 3.5 Writing help

One of the goals of this course is to help students improve their analytic writing skills. You are permitted and encouraged to seek help with your writing through the UC Davis Student Academic Success Center.

<http://success.ucdavis.edu/academic/writing.html>

Additionally, I am available during my office hours and by appointment to give you guidance and feedback on your writing.

### 3.6 Students with disabilities:

If you have a disability and require accommodations, please contact the Student Disability Center (SDC). Their contact information can be found here:

<http://sdc.ucdavis.edu/contact.html>

Appropriate accommodations will be provided once the SDC determines what they are. Please complete this step at the *beginning* of the quarter since the SDC sometimes takes some time to process these requests.

## 4 Schedule:

WEEK:	DATE:	TOPIC:
<b>Week 1</b>	6/23/14	Philosophical methodology
	6/24/14	
	6/25/14	
<b>Week 2</b>	6/30/14	The existence of God
	7/01/14	
	7/02/14	
<b>Week 3</b>	7/07/14	Moral philosophy
	7/08/14	
	7/09/14	
<b>Week 4</b>	7/14/14	The problem of induction
	7/15/14	
	7/16/14	
<b>Week 5</b>	7/21/14	The analysis of knowledge
	7/22/14	
	7/23/14	
<b>Week 6</b>	7/28/14	Paradoxes
	7/29/14	
	7/30/14	No class