

PHILOSOPHY H101

Honors Introduction to Philosophy

(www.cohums.ohio-state.edu/philo/people/faculty/hubin.1/classes/H101AU2000/)

Instructor: Don Hubin
hubin.1@osu.edu
337N University Hall
292-2505
www.cohums.ohio-state.edu/philo/people/faculty/hubin.1/
Office Hours: M 10:00 – 11:00, Tu 1:30 – 2:30
and by appointment

Course Description

This course will be a very challenging introduction to a cluster of philosophical problems connected with the nature of persons. We will read, discuss and critically evaluate both classical and contemporary answers to such questions as: What is the relation between one's mind and body? In virtue of what, if anything, do normal adult humans occupy a special moral status in the world? What is the moral status of human fetuses and non-human animals? Is it possible for a machine to be conscious, and how, if at all, do we differ from sophisticated machines? In virtue of what is a person now identical with herself at an earlier or later time? Do humans have a single unified consciousness?

Texts:

There are no required textbooks for this course. You will quickly learn that this doesn't mean that there is no required reading. Some required reading will be distributed in class, some will be placed on reserve and some will be available on the Web.

Partial Course Outline and Readings:

I. A Puzzle About Persons

Readings: "Where Am I?", Daniel Dennett (Handout)

II. Minds, Bodies and Persons

Readings: "Meditations on First Philosophy" (Meditations 1, 2, and 6), René Descartes (Web)

Further readings to be announced

III. Non-Persons: The Case of Non-human Animals

A. Ethical Problems

Readings: To be announced

B. Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Nature of Non-human Animals

Readings: "God Created Man in His Own Image", *The Bible* [WEB]

"How Humans Differ from Other Creatures", Aristotle [WEB]

"Differences Between Rational and Other Creatures", Aquinas [WEB]

"Animals are Machines", Descartes [WEB]

"A Reply to Descartes", Voltaire [WEB]

"Of the Reason of Animals", Hume [WEB]

C. The Treatment of Non-human Animals

Readings: To be announced

D. The Rights of Non-human Animals

Readings: To be announced

E. Killing and the Value of Non-human Life

Readings: To be announced

IV. Abortion and the Nature of Persons

Readings: "Abortion", Donald Hubin (Web)

"Roe v. Wade", U.S. Supreme Court (Web)

Further readings to be announced

V. Minds and Machines

Readings: To be announced

VI. Personal Identity

Readings: "Of Identity and Diversity", John Locke (Web)

"Of Personal Identity", Joseph Butler (Web)

"Our Idea of Identity", David Hume (Web)

Further readings to be announced

VII. The Unity of Consciousness

Readings: To be announced

Course Requirements:

Student grades will be based on three short (2-3 page) papers, each worth 15% of the course grade, and one long (12-15 page) paper worth 45% of the grade. The remaining 10% of the course grade will be determined by active, intelligent, informed participation in class discussion. Due dates for the short papers will be approximately every two weeks and will be announced in class at least a week in advance. The term paper will be submitted in draft form on Wednesday, November 21st. These will be returned with comments, criticisms and suggestions for revision. No grade will be assessed on the rough drafts; however, a penalty of one full grade will be assessed on the final draft if no rough draft was turned in. Final drafts are due in my mailbox in 350 University Hall by 5:00 p.m., December 7th. (Graduating seniors, if there are any, must see me about the due dates for their work.)

Academic Misconduct

The University understands academic misconduct to include "any activity which tends to compromise the academic integrity of the institution, subvert the educational process" ("Procedures of the Committee on Academic Misconduct", Sept. 1989). Examples include, but are not limited to, such actions as cheating on exams and submitting a term paper written by another. No one should be unclear about whether *these* are wrong, but students are sometimes not clear about what constitutes plagiarism. 'Plagiarism' is defined by the University to be "the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrase of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas". There should be no misunderstanding about word for word transcriptions or simple paraphrases--these *must* be acknowledged through proper citations. It is sometimes not clear, though, when simply using the ideas of another requires citation. This is especially true in the context of a course, in which one is, presumably acquiring fundamental ideas of a subject matter from the text or the instructor. Certain ideas are "in the public domain", so to speak; they are ideas used by everyone working in the field, and do not require citation. Other ideas are such that their origin needs to be acknowledged. It is sometimes difficult for beginning students to distinguish these. It is helpful to remember that what is at issue is whether the failure to acknowledge a source would tend to misrepresent the idea as your own. The failure to acknowledge your source for a distinction between person and human being, for example, would not tend to misrepresent the distinction as your own since it is a distinction that most people working in the field will draw in some way or other. To offer a *specific* account of this distinction that is offered by another without citing the source could easily tend to misrepresent the account as your own. It is clearly better to err on the side of over-acknowledgment in cases in which one is in doubt.

I view academic misconduct of any sort as a *very* serious violation of University requirements. University rules provide for extremely serious sanctions for academic misconduct, and I will, as I am required to do, forward any cases of suspected misconduct to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.