



Academic Year 2016-17

Introduction to Philosophy

Venue	Conway Hall, Red Lion Square
Day and Time	Monday 5pm to 7pm
Term Dates	3rd October to 6th December 2016 16th January to 21st March 2017
No. of Meetings	20
Module taught by	Jane O'Grady, Mark Fielding
Fee	£120 per term

Entrance Requirements

The course is open to anyone with an interest and enthusiasm for the subject. Students are able to register for both terms at the start of the course. Payment to be made at the start of each term. As the material covered in each term is distinct, it's possible for students to take each as a separate module.

Teaching Methods

The modules will be taught using a combination of lectures, reading extracts of key texts, and class discussion. In addition students can be set essays (two per term) which are optional. An additional fee applies should students want to receive this extra teaching. There will be individual feedback on each assignment, together with an opportunity to produce additional, short, pieces of work in order to aid understanding of particular arguments, as necessary.

Course Description

This course focusses on the key areas of Philosophy as they have come to be identified over the history of the subject. The intention is to prepare students for the University of London International Programme examination 'Introduction to Philosophy' and we follow the content of *Reading Philosophy: Selected Texts with a method for Beginners* (Routledge, 2002). Subjects covered include: Theory of Knowledge (epistemology), Metaphysics, Moral Philosophy, Political Philosophy, and Aesthetics. The course is open to all students, regardless of whether the University of London examination is entered for.

Module Content

First Term

Week1

Introduction

The aims and methods of Philosophy: A brief overview of the development of the subject and of the structure of the course

Tutor: Mark Fielding

Week 2

Epistemology

What is Knowledge? Belief, Truth, and Justification

Tutor: Mark Fielding

Week 3

Epistemology

How do we know that we're not a brain-in-a-vat? The sceptical challenge to knowing and its problems

Tutor: Mark Fielding

Week 4

The self as two (Dualism)

Descartes' idea of the Self and its problems

Tutor: Jane O'Grady

Week 5

The self as one (Monism)

Strawson's argument against Descartes

Tutor: Jane O'Grady

Week 6

Taking pleasure in the presentation of pain: Hume's account of Tragedy

Tutor: Jane O'Grady

Week 7

Another solution to the paradox of Tragedy: Susan Feagin

Tutor: Jane O'Grady

Week 8

What is it to treat people equally?: Williams on Equality

Tutor: Mark Fielding

Week 9

Needs and Distribution: Nozick's objections to Williams

Tutor: Mark Fielding

Week 10

Contemporary Philosophy: An overview

Tutor: Mark Fielding

Second term

Week 11

What are Moral Dilemmas? E.J. Lemmon

Tutor: Mark Fielding

Week 12

The greatest good for the greatest number? J.S. Mill on Utilitarianism

Tutor: Mark Fielding

Week 13

The nature of Personal Identity: Locke's account

Tutor: Jane O'Grady

Week 14

Williams' 'The Self and the Future'

Tutor: Jane O'Grady

Week 15

How Free are We? Free Will and Determinism

Tutor: Jane O'Grady

Week 16

Strawson, Freedom, and Resentment

Tutor: Jane O'Grady

Week 17

The Nature of Causation: Hume's billiard balls

Tutor: Jane O'Grady

Week 18

Challenging Hume: Anscombe and Feynman

Tutor: Jane O'Grady

Week 19

What do things have in common? Boyle and Locke on Qualities

Tutor: Mark Fielding

Week 20

Berkeley's critique of Locke: Hylas and Philonous

Tutor: Mark Fielding

Suggested readings:

No additional readings are necessary, but it's sometimes helpful to read a number of different discussions of the same problem to assist in understanding. Not all Philosophers are also clear writers!

Here are a few suggestions:

Think: A Compelling Introduction to Philosophy, Simon Blackburn. OUP 2001

The Problems of Philosophy, Bertrand Russell. Cosimo 2007

What Does It All Mean?: A Very Short Introduction to Philosophy, Thomas Nagel. OUP 1989

Western Philosophy: An Anthology, (Ed.) John Cottingham. Wiley-Blackwell 2008