

PHL 201

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

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INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

What we need to do today

- * Standard first day of class lecture
- * Introducing myself
- * Explaining the class
- * Selling the class
- * Grades and workload
- * Starting the class

My background

- * Professor of Philosophy at Eastern Oregon University 1982-2016
- * Retired June 2016
- * Teaching interests
 - * Introduction to philosophy
 - * Critical thinking
 - * Ethics
 - * Philosophy of religion
 - * Philosophy of law
- * Research interests
 - * Privacy
 - * Philosophy of Religion
 - * Philosophy of Law
 - * Inference to the best explanation
- * Distance education
 - * My history
 - * Old style lecture professor
 - * Collaborative learning
 - * My sympathies for distance students

Explaining the class

- * What the course is not
 - * Not a course on the history of philosophy
 - * Not a survey of philosophical problems
- * Why not?
 - * Expense
 - * Taking advantage of my research
 - * I hope the course can be of practical value to you

Explaining the course

- * What the course is
- * Philosophical reasoning
- * Case studies
 - * Inference to the best explanation
 - * Philosophical theology
 - * Philosophical psychology

Structure of the course

- * Three large modules
 - * 1st four weeks — **Midterm exam**
 - * Skepticism and knowledge
 - * Inference to the best explanation
 - * Darwin and evolution
 - * Global warming
 - * 2nd three weeks — **Analytical paper**
 - * Cosmological argument
 - * Teleological argument
 - * Mysticism and the problem of evil
 - * 3rd three weeks — **Final exam**
 - * Mind-body problem and artificial intelligence
 - * Evolutionary psychology and the biological basis of religion
 - * The biological basis of religion and inference to the best explanation

Structure of the Course

- * Three hours reading per week
- * Four hours streaming video-lectures
- * Three hours preparing for exams and analytical paper
- * Is this an unreasonable workload?
- * Worst case scenario
- * The “Carnegie Formula”

Means of Assessment

- * Assessing your work; assessing my work
- * “Take-home” midterm essay exam (33% of course grade)
 - * Covers first four weeks
 - * Four questions — answer any three
- * Analytical paper — Covers Weeks 5, 6, & 7 (33% of course grade)
- * “Take-home” final essay exam (33% of course grade)
 - * Covers last three weeks
 - * Four questions — answer any three

“Homework”

- * List three things you know for sure
- * Could you be wrong about any of these?