

# **Introduction to Philosophy**

PHIL-020-12, Summer 2021

Class Time: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday; 10:45 a.m - 12:45 p.m.

Class Location: Car Barn 202

Zoom Link to Class (in case of absence):

<https://georgetown.zoom.us/j/98345523251?pwd=anFzL3VXRvdHUkpGWUY4M3o5Mm1ZQT09>

Instructor: Christopher Torres

Office Hours: Car Barn 202; 12:45 - 12:59 p.m. Monday through Thursday; Fridays  
(location/time) by appointment.

Email: cat139@georgetown.edu

## **Course Description:**

This course will introduce you to some of the central methods, tools, and questions of philosophy through the writings of both traditional and contemporary authors. We will look at how these thinkers engage with five important topics in philosophy: logic (the nature of reasoning and argumentation), religion (the nature of God and the existence of evil), knowledge (its possibility and its nature), ethics (how one should live one's life), and mind (our knowledge of other minds and the relationship between the mind and the brain). This course intends to provide not only a broad exposure to the content debated in philosophy but also the reading, writing, and reasoning skills that are essential to successful philosophizing, which can also be used to improve thinking and communication in one's future academic, professional, and civic life.

## **Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes:**

- (1) Achieve a foundational understanding of some key debates in the history of philosophy.
- (2) Improve one's ability to interpret, analyze, and synthesize content from a variety of complex texts.
- (3) Develop critical thinking and communication skills that can be used for the rest of one's life.
  - a. Be able to understand and evaluate arguments offered (in either speech or writing) for the philosophical positions of others.
  - b. Be able to articulate clear and precise arguments (in either speech or writing) for one's own philosophical positions.
- (4) Be able to think independently and creatively about some of the perennial questions of the human condition.
- (5) Achieve a greater awareness of the nature and importance of intellectual virtues, such as honesty, integrity, respect for others (especially those with opposing views), objectivity, and openness to the transcendent.

### Required Readings:

1. Patrick J. Hurley, Lori Watson. 2018. *A Concise Introduction to Logic* (13th Edition). ISBN-13: 9781305958098; ISBN-10: 1305958098.
2. John Perry, Michael Bratman, John Martin Fischer. 2018. *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings* (8th Edition). ISBN-13: 978-0190698720; ISBN-10: 0190698721.
3. Any other readings will be available on Canvas or emailed to you.

### Course Requirements with Points: (100 point total)

Attendance & Participation:	10 points
Daily Exercises/Discussion Posts:	20 points
Midterm Exam:	30 points
Final Exam:	40 points

### Attendance\*:

It's mandatory, and I will take attendance. Each class is worth an equal portion of your attendance grade (i.e., 1/2 point). **Each unexcused absence pulls down your grade a little bit.** If you need to be excused from a meeting, communicate with me about it *before* the class meets. The only excuses I will accept *after* an absence are those related to an illness or accident that prevented your informing me beforehand.

*\*There may be some hiccups in attending class during the first week on account of university Covid protocols. If you fall into this category, please use the Zoom link provided at the top of the syllabus to attend class virtually. You will be expected to complete all readings, homework, and in-class assignments as your in-person classmates. Nevertheless, please do the best you can to complete all Covid-related protocols ahead of time and attend class in person from the very first meeting because we have 5 very short weeks together and a lot of content to get through.*

### Participation:

Everyone is expected to constructively participate in discussions; failure to do so will result in a lower "attendance and participation" grade. If you are participating, you are mentally *present* with us, either taking notes, listening, or talking—you are not distracted on a screen. While you may take notes on your electronic device, you may not use that device to look at things unrelated to course content and discussion (e.g., video games or online shopping). On the days you are found breaking this rule, you will **not receive credit for your attendance in the class.**

### Daily Exercises/Discussion Posts:

There will be homework, which can be found under the "Assignments" tab of Canvas, after every class that is due before the next class meeting, i.e., before 10:45 a.m. on the days that we meet. Each homework assignment will be worth 1 point. Students should

upload either a document or a (clear) picture of their completed homework under the corresponding assignment on Canvas. Although answers will not be graded for accuracy, your answers should demonstrate thoughtful, concerted effort and engagement with the reading. A one or two sentence response, for example, would most likely not satisfy this standard. These exercises/discussion questions are intended to deepen your understanding of the text in preparation for your exams. Copying responses from another student will be noticed and may result in academic penalties that include, but are not limited to, failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. See sections on “Academic Integrity” and “Plagiarism” below for more information.

**Midterm Exam:**

The midterm exam will be held for two hours during our class meeting on Tuesday, June 22. It will be a cumulative, open-book/open-note exam over the reasoning and logic skills thus far covered in the class.

**Final Exam:**

The final exam will be held for two hours during our class meeting on Thursday, July 8. It will be an open-book/open-note exam over everything that was covered after the midterm exam to the present. The exam will include essay, multiple-choice, and true/false questions.

**Communication Policy:**

Communication is the key to unlocking education. Students are welcome to email me with philosophical or administrative questions, concerns, or ideas of any kind. Messages should remain formal to respect the dignity of the profession and should come from a GU email address. To make an appointment, email me suggesting three possible dates and times, then I’ll confirm one.

**Grading Scale:**

A (4.0):	93.333-100	C+ (2.3):	76.666-79.999
A- (3.7):	90-93.333	C (2.0):	73.333-76.666
B+(3.3):	86.666-89.999	C- (1.7):	70-73.333
B (3.0):	83.333-86.666	D (1.0):	60-69.999
B- (2.7):	80-83.333	F (0.0):	0-59.999

**Students with Disabilities**

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities have the right to specific accommodations. Some

accommodations might include note takers, books on tape, extended time on assignments, and interpreter services among others. Students are responsible before the start of classes for communicating their needs to the Academic Resource Center, the office that oversees disability support services (202-687-8354; [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu); <https://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/disability/>) to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. For the most current and up-to-date policy information, please refer to the Georgetown University Academic Resource Center website. Students are highly encouraged to discuss the documentation and accommodation process with an Academic Resource Center administrator.

### **Accessibility and Inclusion**

One of the central tenets of Georgetown's educational mission is *cura personalis*, a Latin phrase meaning "care of the whole person." Georgetown is committed to showing care and concern for each student by creating an inclusive and accessible learning environment that follows universal design principles to meet the needs of its diverse student body. I am committed to creating a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including along lines of race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.). For example, if your name or pronouns need to be corrected, please let me know early in the semester so that I can make the appropriate changes to my records.

### **Academic Integrity**

Students at Georgetown University are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity. Although most Georgetown students conduct themselves in accordance with these standards, occasionally, there are students who violate the code of conduct. Cheating harms the University community in many ways. For example, honest students are frustrated by the unfairness of cheating that goes undetected, and students who cheat can skew the grading curve in a class, resulting in lower grades for students who worked hard and did their own work. Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to, failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. All students are expected to fully adhere to the policies and procedures of Georgetown's Honor System and to take the Honor Code Pledge.

### **Honor Code Pledge**

In pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and to uphold the Georgetown University honor system; to live out a commitment to integrity in all my words and actions; to be honest in every academic

endeavor; and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community as we live and work together; to live out the ideals of Georgetown University I commit myself to be a person for others in my daily life, respectful of difference and disagreement; To care for this venerable campus and all of those with whom I share it; and to fulfill in all ways the trust placed in me to carry on the Georgetown tradition.

### **Plagiarism**

Stealing someone else's work is a terminal offense in the workplace, and it will wreck your career in academia, too. Students are expected to work with integrity and honesty in all their assignments. The Georgetown University Honor System defines plagiarism as "the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another." More guidance is available through the Gervase Programs. If you have any doubts about plagiarism, paraphrasing, and the need to credit, check out Plagiarism.org. All submissions must be your original work. Any submission suspected of plagiarism will be immediately referred to the Honor Council for investigation and possible adjudication. All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. If you have not done so, please read the honor code material located online at the Honor Council website.

### **Support Services**

Georgetown recognizes that COVID-19 has a significant impact on everyone in the Georgetown community. Georgetown offers a variety of support services for students that can be accessed online and has put together a newsletter which aims to provide you with information about well-being resources and virtual meetings that can connect you with mental health professionals on and off campus during this time. Below are some resources available to you: • Academic Resource Center 202-687-8354 | [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu) • Counseling and Psychiatric Services 202-687-6985 • Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action (IDEAA) (202) 687-4798

### **Title IX/Sexual Misconduct**

Georgetown University and its faculty are committed to supporting survivors and those impacted by sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, and stalking. Georgetown requires faculty members, unless otherwise designated as confidential, to report all disclosures of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator or a Deputy Title IX Coordinator. If you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a professor in or outside of the classroom (with the exception of disclosures in papers), that faculty member must report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator, or Deputy Title IX Coordinator. The coordinator will, in turn, reach out to the student to provide support, resources, and the option to meet. [Please note

that the student is not required to meet with the Title IX coordinator.]. Please note that University policy requires faculty to report any disclosures about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator, whose role is to coordinate the University's response to sexual misconduct. Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources who can provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct. These resources include: • Jen Schweer, MA, LPC, Associate Director of Health Education Services for Sexual Assault Response and Prevention (202) 687-0323 | jls242@georgetown.edu • Erica Shirley, Trauma Specialist, Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS), (202) 687-6985 | els54@georgetown.edu. More information about reporting options and resources can be found on the Sexual Misconduct Website.

### **Title IX/Pregnancy and Parenting Accommodations**

Georgetown University is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for pregnant and parenting students. Students may request adjustments based on general pregnancy needs or accommodations based on a pregnancy-related complication. Specific adjustments will be handled on a case by case basis and will depend on medical needs and academic requirements. Students seeking a pregnancy adjustment or accommodation should follow the process laid out on the Title IX website. Discrimination based on sex, including sexual misconduct and discrimination based on pregnancy or parenting status, subverts the University's mission and threatens permanent damage to the educational experience, careers, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff.

### **Georgetown Library**

If you have a question for a librarian you can go to their "Ask Us" page where you will have the option to chat online, send an email, or schedule a Zoom appointment to discuss a research topic, develop a search strategy, or examine resources for projects and papers. Librarians offer an overview of and in-depth assistance with important resources for senior or master's theses, dissertations, papers and other types of research. This service is available to currently enrolled students who need assistance with Georgetown-assigned projects and papers. Please review the Services & Resources Guide for Online Students for additional information.

### **eResources**

Students enrolled in courses have access to the University Library System's eResources, including 500+ research databases, 1.5+ million ebooks, and thousands of periodicals and other multimedia files (films, webinars, music, and images). You can access these resources through the Library's Homepage by using your NetID and password.

## Learning Resources

Georgetown offers a host of learning resources to its students. Two that you might find particularly helpful in this course are the Writing Center and Refworks. • The Writing Center offers peer tutoring by trained graduate and undergraduate students who can assist you at any point in the writing process. They help at any stage of your writing process, from brainstorming to revision. Tutors can offer advice on thesis development, use of evidence, organization, flow, sentence structure, grammar, and more. The Writing Center will not proofread or edit papers; rather, they will help to improve your proofreading and editing skills to become a better writer. Appointments can be booked online through their website. • Refworks is an online research management tool that aids in organizing, storing, and presenting citation sources for papers and projects.

## Technical Support

All students have 24/7 access to Canvas technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including live chat and a support hotline at 855-338-2770. Use the 'Help' icon in the lower left of your Canvas window to view all available support and feedback options. If you're looking for help on a specific feature, check out the Canvas Student Guide.

## Privacy, Journalistic Ethics, and Intellectual Property

To promote learning, this course encourages open inquiry and discussion by and among course participants in an atmosphere of mutual respect and candor. Students must be able to engage in class discussion freely, without fear that their conversations and personally-held views will be shared with the general public. Accordingly, the course materials and discussions by or among course participants cannot be recorded, reported on, or distributed to anyone outside of the class without the clear and explicit consent of all individuals involved (including the instructor).

## TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

(Subject to Revision)

*The readings corresponding to each date are to be completed before class.*

Week 1: Informal Reasoning	
Monday, June 7	<i>A Concise Introduction to Logic (CIL)</i> , Ch. 1.1 - 1.2
Tuesday, June 8	<i>CIL</i> , Ch. 1.3 - 1.4

Wednesday, June 9	<i>CIL</i> , Ch. 1.5 - 1.6
Thursday, June 10	<i>CIL</i> , Ch. 6.1 - 6.2

Week 2: Propositional Logic Primer	
Monday, June 14	<i>CIL</i> , Ch. 6.3 - 6.4
Tuesday, June 15	<i>CIL</i> , Ch. 6.5 - 6.6
Wednesday, June 16	<i>CIL</i> , Ch. 7.1 - 7.2
Thursday, June 17	<i>CIL</i> , Ch. 7.3 - 7.4

Week 3: Midterm Exam; God and Evil	
Monday, June 21	Review
Tuesday, June 22	Midterm Exam
Wednesday, June 23	<i>Introduction to Philosophy (IP)</i> , pp. 37-53
Thursday, June 24	<i>IP</i> , pp. 89-98, 124-131

Week 4: Knowledge and Reality; Utilitarianism; Deontology; Virtue Ethics	
Monday, June 28	<i>IP</i> , pp. 161-193
Tuesday, June 29	<i>IP</i> , pp. 521-527, 532-548, 575-582
Wednesday, June 30	<i>IP</i> , pp. 583-606
Thursday, July 1	<i>IP</i> , pp. 607-632

Week 5: Knowledge of Other Minds; Relationship between Mind and Brain	
Monday, July 5	<b>NO CLASS (Independence Day Observed)</b>



Tuesday, July 6	<i>IP</i> , pp. 271-298 (top), 303-306
Wednesday, July 7	Review
Thursday, July 8	Final Exam