

University of Waterloo
Department of Philosophy

Philosophy 110A (LEC 002)

Introduction to Philosophy: Knowledge and Reality

Term Winter 2012
Class: T/TH 1:00 - 2:20
Classroom: RCH305

Instructor: Gregory Andres, Ph.D.
Office: HH326
email: ggandres@uwaterloo.ca



Figure 1: Detail from *Battle of the Giants*, Pergamon Museum, Turkey

Stranger: There appears to be a sort of war of Giants and Gods going on amongst them; they are fighting with one another about the nature of essence.

Theaetetus: How is that?

Stranger: Some of them are dragging down all things from heaven and from the unseen to earth, and they literally grasp in their hands rocks and oaks; of these they lay hold, and obstinately maintain, that the things only which can be touched or handled have being or essence, because they define being and body as one, and if anyone else says that what is not a body exists they altogether despise him, and will hear of nothing but body.

Theaetetus: I have often met with such men, and terrible fellows they are.

Stranger: And that is the reason why their opponents cautiously defend themselves from above, out of an unseen world, mightily contending that true essence consists of certain intelligible and incorporeal ideas; the bodies of the materialists, which by them are maintained to be the very truth, they break up into little bits by their arguments, and affirm them to be, not essence, but generation and motion. Between the two armies, Theaetetus, there is always an endless conflict raging concerning these matters.

Theaetetus: True.

Stranger: Let us ask each party in turn, to give an account of that which they call essence.

- From Plato's *The Sophist*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce you to philosophical reading, thinking, discussion and writing through a survey of four classic questions in the philosophical sub-disciplines of metaphysics and epistemology: *does God exist? what can we know about the external world? what is the character of scientific knowledge?* and, *what is the nature of mind?* As we wrestle with these questions, we'll pay particular attention to what Plato described as the war of Giants and Gods – the historic tug-of-war between two different classes of answers to these (and related) questions.

REQUIRED TEXT & ACCESSORIES

1. Andrew Bailey and Robert M. Martin, Eds., *First Philosophy: Fundamental Problems and Readings in Philosophy*, 2d. Peterborough, Broadview: 2011.
2. iClicker

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance & Participation: (20 lectures x 1% = 20%)
2. Minor Essay: (2 x 10% = 20%)
3. Major Essay: (1 x 25% = 25%)
4. Take-Home Final: (1 x 35% = 35%)

Please see class website for due dates and other information. No late work will be accepted except for documented medical or compassionate grounds.

COURSE WEBSITE

www.gregandres.com

COURSE OUTCOMES

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- articulate philosophical questions stemming from metaphysics and epistemology;
- explain two or more possible answers that philosophers have posed to each of those questions;
- identify similarities between classes of answers that have been offered to these questions and differences between those classes;
- critically and charitably analyse primary texts from a range of philosophical periods and movements;
- mount your own philosophical arguments orally and in writing.

ADDENDUM

CROSS-LISTED COURSE:

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about rules for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline:

<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4:

<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals:

<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

Academic Integrity website (Arts):

http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity Office (UW):

<http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>

ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Note for students with disabilities: The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.