



Syllabus

What is this course about?

The *manifest image* is your commonsense picture of the world: you are one of many conscious, intelligent, free beings; you find meaning in the world and, in particular, your relationships with others; you bear responsibility for your actions; perhaps you take yourself to be created by a God who loves you. Contrast that with the *scientific image* of the world: there are atoms in the void (or perhaps something much weirder than that)—and that's all. This course explores tensions between the two views. How do we know things about the world? Does the scientific image leave room for free action or responsibility? Can it account for your conscious intelligence? Should science lead us to conclude there is no God?

Logistics

Course meets Mondays and Wednesdays 1:15 – 2:30 in Pearsons 202.

I am Peter Kung. My office is Pearsons 201B, email peter.kung@pomona.edu. Office hours are Monday 2:30-3:30 and Tuesday 2-4 and of course by appointment.

Textbook?

There isn't one.

Sakai

We use it. All registered 5C students should already be able to log in. Readings are available through Sakai, and you will submit quizzes and papers through Sakai. Make sure you have access.

<http://sakai.claremont.edu>

Understanding the Reading

Part of your grade will come from:

1. An unspecified number of prove-to-me-you-understand-the-reading responses (15%)

The precise number will depend on ... how much you all do the reading.

In these responses you should extract and *concisely* present the author's main line of argument. Use your presentation to pinpoint a premise or inference that you have a criticism or comment about.

If you prepare a response in advance, place a copy in your Sakai "drop box" before class. Each day in class I will announce whether I will grade that day's response. If you haven't prepared one in advance, you have five minutes (only) to write one in class.

I don't think of these responses as (much) extra work: you should be reading carefully and critically anyway, *right*? Class discussion works best when you to come to class with opinions about what the author argues for and how she argues for it, and, most importantly, with critical thoughts about the position and arguments. See Pryor's helpful guidelines:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>

Response grades range from 5 (well-written and insightful), 4 (good, understands the argument, less in the way of critical insight), 3 (has the basic idea but confused), 2 (at least you submitted something), and 0 (not even a 2). I expect the most common grade to be 3; a 3 average will not change your overall grade. A better than 3 average will improve your overall grade; a less than 3 average will lower it.

Assignments

You must complete all the following to get credit for the course:

2. Either in-class midterm or paper, your choice (25%)
3. Term paper (30%)
4. Final exam (30%)

Class participation influences borderline grades. You'd be surprised how often grades wind up in the border region ...

Writing

Everyone needs outside feedback on their writing. *Everyone*. I'll show you one of my recent "finished" papers that my colleague *savaged* with incisive, constructive suggestions and lots and lots of deletions. I have to be nice to my colleagues to get them to give me feedback. Fortunately for you, you can simply go to *The Writing Center* (Pomona's is on the 2nd floor of Smith Campus Center, above the Coop Fountain; ever college has one), which offers free, one-on-one consultations at any stage of the writing process—from generating a thesis and structuring an argument to fine-tuning a draft. Consultations available by appointment, which you can make online:

<http://writing.pomona.edu/writingcenter>.

For some of you this will be your first experience with philosophical writing. We will discuss what I expect in your writing throughout the semester. For a preview, see:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>.

Using Pryor's guidelines in writing your response papers will lead to better results. They are also

helpful (perhaps just to review) even if you have written many philosophy papers for other courses.

Policies

Lateness is bad, very bad, and so is penalized **one point** (on Pomona's weird 12-point scale) **per day late**. Extenuating circumstances should be serious enough to require attention from a doctor, your adviser, or your College's dean. On the other hand, I am generally flexible if you let me know *well in advance* that a particular due date poses a problem for you.

You are expected to abide by the code of conduct of your college, and we'll be discussing the application of these codes to specific assignments as they approach. In brief, any work that is submitted as your own but written in whole or in part by someone else is plagiarism. *Just for the record*: violation of the honesty code results in an F for the course and is subject to further disciplinary action.

No early final exams. Make your travel plans accordingly.

Tentative Schedule

All readings are available through Sakai. In many cases articles are downloadable PDFs; occasionally they are links to papers on the web.

Please *bring the day's reading to class*. We do a fair amount of close reading in class and to participate you must have... the thing we are reading. Either bring a paper copy or work directly from your computer. (If you bring your computer you might want to get to class early to ensure you get a seat at the big table.)

Survey through *The Meditations*

Foundations of knowledge	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> I, II & III	Wed 9/3
Reading philosophy	http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html	Mon 9/8
Free will & mind	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> IV, V & VI	

Do we know there is an external world?

The skeptical problem	Christopher Grau, "Dream Skepticism" and "Brain in Vats and the Evil Demon" Blumenfelds, "Can I know that I am not dreaming?"	Wed 9/10
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An externalist solution	Robert Nozick, selection from <i>Philosophical Explanations</i>	Mon 09/15
	Gail Stine, "Scepticism, Relevant Alternatives and Deductive Closure"	Wed 09/17
Should we care whether we know?	Christopher Grau, "The Value of Reality: Cypher and the Experience Machine"	Mon 09/22
	Iakovos Vasiliou, "Reality, What Matters, and The Matrix"	

Does God exist?

The ontological argument ...	St. Anselm & Gaunilo	Wed 09/24
...has got to be wrong	Kant, from <i>The Critique of Pure Reason</i>	Mon 09/29
Is the universe designed?	William Dembski, "The logical underpinnings of intelligent design"	Wed 10/1
	Roger White, "Does Life's Existence Call for an Explanation?"	Mon 10/6
	Slack	Wed 10/8

Do we have free will?

Um, no	Daniel Wegner, from <i>The Illusion of Conscious Will</i>	Mon 10/13
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Midterm or Paper due

Wed 10/15 start of class

Fall Break

Mon 10/20

Yes ... compatibilism	Hume, "Of Liberty and Necessity" from the <i>Enquiry</i>	Wed 10/29
	Harry Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility"	
Yes ... libertarianism	Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism"	Mon 10/27
	Jean-Paul Sartre, from <i>Being and Nothingness</i>	
	William James, "The Dilemma of Determinism"	
Really, no ...	Peter Van Inwagen, "The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism"	Wed 10/22

Can Science Explain Consciousness?

Science cannot even begin to explain ...	Thomas Nagel, "What is it Like to be a Bat?"	Wed 11/5
Sure they can	Kathleen Akins, "A Bat Without Qualities"	Mon 11/10
	Oliver Sacks, "Stereo Sue: Why two eyes are better than one"	
Knowing color	Frank Jackson, "What Mary didn't know"	Wed 11/12

Term paper due

Mon 11/17, 9 a.m

Conceiving the impossible?	Kripke, Lecture 3 of <i>Naming and Necessity</i>	Mon 11/17
		Wed 11/19
	Stephen Yablo, "No Fool's Cold"	*Mon 11/24

*Thanksgiving**Wed 11/26***Alternative Views of Epistemology**

Feminist ...	Helen Longino, "Can there be a Feminist Science?"	Mon 12/1
... and Postcolonialist Epistemologies	Wiredu, "How not to compare African thought with Western thought"	Wed 12/3
Can reasonable people disagree?	Feldman, "Reasonable religious disagreement" Elga, "Lucky to be rational"	Mon 12/8
	Slack	Wed 12/10

*Final Exam, Per College schedule**Tue 12/16, 2 p.m.*