This class is an introduction to philosophical thought and reasoning. We will discuss several topics in philosophy, using both historical and contemporary readings.

**Readings**

*The Elements of Philosophy*, Tamar Szabó Gendler, Susanna Siegel, and Steven M. Cahn, eds., available at Labyrinth. Readings not in this book will be available on the classes server.

**Requirements and grading**

*Reading for each class.* The assigned reading won’t be extensive, but the material is difficult. You will need to read the texts slowly and carefully, and more than once, in order to understand them at the level needed for the class. One of the goals of the class is to give you the tools to read such texts on your own. In order to help you with this, I will post reading questions for each assignment on the classes server. These questions are designed to help guide you through the texts. Some of these questions will also serve as the basis for paper assignments and for discussion in sections each week.

*Three 5-8 page papers.* Each paper counts for 30% of your final grade. If your papers show improvement during the semester, however, the later ones will be weighted more heavily. TAs are willing to look at first drafts and give you feedback, but drafts must be in no later than one week before the due date.

*Attendance and participation* in lectures and discussion sections count for 10% of your final grade. Participation can only help your grade, not hurt it; poor attendance may lower your grade. Attendance at lectures and sections is mandatory. Lectures will outline arguments in the readings, summarize key themes and ideas, and discuss objections. Sections allow you the opportunity to discuss these things in more depth. Note that if you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the notes and any announcements from a classmate.
Warnings
Late papers will have their grades deducted one notch for each day late. There are no exceptions. Due dates are listed below. Plan ahead.

Plagiarism: don’t do it, period. You will fail the assignment, and possibly the class. Better to take the late penalty than risk failing the class. I and the teaching fellows are happy to meet with you or discuss by email your papers in progress beforehand. There should be no need for cheating. That aside, one goal of this class is to learn how to think and reason. If you sign up for the class, you should be interested in that goal. So do your own reasoning.

Discussion sections
Dawn Jacob: Friday 10:30–11:20am and 11:35am–12:25pm
Bryan McCarthy: Tuesday 3:30–4:20pm and 4:30–5:20pm

Office hours
Dawn Jacob: Fridays 1:00–2:30pm, HGS McDougal Center
Bryan McCarthy: Thursdays 2:30–4:00pm
Prof. North: Tuesdays 3:30–4:30pm, 405a CT Hall

Schedule
This is a tentative schedule. Details are subject to change during the semester. Readings are listed next to the date they will be discussed.

Sept. 3: Introduction
Simon Blackburn, *The Elements of Logic*, pp. 5–10

Traditional Arguments For and Against the Existence of God
Sept. 8: The ontological argument
Saint Anselm, *The Ontological Argument*, pp. 15–16
Gaunilo, *In Behalf of the Fool*, pp. 16–17
William L. Rowe, *Why the Ontological Argument Fails*, pp. 21–24

Sept. 10: The cosmological argument; the argument from design

Sept. 15: Arguments against the existence of God
Nicholas Everitt, *Theism and Modern Science*, pp. 66–69

**Knowledge and Reality**

Sept. 17: Defining “knowledge”

Sept. 22: Skepticism about the external world
- René Descartes, *Meditation 1*, pp. 351–354

Sept. 24: Skepticism and foundationalism
- René Descartes, *Meditation 2*, pp. 354–358

Sept. 29: A response to Descartes' skeptical challenge
- Jonathan Vogel, *Cartesian Skepticism and Inference to the Best Explanation*, pp. 373–379

**Paper 1**: Topics posted to the classes server on September 29. Optional first draft due October 6. Final paper due in your drop box on the classes server by midnight **Tuesday, October 13**.

Oct. 1: Idealism
- George Berkeley, selections from *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge*, pp. 384–392

Oct. 6: Hypotheses about the nature of reality
- David Chalmers, *The Matrix as Metaphysics*, pp. 405–419

Oct. 8: Induction
- David Hume, “Induction,” from *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, pp. 422–428

**Freedom and the Person**

Oct. 13: The problem of free will; compatibilism

Oct. 15: Incompatibilism: libertarianism

Oct. 20: Compatibilism again
- Harry Frankfurt, *Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person*, 488–497
Oct. 22: Personal identity over time

Oct. 27: Psychological continuity and the importance of personal identity
  Derek Parfit, “Personal Identity,” from Reasons and Persons, pp. 532–548

Oct. 29: Consciousness
  Thomas Nagel, What Is It Like to Be a Bat?, pp. 620–628

**Paper 2:** Topics posted October 29. Optional first draft due November 5. Paper due in drop box on server by midnight Thursday, November 12.

Nov. 3: The Turing test
  A. M. Turing, Computing Machinery and Intelligence, pp. 663–677

Nov. 5: Reply to the Turing test
  John Searle, Can Computers Think?, pp. 677–683

**Moral Philosophy**

Nov. 10: The universality of morality

Nov. 12: Utilitarianism
  John Stuart Mill, selections from Utilitarianism, pp. 77–88

Nov. 17: Deontology
  Immanuel Kant, selections from Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, pp. 105–111

Nov. 19: The value of morality
  Susan Wolf, Moral Saints, pp. 220–232

Dec. 1: Moral duties to the poor
  Peter Singer, Rich and Poor, pp. 139–153

Dec. 3: Abortion
  Judith Jarvis Thomson, A Defense of Abortion, classes server