

# PHL 2010 – Introduction to Philosophy

## [Course Zoom Link](#)

### Instructor Information

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**Name:** Alex Madva (he/him)

**Office Hours Location:** Building 1, Room 329, and [Office Hours Zoom Link](#)

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 4p-6p (both in person ([Google Maps](#)) and online), and by appointment

**Email:** [ammadva@cpp.edu](mailto:ammadva@cpp.edu)

### Course Information

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#### Course Description

This class will introduce you to a few fundamental questions about who we are and how we should live. First: Where does morality come from? Does it depend on a higher power? Does it depend on your culture? Second: How can you know whether, right now, you're really awake or just dreaming, or perhaps you're living in a computer simulation? Could you be having the same conscious experiences either way? Third: For that matter, what does it mean to *be* conscious? Could your consciousness and memories be transferred into another body? Would the recipient of those memories become *you*? Are you just a bundle of experiences, or is there some underlying soul or chunk of brain that makes you who you are? Fourth: How can we apply these questions to decisions about how we should live our lives? We will approach these and other questions through classic philosophical writings from across the world and centuries ago, as well as contemporary responses.

#### Course Learning Objectives

##### Knowledge and Understanding

After completing this course, you will be able to demonstrate:

1. knowledge and understanding of basic philosophical questions related to how we should live; what (and how) we can know; and who we are.  
Specific topics and questions will likely include:
2. cultural relativism versus moral universalism: is morality specific to cultures or are there at least some universal moral truths?
3. morality and God: does morality depend on God(s), or is morality independent from God?
4. knowledge, skepticism, and reality: are you awake, or dreaming, or is this all a computer simulation? Can we be certain of anything, such as the fact of our own existence?
5. the nature of the mind or soul versus the body: is the mind or soul distinct from the body? How do mind & body interact?

6. consciousness, self-reflection, and science: can consciousness be understood in physical terms? Can we learn about consciousness and reality by turning inward and performing thought experiments?
7. personal identity, the self, and transformation: what makes you who you are? Can some of our experiences be so “transformative” that they literally turn us into different people?
8. stoicism and practical advice about how to live: how can we maintain peace of mind even when the world around us is challenging and constantly changing?

### Skills

After completing this course, you will be able to:

9. interpret and synthesize complex ideas and views;
10. critically assess texts and arguments;
11. construct clear arguments;
12. take the perspective of scientists, philosophers, and classmates who may disagree with you;
13. present and debate ideas, both orally and in writing, in an open minded, respectful, and rigorous way.

## Covid Safety

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All CSU students are required to submit legitimate vaccination cards via the [Health Services web portal](#) by August 16, or pass weekly COVID-19 tests. (Faculty and staff will be required to do this as well.) Not complying with this policy may result in you being expelled from the university. Although I, as your instructor, am not allowed to ask you about your vaccination status, I strongly urge you to get vaccinated. Talk to your family physician or the health care professionals at Student Health Services if you have questions.

Cal Poly Pomona policy requires that everyone wear masks that cover the nose, mouth, and chin at all times indoors, regardless of vaccination status, unless you are alone. Although our class will only meet virtually, your in-person instructors will require you to follow this rule. If you don't have a mask, ask for one and it will be provided. No eating or drinking is allowed during class. If you do not wear your mask and wear it properly, you will be asked to leave. Repeated violations may be reported to the Dean of Students.

In addition to needing to comply with university policies, instructors will enforce the mask rule because we care about your safety and wellbeing and your family's safety (and our own!). All available evidence supports proper mask wearing as a critical part of effective covid mitigation strategies.

## Course Materials

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### Required Materials

There are no books to purchase. All assignments will be made available on Canvas or the web. I will provide attachments and links to these materials via email after each class. **You are therefore responsible for checking your CPP email or Canvas app after every class.** You will need to have access to these materials in class, either printed out or in digital form.

**Also note:** there are no “textbooks” in this course, in the sense that there are no authoritative texts that you are supposed to just accept and memorize. Everything is up for grabs and debate. You can always disagree!

## Technical Requirements

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### Hardware

- PC, Mac, or tablet **with camera**
- Speakers or headphones
- Reliable access to a fast internet connection for teleconferencing

### Software

- A PDF reader, such as [Adobe Acrobat Reader](https://get.adobe.com/reader/) (<https://get.adobe.com/reader/>)
- Word processing software, such as [Microsoft Office](#) or [Google Docs](#)

## Students' Obligations

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### Minimum Technical Skills

You are expected to have or develop basic computer knowledge including, but not limited to:

- Using Zoom: video and audio, raising hand, and setting virtual background
- Using email and attachments
- Downloading, editing, saving, and submitting files
- Copying and pasting
- Downloading and installing software

### Getting Help

I will work very hard to make this a fun, challenging, and worthwhile learning experience for you. I will provide you with the support you need to succeed in the course. I will ask you for suggestions for improvement and I will take those suggestions seriously.

Please let me know if you need help of any kind! If you are having trouble understanding concepts, or with any aspect of the course, it is your responsibility to seek help by contacting Alex. I want every one of you to succeed, and I'm committed to doing my best to ensure that you can learn and flourish during this difficult and uncertain time. **I am on your side!**

Canvas inquiries can be directed to the [IT Service Desk](#).

## University Student Support

There are [many campus resources](#) available for students' needs. Here are a few that might be especially helpful:

- [Broncos Care Basic Needs](#) for students experiencing food or housing insecurity
- [Dean of Students](#), which includes the Cultural Centers, the Dreamers Resource Center, the Women's Resource Center, clubs, etc.
- [Learning Resource Center](#) for tutoring in many courses
- [Student Health and Wellbeing](#) – this website leads you to many student services including [Counseling](#), the [Disability Resource Center](#), [Health Services](#), the [Integrated Care Network](#), [Survivor Advocacy Services](#), and the [Bronco Wellness Center](#)
- [Student Success Central](#) – this website leads you to many resources including those related to COVID19.
- [Veterans Resource Center](#)

## Grading

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1. Attendance and Participation: 20%
2. Quizzes: 20%
3. First Paper: 15%
4. Second Paper: 20%
5. Third Paper: 25%

**Extra credit:** There will also be a variety of extra-credit opportunities, including responses to outside readings, films, and podcasts.

### Attendance & Participation (20%)

This includes [attendance](#), [participation](#), and [in-class assignments](#). **Attendance is mandatory, as is showing up on time, as is remaining in class after attendance is taken.** I will track attendance and lateness on Canvas. Excused absences, late arrivals, early departures, and long absences from the middle of class require some kind of documentation, e.g., from a doctor, employer, internet service provider, or mechanic. Time-stamped photos can serve as documentation, but you do **not** need to share personal details with me.

**Your web camera needs to be on during synchronous Zoom sessions, and your entire face must be visible** (e.g., don't turn camera up so we can only see your eyes or forehead). If you would prefer for the class not to see where you are (e.g., to protect your privacy), [you can](#)

[set up a virtual or blurred background](#). You may need to **update Zoom** to change your background. If you have to turn off your video for more than a few minutes, or you are not comfortable or able to turn on your video on a specific occasion, you have to let me know through email or private Zoom chat. **Note:** Some students are distracted by the video of themselves, so [you can hide the video of yourself from yourself](#) (while still letting the rest of us see you).

**Participation and preparation are crucial.** I will keep a running record of your participation throughout the term. There are a variety of ways to participate, including: actively contributing to discussions by [speaking, typing in the Zoom chat window](#), demonstrating reflection on the assignments, listening carefully to others' contributions (not dominating discussion), and showing respect toward classmates. If you are uncomfortable participating in class, I encourage you to visit my office hours, arrange an appointment, or contribute more to discussions on Canvas.

Speaking with me outside of class and posting (responsively and respectfully) on Canvas are as valuable for your final participation grade as speaking in class. **You cannot get above a B for attendance/participation if you do not participate.** However, students who participate regularly can **get above 100%**, which is one way to compensate for unexcused absences, or to (in effect) supplement your quiz average, etc. There may also be in-class debates and group work. PowerPoint slides and recordings of synchronous Zoom meetings will be posted to Canvas after class. You are expected to remain engaged in the class and take notes. I may decide to stop posting lecture slides or recordings if students are not paying sufficient attention.

The default setting when I hold Zoom Office Hours will be to only let one person in to speak with me at a time. However, if you want to come as a group, that's fine, too. Just let me know.

Put away phones: aside from the device you use to participate on Zoom (such as your PC, Mac, or tablet), put away smartphones or other secondary internet-connected devices during class, and refrain from checking social media—unless you get my express consent to have a secondary device. If I have to remind you to put away devices, I may deduct points from your attendance/participation grade.

**Extra Credit Typo Policy:** I give extra participation credit if you are the first person to identify typos in class handouts, assignments, and lecture slides (typos in assigned readings and in my emails and Canvas announcements don't count, unless my announcement gets a date or time wrong, or fails to include all the relevant attachments and links). Check Canvas to make sure you got your extra credit—and then email me to remind me if it's not posted! I am the final



If i ever spell something wrong I did it for comedic purposes. I know everything don't forget that

authority on whether it's a "real" typo.

**Also**, if my audio sounds funny or garbled, or I start talking on Zoom while muted, or I forget to record the class, the first person to point this out will get extra credit.

### Quizzes (20%)

Most classes begin with a closed-book Canvas quiz (5-10 minutes) on the assigned material (readings, podcasts, videos, etc.). You will need an internet-connected device (phone, tablet, laptop) to take these quizzes (you can use either a web browser or the Canvas mobile app). The time allowed per quiz depends on the number of questions. A quiz with 8 questions might be 7 minutes long. If you arrive or start the quiz late, you may not be able to finish in time. I will drop your lowest quiz score (Canvas will drop the lowest score automatically when it calculates your quiz average).

### Estimated Quiz Curve

The quizzes tend to be very difficult, but they are graded on a generous curve. The curve will be applied at the end of the term, but a rough guide to the quiz curve is the following:

93% = A+ (100; if above 93% → then above 100 after curve); 86% = A (94), 78% = A- (90), 73% = B+ (87), 66% = B (84), 61% = B- (80), 56% = C+ (77), 51% = C (74), 46% = C- (70), 41% = D+ (67), 38% = D (64), 35% = D- (60), 33% or below = F

Grades Scored Between	Will Equal
93 % and 100 %	A+
86 % and Less Than 93%	A
78 % and Less Than 86%	A-
73 % and Less Than 78%	B+
66 % and Less Than 73%	B
61 % and Less Than 66%	B-
56 % and Less Than 61%	C+
51 % and Less Than 56%	C
46 % and Less Than 51%	C-
41 % and Less Than 46%	D+
38 % and Less Than 41%	D
35 % and Less Than 38%	D-
0 % and Less Than 35%	F

**Note:** some students find that quizzes don't represent the work they put into the assignments. All students therefore have the option of supplementing their quiz scores by writing one response to the homework assignments per week. Upload the assignment response to Canvas before the class that the reading is assigned for. See Assignment Response Guidelines at the end of this syllabus.

**Note:** If you miss a quiz, your score for that quiz will be zero, unless you have an excused absence.

### Papers (60%)

There will be three short paper assignments (600-1,000 words). There may be additional activities paired with the writing assignments, which would form part of your grade for that paper, such as peer evaluation workshops for rough drafts. Estimated deadlines: 9/24, 10/22, and 12/6. These due dates are very rough approximations.

My expectation is not that you already know how to write an excellent philosophy paper but that you will build the necessary skills to do so by taking this course. We will dedicate significant time and work on cultivating these skills in class. All papers will be graded according to a rubric, which we will review in a future class, and which you can download now from Canvas in the Files section on the left navigation menu.

The **grading scheme for both your papers and your final grade** is as follows:

97 and above	A+		74 and less than 77	C
94 and less than 97	A		70 and less than 74	C-
90 and less than 94	A-		67 and less than 70	D+
87 and less than 90	B+		64 and less than 67	D
84 and less than 87	B		60 and less than 64	D-
80 and less than 84	B-		Less than 60	F
77 and less than 80	C+			

### Make-Up and Late Work Policies

I will do my best to grade your work in a fair and timely manner. I will work with you if life gets in the way of completing the work for this class. I am open to granting extensions on paper assignments if there are extenuating circumstances. However, **I can only work with you if you contact me about events that obstruct the completion of classwork**. So, please contact me before assignments are due, if you anticipate having a problem with turning work in when it's due. Of course, sometimes there are genuinely unforeseen events that prevent you from completing work in a timely fashion. If that happens, I'll work with you to help you successfully complete the course.

Late papers will be penalized one third of a letter grade for every day late. After 1 day late, an A becomes an A-; after 2 days, an A becomes a B+, and so on. There is no final deadline for how late I will accept work (it is never too late to get some credit for a paper!).





## Course Policies

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### Academic Integrity

The University trusts each student to maintain high standards of honesty and ethical behavior. I will observe Cal Poly Policies on Honesty and Plagiarism. While teamwork is encouraged, any kind of cheating is unacceptable. We will use TurnItIn and other digital tools to help ensure that assignments are not plagiarized. **Students that fail to observe honesty and plagiarism policies will fail the course, and their cases will be reported to the Judicial Affairs Committee.** We will go over the expectations of academic integrity in a future class, and I will distribute an online survey for each student to complete. For more information, visit [Academic Integrity Policies](#).

### Netiquette

Netiquette refers to the behavior that you are expected to follow when communicating online. It covers both common courtesies in an online environment and the informal ground “rules” for navigating in cyberspace. For this course, you are asked to follow these basic guidelines:

- When writing an email to Alex, include the class name and section, along with a description, in the subject line. For example: PHL 1234.01 RE: Truth.
  - Remember the perspective of the person you’re interacting with. Telling me which section you’re in is like writing a “K” on yourself so that others can read it. So if you email me without saying what section you’re in, I may send you this gif:



- Use a signature with your full name at the end of your emails.
- Remember that slang can be misunderstood or misinterpreted – use your “academic” voice. pls dnt use txt lang when sending messages 2 me.
- Be aware of your tone and avoid sentences typed in all caps – it implies online “screaming” or “shouting.”
- Do not use offensive language.
- Be sensitive to those with different cultural or linguistic backgrounds, as well as different political and religious beliefs.
- Respect different views and opinions.
- Provide constructive feedback and use good judgment when composing responses to your classmates.
- Be professional and use good grammar and spelling. Consider writing your discussion posts, assignments, and online correspondence in a text editor to check for spelling and grammar before pasting it into an online submission.

## Response Time and Feedback

I will reply to emails within 24 hours. I will grade papers and optional assignment responses within 1 to 2 weeks. I will check Canvas discussion posts a few times a week. If I don't get back to you within these timeframes, please send a follow-up email to remind me!

## Accessibility

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I am dedicated to providing students with the support they need to succeed in this class. Students with disabilities are encouraged to meet with me during office hours early in the semester to discuss your DRC authorized accommodation needs for this course. For additional information or assistance, contact the [Disability Resource Center](https://www.cpp.edu/drc/) (<https://www.cpp.edu/drc/>) ((909) 869-3333, Bldg. 9-103).

## Course Schedule

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**Note:** the readings, assignments, deadlines, and schedule are **tentative and subject to change**. I will confirm the specific upcoming assignments in every class and shortly after class via email. **You are therefore responsible for checking your CPP email or Canvas app after every class.** (If you are not already registered for the class, I need your email address now so I can add you to Canvas and/or email you the first assignment. If you do not receive the first assignment via email, then you should proactively email me to make sure that I send it to you.)

- If you check your email with Outlook on a smartphone, beware that my announcement emails might go into your "Other" tab. So: move them to "Focused," or make sure to check "Other," or tell Outlook not to distinguish "Focused" and "Other."

## Week 1: NO SYNCHRONOUS CLASS! Get started (8/19)

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1. Log into Canvas and poke around the site
2. Read the syllabus
3. Set up a Zoom account through CPP
4. Test your Zoom video and audio by starting a Zoom chat with a friend or family member
5. Listen to *Hidden Brain* episode with Jennifer Morton, "[Between Two Worlds](#)"
6. Read Shaun Ossei-Owusu, "[More Mobility, More Problems](#)"
7. Optional: Watch interview by Brandon Busted with [Jennifer Morton about common challenges for students who are the first generation in their family to go to college](#)

## Week 2 (8/24; 8/26): Course Prep; Basic Philosophy Concepts & Tools

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### General course prep

1. Complete the "Tell Me About You" survey
2. Set up a virtual or blurred Zoom background for beginning of class on 8/24

3. Watch all the Syllabus videos and memorize...
  - Course grading and requirements (determinants of final grade)
  - Attendance and participation requirements
  - Quiz guidelines
  - Optional Assignment Responses guidelines
  - Technology requirements
  - (You do NOT need to memorize the class schedule or dates!  
You do NOT need to memorize the quiz curves)
4. Watch "[Introducing FOH: Faculty Office Hours](#)" (video)
5. Susan Dynarski, "[Laptops Are Great. But Not During a Lecture or a Meeting](#)"
6. Micah Buzan, "[The Spotlight Effect – Social Psychology & Making Art](#)"
  - ^ this video may help you feel more comfortable participating in class!
  - Optional: for more on the research behind the Spotlight Effect, [watch this](#)
7. Demonstrate knowledge of the above on the first Canvas Quiz (on 8/26)
8. Meet me and your classmates!

### Course content

1. Read John Perry, Michael Bratman, and John Martin Fischer, "On the Study of Philosophy" and "Logical Toolkit" (expect an in-depth quiz on this reading!)
2. In class: Why to Study Philosophy, and The Branches of Philosophy
3. Study the important terms we cover in class
4. Demonstrate engagement with the above assignments on first Canvas quizzes

### Week 3 (8/31; 9/2): Intro to Ethics & Morality; Cultural Relativism

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1. Listen to Radiolab, "[Morality](#)"
2. James Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"
3. Watch Frans de Waal's [Ted talk on animal morality](#)
4. Watch this video about [morality in infants](#)
5. Listen to or read Hidden Brain, "[Moral Combat](#)"
6. Read Sigal Samuel, "[Is it okay to sacrifice one person to save many? How you answer depends on where you're from](#)"

### Week 4 (9/7; 9/9): Different Perspectives on Morality & Culture

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1. Read Cleuci de Oliveira, "The Right to Kill"
2. Read Daniel Engber, "[The Kids Are All Right](#)"
3. Read Jesse Prinz, "[Morality is a Culturally Conditioned Response](#)"
4. Read Mohammed Al-Mosaiwi, "[The danger of absolute thinking is absolutely clear](#)" (audio version available on webpage)
5. **1<sup>st</sup> Paper Assignment Distributed**

## Week 5 (9/14; 9/16): Writing Guidelines; Feminism, Morality, Culture

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1. Read Jim Pryor, "[Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper](#)"
2. Begin watching Alex's "How to Write a Philosophy Paper" videos
  - o "1<sup>st</sup> Paper Topics Explainer"
  - o "How to Write a Philosophy Paper Intro"
  - o "General Writing Guidelines"
  - o "Quotations, Citations, & Minor Stylistic Points"
  - o "Thesis Statements"
3. Study Paper Rubric and prepare to answer questions about it
4. Listen to *The Philosopher's Zone*, Interview with Serene Khader: [Philosophy in the wake of Empire: Missionary feminism](#)
5. [Radio Address by Laura Bush](#), First Lady of the United States before Afghanistan War
6. Read Jennifer Saul, "Feminism and 'Respect for Cultures'"
7. Optional: Judit Moschkovich, selection from *This Bridge Called My Back*

## Week 6 (9/21; 9/23): Writing Guidelines; Morality & God

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1. Finish watching Writing Guidelines videos
  - o "Intro Paragraphs"
  - o "Main Body – Raising & Responding to Objections"
  - o "How Alex Grades"
2. Read Simon Rippon, "[A Brief Guide to Writing the Philosophy Paper](#)"
  - o Quiz questions will ask how Rippon's advice differs from Alex's guidelines
3. Watch "Academic Integrity"
4. Read "Avoiding Plagiarism"
5. Complete the academic integrity survey. Retake the survey until you get a perfect score.
6. Read Rebecca Newberger Goldstein, "[How Philosophy Makes Progress](#)"
7. Read Plato, *Euthyphro*
8. Watch "[Euthyphro Dilemma, Part 1](#)" by SoccerTees and PlayDough
9. **1<sup>st</sup> Paper Due**

## Week 7 (9/28; 9/30): God, Morality, Knowledge, & Doubt

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1. Watch "[Divine Command Theory: Crash Course Philosophy #33](#)"
2. Read Hamza Andreas Tzortzis, "[Does Euthyphro's Dilemma Undermine God's Commands?](#)"
3. Read Jesse Roach, "[The Good Grounded in God: A Response to the Euthyphro Dilemma](#)"
4. Read Michael Austin, "Divine Command Theory," [Sections 3 and 4](#)
5. Re-read the second-to-last section of Jesse Prinz's paper, "[God, Evolution, and Reason: Is There an Objective Moral Code?](#)"
6. Listen to *The Philosopher's Zone*, "[Tell me one thing that's absolutely true](#)"

7. Read Elizabeth Reninger, "[Zhuangzi's \(Chuang-Tzu's\) Butterfly Dream Parable](#)"
8. Watch Jennifer Nagel, "[Introduction to Theory of Knowledge](#)," "[The Problem of Skepticism](#)," and "[Three Responses to Skepticism](#)" (note that you can also read transcripts of the audio)
9. **2<sup>nd</sup> Paper Assignment Distributed**

## Week 8 (10/5; 10/7): Knowledge & Doubt in Everyday Life

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1. Watch "[Viewing Your Feedback on TurnItIn](#)"
2. Read Ana Swanson, "[12 optical illusions that show how colour can trick the eye](#)"
3. Read Michael Patrick Lynch, "The Value of Truth"
4. Watch Annie Duke, "[Risk Schmisk](#)" and interview on "[Making Smart Bets in Life, Politics, and Football](#)"
5. Read Annie Duke, selections from *Thinking in Bets*

## Week 9 (10/12; 10/14): Are We Living in a Computer Simulation?

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1. Begin rewatching Writing Guidelines videos and prepare for quiz questions
2. Watch "[Why Elon Musk says we're living in a simulation](#)"
3. Listen to Nick Bostrom interview for Philosophy Bites on the [Simulation Argument](#)
4. Read or listen to Nick Bostrom, "[Why Make a Matrix? And Why You Might Be in One](#)" ([audio version](#))
5. Watch "[Is Reality Real? The Simulation Argument](#)"
6. Start reading Nick Bostrom, "[Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?](#)"
  - o ^ Don't worry about the math or formal symbols, etc.

## Week 10 (10/19; 10/21): Simulation Class Debate

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1. Finish Bostrom
2. Finish rewatching Writing Guidelines videos
3. Read Dom Galeon, "[Sorry, Elon. Physicists Say We Definitely Aren't Living in a Computer Simulation](#)"
4. Read Clara Moskowitz, "[Are We Living in a Computer Simulation?](#)"
5. Watch *Black Mirror*, "[Hang the DJ](#)"
6. Thursday (10/21): Class debate over simulation argument
7. Optional: "[2016 Isaac Asimov Memorial Debate: Is the Universe a Simulation?](#)"
8. Optional: dfranke, "[We are not living in a simulation](#)"
9. Read Nick Byrd, "[How to Write a Philosophy Paper: 4 Tips, 9 Criteria](#)"
10. **2<sup>nd</sup> Paper Due**

## Week 11 (10/26; 10/28): The Nature of the Mind & Consciousness

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1. Watch Suilin Lavelle's [intro to dualism](#)
2. Watch "[Where Does Your Mind Reside?: Crash Course Philosophy #22](#)"

3. Read Amy Kind, "Nagel's 'What Is It Like to Be a Bat' Argument against Physicalism"
4. Read Brie Gertler, "The Knowledge Argument"
5. Watch David Chalmers, "[How do you explain consciousness?](#)" TED talk
6. Read Amy Kind, "Chalmer's Zombie Argument"
7. Watch Susan Barry, "[Fixing My Gaze](#)" (real-life version of Mary, discovering depth perception?)

## Week 12 (11/9; NO CLASS 11/11): Philosophy vs. Psychology

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1. Rewatch paper instructions and advice highlights videos, and paper topics video
2. Read Patricia Churchland, "The Hornswoggle Problem"
3. Listen to *The Philosopher's Zone*, "[The Value of Thought Experiments](#)"
1. Watch Michael S. A. Graziano, "[What is consciousness?](#)"
2. Read Susanna Siegel, "[What does philosophy contribute to the study of the mind?](#)" (2020)
3. Optional: Sara Aronowitz and Tania Lombrozo, "[Learning Through Simulation](#)"
4. **Final Paper Assignment Distributed**

## Week 13 (11/16; 11/18): Personal Identity & World Philosophy Day

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1. Listen to *The Philosopher's Zone*, "[I'm just not myself](#)"
2. Read Daniel Dennett, "Where Am I?"
3. Watch Joshua Knobe, "[The True Self](#)"
4. (Optional: [longer podcast interview](#) with Knobe about the true self on *Elucidations*)
5. Barry Lam, "[The Self and Survival](#)," *Hi-Phi Nation* podcast
6. 11/18: WORLD PHILOSOPHY DAY! We might have a Philosophy Department Zoom event.

## Week 14 (11/23; 11/25; NO CLASS ALL WEEK; HAPPY THANKSGIVING)

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## Week 15 (11/30; 12/2): Transformative Experiences and/or Stoicism

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1. Watch or read Laurie Paul, "[The Transformative Experience](#)"

2. Optional: Laurie Paul, "What You Can't Expect When You're Expecting"
3. Listen to Hillary Frank, "[What to Expect When You're Expecting a Robot](#)," *This American Life*
4. Listen to Reductio podcast, "[Transformative Experiences](#)"
5. Read or listen to David Foster Wallace, "This Is Water," Kenyon College Commencement Speech
6. Watch "[The Discourses of Epictetus](#)"
7. Read Epictetus, *Handbook* (entire)
8. Read Donald Robertson, "[Stoicism in a time of pandemic: how Marcus Aurelius can help](#)"
9. Watch Jay Garfield, "[Stoicism: Rationality and Acceptance](#)" (this is on Kanopy, you can log in with CPP credentials)
10. Read Kai Whiting, "[Taking Stoicism Beyond the Self: The Power To Change Society](#)"
11. Optional: listen to *The Philosopher's Zone*, "[Happy?](#)"
12. Optional: listen to interview, [Robert Wright on Why Buddhism is True](#)

## Finals Week

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There is no final exam. **Final Paper Due**

## Guidelines for the Quizzes and Optional Assignment Responses

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I recognize that many of the readings and other assignments are difficult.

- Most quiz questions will not assume that you have perfectly understood the material.
- **Pointer #1:** pay attention to the **specific examples (metaphors, stories, etc.)** used by the authors to make their points. The specific examples are the most likely to show up on the quizzes.
- **Pointer #2:** bear in mind that I often try to come up with questions that don't show up in summaries of the material, e.g., on Wikipedia or other online sources. I want you to complete the actual assignment and not just get a quick summary from somewhere else.

Still, some students find that the quizzes don't represent the work they put into the assignments.

- All students therefore have the option of supplementing quiz scores by writing one homework assignment response per week. (P.S. Writing the responses helps with the quizzes!)

## Optional Assignment Response (O.A.R.) Guidelines

Option to supplement your quiz score:

- Once per week, you can write a homework assignment response and upload it to Canvas

- You can start uploading Optional Assignment Responses (or OARs) right away, for the first assignment
- **The OARs are entirely optional.** There is no penalty for not doing them. You can skip it one week, then do it the next, etc. There will be other extra-credit opportunities, which usually go toward your quiz grade.

## Upload Instructions

- Click on the “Assignments” link on the Canvas menu (left ribbon).
- Click on “Optional Assignment Responses” and then scroll all the way down to “Drag a file here, or Choose a file to upload” to upload your document.
- You will upload every response to this exact same place.
- Submit your assignment response in .pdf, .doc, or .docx form.
- If you have difficulty uploading your paper, you can email it to me to establish that it's on time, but **you must upload it to Canvas eventually.**
- **You must upload the response before the class that the reading is assigned for.** Not *after* we have already discussed the material in class!
- Upload it up to 1 minute before class begins.

## Assignment Response Requirements

- **OARs should be at least 350 words (the word count does not include the date, your name, etc.). Formatting: Times New Roman, 12 point font, double-spaced. This should come out to about 1-and-a-half pages.**
- **If you do not meet the word minimum, you will get no extra credit for your response.**
- No maximum length. You get more extra credit if you create more thorough responses (actual engagement with the assignment rather than just bull\$#!++ing)!
- The more work you put into it, the more extra credit you get.
- Do not artificially inflate the length of your OAR in any way (e.g., by padding the header and starting midway through the first page). That just irritates me and does not benefit you.
- You only need to write one response per week in order to get the extra credit.  
**You will not get additional extra credit if you write two responses in one week.**
- On weeks when there is only 1 class, you will have only 1 opportunity to do an assignment response.



## What is Alex looking for in the optional homework assignment responses?

- Expectation #1: I am looking for **more than summaries** of the assigned material.
- Expectation #2: I am looking for **thoughtful reflection and personal engagement** with the assigned material.
  - o This includes connections between the material and personal experiences (life experiences, stuff going on in the news, film/TV/music/podcasts (but **please avoid spoilers!**), etc.), connections between new assignments and old assignments, connections to other classes you've taken or things you've learned, as well as other sorts of reactions and questions (even puzzlement!!!) about the material.
  - o OARs can, but do not have to, be in essay form. They can be creative: poems, short stories, comic strips, vlogs, songs, etc. (If your response is, say, a vlog, then upload a document in the normal way to Canvas, but include a link.)
- Expectation #3: **show that you did the entire homework assignment, rather than just the first few pages.**
- Expectation #4: If there are multiple assignments for one class, **refer to all the readings and other assignments, at least briefly.**
  - o It's perfectly OK for you to focus primarily on the assigned material that most interested you, but you must mention them all.
  - o **If you do not mention all the assigned materials, then you will get no extra credit for your response.**

## How do the optional extra-credit assignment responses affect my overall grade?

- For every week that you do this, I will add more extra credit to your overall quiz average.
- Example: let's say you completely bomb the Tuesday quiz. You can then write a response for the Thursday homework assignment (on the material assigned for Thursday!) to make up for the failed Tuesday quiz.
  - Hypothetical grade impact: suppose there are two 6-question quizzes in one week and you get a 0/6 on both quizzes, but you submit one very thoughtful assignment response. I might give you 6 points of extra credit total. That would (effectively) boost your score to 3/6 on both quizzes (from an F to a C). If you get 3/6, it will boost to 6/6 on both quizzes. If you get 6/6, it will boost to 9/6.
  - There are always a few students who get above 100% on their final quiz score!
  - I will post a running record of your assignment-response extra credit on Canvas, and your posted quiz average will automatically update to reflect this.

- I will grade papers and optional assignment responses within 1 to 2 weeks.
- **Last pointer:** if you are struggling to manage your time, then consider writing your responses for Tuesday classes, and doing them over the weekend (on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday).