

Introduction to Philosophy

Philosophy 103

Dr. Stephen Hicks

Scarborough 119 Phone: 815 226 4078

SHicks@Rockford.edu

Website: www.StephenHicks.org

Philosophy deals with the big questions of human existence: What is it to be a fully developed human being? What kind of world are we living in—for example, does a God exist? How do we know these things? And who really cares? What difference does it make—what is the good life? We will grapple with fundamental philosophical problems and discuss the views of major thinkers in the Western intellectual tradition.

Books

- Plato, *Four Texts on Socrates* (Cornell)
- Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead* (NAL/Signet)
- René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Hackett)
- C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (HarperCollins)
- Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (W. W. Norton)
- Stephen Hicks, editor, *Readings in Philosophy* booklet

Assignments and Grading

Three-point lists (each Monday we meet)	30%
Essay (March 5)	20
Participation	20
Final Exam (Thursday, May 6, 1 pm)	<u>30</u>
	100%

On the Essay

Topic: Oscar Wilde wrote: “Most people are other people. Their thoughts are someone else’s opinions, their lives a mimicry, their passions a quotation.” Using Wilde’s quotation as a starting point, reflect on one or more of the books we will read and address the following questions: What is it to be a person? What is it to be real, genuine, independent? When and how should others’ opinions and feelings properly influence you? Why is it often difficult for people to achieve, say, and do what they really think or want?

Length: 1,500 words

Due: Friday, March 5, 3 pm

Note: Center for Ethics and Entrepreneurship prizes for the best essays in Philosophy 103: \$300 for First Place. \$100 each for two Honorable Mentions.

Recommended Supplemental Reading

James Fieser, editor. *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

Schedule and Readings

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topic for first half</i>	<i>Topic for second half</i>
1 (Jan 15)	What philosophy is and why it matters Reading: Ayn Rand, "Philosophy: Who Needs It"	Socrates and the philosophic life Reading: Bertrand Russell, "The Value of Philosophy"
2 (Jan 18)	The trial of Socrates Reading: Plato, <i>Apology</i>	Greek virtue: justice, courage, wisdom, piety (or temperance)
3 (Jan 25)	Socrates and civil disobedience Reading: Plato, <i>Crito</i>	Individuals, communities, and the state
4 (Feb 1)	Ayn Rand and Objectivism: Howard Roark and Peter Keating Reading: Rand, <i>The Fountainhead</i> , Part 1 <i>Note: No class on Wednesday, February 3</i>	Independence of mind: Asch's and Milgram's experiments
5 (Feb 8)	Gail Wynand and Dominique Francon Reading: Rand, <i>The Fountainhead</i> , Parts 2 and 3	Independence and integrity in action Reading: Thoreau, "What I Lived For"
6 (Feb 15)	Howard Roark versus Ellsworth Toohey Reading: Rand, <i>The Fountainhead</i> , Part 4	Entrepreneurial living Reading: Martin Luther King, "What Is Your Life's Blueprint?" [Time permitting]
7 (Feb 22)	René Descartes: The challenge of skepticism	Reading: Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> I-III
8 (Mar 1)	Wednesday, March 3: Guest speaker: Roberto Salinas Leon <i>Note: Essay due Friday, March 5</i>	
9 (Mar 8)	Spring Break week	
10 (Mar 15)	Philosophy, religion and science in the Renaissance and the Reformation	Reading: Galileo, <i>Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina</i>
11 (Mar 22)	C. S. Lewis and the religious philosophical tradition	Reading: Lewis, <i>Mere Christianity</i> , Book 1
12 (Mar 29)	C. S. Lewis on Christian ethics	Reading: Lewis, <i>Mere Christianity</i> , Book 3

13 (Apr 5)	Sigmund Freud on human nature <i>Note: No class Friday, April 9</i>	Reading: Freud, <i>Civilization and Its Discontents</i>
14 (Apr 12)	<i>Note: No class Monday, April 12</i> Freud's challenge for civilization Reading: Freud, <i>Civilization and Its Discontents</i>	
15 (Apr 19)	Our authors on the mind-body problem Readings: Martin Luther, Pope Innocent, and St. Paul, "Three Quotations on Dualism" Reading: Daniel Dennett, "Where Am I?"	Reading: Raymond Smullyan, "Is Man a Machine?" Reading: Roy Baumeister, "Is There Anything Good About Men?" [Time permitting]
15 (Apr 26)	What is the meaning of life? Reading: Psalm 103 Reading: Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress" Reading: John Steinbeck excerpt Reading: Pseudo-Vonnegut, "Advice"	What is the meaning of life? Reading: Rupert Brooke, "The Great Lover" Reading: Shakespeare excerpt from <i>Macbeth</i> Optional reading: Stephen Hicks, "Would Immortality Be Worth It?"
17 (May 3)	Final exam on Thursday at 1 p.m.	

* * *

A copy of the syllabus and schedule can be found online at www.StephenHicks.org.

For Honor Code and Disability issues, consult the College's website.