

Readings and Assignments: Weeks One-Seven

If you miss a class, check these *Readings and Assignments* handouts for assignment or handouts.

If you have questions about an assignment after class has adjourned, I prefer that you ask through the *Course Website* Bulletin Board so that all can benefit.

If you make a special arrangement with me about a due date, etc., write out a brief note or e-mail to that effect and have me sign or confirm it in case I forget our arrangement.

📄 indicates a handout in class. 📖 indicates material from *Philosophy 120 Course Pack*.

Dotted-underlined titles are also available at *Course Website*.

Contents and Major Due Dates

In deference to our leaf-bearing friends, *Readings and Assignments* is handed out in instalments in case there are revisions as we go along, as there often are.

However, *Readings and Assignments* for the whole course is at the *Course Website*—just treat it as open to revision. Major due dates are listed below.

What is philosophy and how do you do it?

- [1. Wednesday, January 10](#)
- [2. Wednesday, January 17](#)
- [3. Wednesday, January 24](#)

When—if ever—am I truly free?

- [3. Wednesday, January 24](#)
- [4. Wednesday, January 31](#)
- [5. Wednesday, February 7](#)
- [6. Wednesday, February 14](#)

February 19-20: Mid-term Break

- [7. Wednesday, February 21](#)

What am I as a thinking thing?

- [7. Wednesday, February 21](#)
- [8. Wednesday, February 28](#)
- [9. Wednesday, March 7](#)

Who am I really? How do I tell?

- [9. Wednesday, March 7](#)
- [10. Wednesday, March 14](#): **DUE: *Second Essay* draft**
- [11. Wednesday, March 21](#)
- [12. Wednesday, March 28](#): **DUE: *Group Presentations***
- [13. Wednesday, April 4](#): **DUE: *Group Presentations; Second Essay***

DUE Final Exam Period: *Third Essay* (in class)

1. Wednesday, January 10

- ☞ [Introductory Questions: Survey](#)
 - ☞ [Introductory Questions: Personal](#)
 - ☞ [Brief Course Description](#)
 - ☞ [Readings and Assignments: Weeks One-Seven](#) (this handout)
- Nature of Philosophy, ☞ [Nature of Philosophy](#)
Socrates: videotape

Assignment

- DO ☞ [Introductory Questions: Personal](#).
- READ ☞ [Course Description](#). Questions?
- READ 📖 1.3 [Methods of Inquiry](#) and 📖 1.4 [Writing without Gender Bias](#).
- READ 📖 2.2 [Plato's Republic](#), excerpt on The Cave, and take notes (not to be handed in) on the following:
1. Identify at least five different locations-situations-roles in [Socrates'](#) description of the Cave.
 2. In our society, what occupations—if any—can be found in these locations-situation-roles?



DUE NEXT SESSION (but not to turn in): Methods of Inquiry: Practice

Following the steps in *Methods of Inquiry*, section B., make some notes explaining and justifying your answers to **one** of the following questions **assigned to you**. You will be asked to work from these notes in class but not to turn them in.

1. Could a person who was blind from birth know what the word "red" means?
2. At what distance should we be from a star in order for it to appear to us to be the size it actually is?
3. What is the difference between a tree and a telephone pole?

READ 📖 2.3 Borges, "The Other Death." Is this a true story? Why do you think so?

2. Wednesday, January 17

DUE: Introductory Questions: Personal.

The Cave

Methods of Inquiry

Introduction: Sartre and existentialism

Assignment

READ 📖 3.3 Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*

DUE NEXT SESSION: Individual Prep Questions: Sartre

Answer each of the following four questions in no more than about 100 words each.

In so few words, you will probably not be able to give definitive answers to each of these questions, but do attempt to express your views as clearly as possible and to state a couple of your major reasons (including examples) for holding your view.

Your answers will be marked according to their clarity, coherence, and use of specific examples.

These questions follow the steps in section A., *Methods of Inquiry*.

1. Explain whether you think that Sartre believes that in important ways, humans are quite different from other animals.
(Look **in** the lines for some conclusions.)
2. Sartre says "...existentialism puts every man in possession of himself as he is, and places the entire responsibility for his existence squarely upon his shoulders."
Explain whether you think Sartre implies that we all deserve whatever we get out of life. (Look **between** the lines to examine Sartre's reasoning.)
3. Explain Sartre's conception of what it is to be an individual.
Explain whether you tend to agree with his conception. For example, would you and Sartre agree in your views about the "Battered wife case..." (📖 3.2 [Freedom & Determinism: Examples](#))?
(Look **beyond** the lines in order to apply and evaluate Sartre's position. And that requires **you** at least to begin developing a position from which to question Sartre in Question 4...)
4. What couple of questions would you like Sartre to answer in order for you fully to understand his theory?



3. Wednesday, January 24

Methods of Inquiry: Practice

Co-op work on Sartre.

DUE: *Individual Prep Questions: Sartre*

Assignment

READ 📖 3.4 Butler, *Erewhon*,
 📖 3.6 Minton, "Free Will and Determinism."
 📖 7.1 Jean Grimshaw, "Autonomy and Identity in Feminist Thinking"

First Essay

Your work on this essay assignment counts as 10% of your **Final Mark**.

If you miss some of the preparation or group work for this assignment, your mark is prorated.

DUE Monday, January 29: If you care, using e-mail or voice-mail, list your preferences among the positions noted below.

(I will attempt to place you according to your preferences while forming balanced groups.)

Libertarianism: we have freedom since we have a free will, *i.e.*, since what we will is not always caused (*e.g.*, Sartre's view that an essential part of being human is making free choices).

Hard Determinism: we have no freedom since we live in a completely causal world (*e.g.*, Butler's satirically expressed view that mocks our usual concept of freedom).

Compatibilism of two varieties:

We have **moral and legal freedom** even though all our actions are caused (*e.g.*, Szasz's view that our legal and political concept of freedom should be retained at almost any cost);

While **objectively** all our actions are caused, **subjectively** we do have freedom.

Some feminist views: the problem of freedom and determinism arises at least in part from a false distinction men have attempted to draw between themselves and nature (including women) as Other.

4. Wednesday, January 31

Sartre Questions

Samuel Butler: *Erewhon*

Thomas Szasz: *Psychiatry: Myth or Medicine* videotape.

Freedom & Determinism: Introduction

📖 [First Essay](#): assign positions and readings

Assignment

DUE SESSION 5: A double-entry journal on readings for your assigned position on the 📖 [First Essay](#). (4 points towards *Individual Prep and Informal Co-op* mark)

Prepare to work on steps 1, 3, 4 of your essay with others assigned to the same position.

5. Wednesday, February 7

Freedom and Determinism

Work on *First Essay*.

DUE: Double-entry journal on readings for your assigned position on the 📖 [First Essay](#).

Assignment

PREPARE FOR NEXT SESSION: Meet with colleagues examining other positions to write a conclusion in no more than about 250 well-written words justifying the position your group recommends that we should adopt. (📖 [First Essay](#))

6. Wednesday, February 14

Work on *First Essay Group Conclusions*.

Descartes: Introduction

Assignment

DUE NEXT SESSION: 📖 [First Essay](#) Individual Position Papers and Group Conclusions.

READ Descartes, *Meditation I*. (Do not read the *Synopsis* (pp. 54-56) at this point: it is not a good summary of the *Meditations*!)

Assignment continued on next page...


DUE SESSION 7: Meditation I: Individual Prep Questions.

Please give brief (not more than about 100 words each) answers to each of the following questions. "I" and "my" refers to you-the-meditator taking on the role and perspective of the meditator; "you" refers to you-the-student taking a critical view of the meditator's arguments. **You will be marked down for not writing from these perspectives.**

Do not merely quote the text: **explain** what the text means.

1. What do **I** (the meditator) set out to do in the *First Meditation*: what do **I** set out to accomplish (first paragraph, p. 59-60)?
- 2.a. What is **my** argument about dreaming (third paragraph, p. 60) : what is the case of dreaming supposed to prove, and how is it supposed to do so?
(Borges's "The Circular Ruins" in *Ficciones* is of interest here.)
- 2.b. Are **you** (the student) really convinced by this argument? Can **you** think of some **specific** way to tell whether you are dreaming or awake right now?
3. By the end of the *First Meditation*, do **you** (the student) think that **I** (the meditator) have accomplished what **I** set out to accomplish as described in your answer to question 1?
If so, why do **you** think so? If not, why not: explain a belief or principle that **you** think is certain.
4. Comment on anything else you find particularly interesting in this *Meditation*.

February 19-20: Mid-term Break**7. Wednesday, February 21**

DUE:  [First Essay](#) Individual Position Papers and Group Conclusions.

Meditation I

DUE: *Meditation I*: Individual Prep Questions.

Meditation I: Summary.

Meditation II: Introduction

Meditation VI, Synopsis: Introduction

Assignment

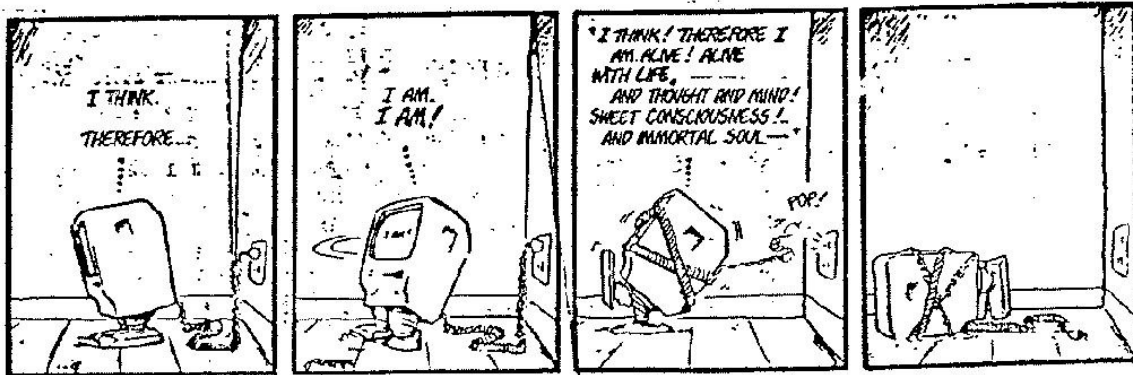
READ Meditation II.

Assignment continued on next page...

DUE NEXT SESSION: *Meditation II: Individual Prep Questions*

Briefly answer (not more than about 100 words each) each of the following questions. These questions are asked **in your voice as the meditator**. Please answer them in the same voice.

1. At the beginning of this *Meditation*, I make a famous argument that I must exist whenever I think (last paragraph, p. 63)). This argument is often rendered as: "I think. Therefore, I am." (Cogito ergo sum.) Would the argument, "I walk. Therefore, I am." (Ambulo ergo sum.) have done just as well? (Borges's "Everything and Nothing" (Labyrinths) and, again, "The Circular Ruins" are of interest here.)
2. On page 65, second paragraph, I say, "I know that I exist; I ask now who is this "I" whom I know? Most certainly, in the strict sense the knowledge of this "I" does not depend upon things of whose existence I do not yet have knowledge..." Now that I think about it, it seems to follow from that statement that what I know about myself—that I am a thinking thing—is not dependent on the existence of things I do not know about to this point, for example, whether or not I have a body or a soul. And from that statement, it seems to follow that my existence as a thinking thing is not dependent upon the existence of anything else, for example, of my body or soul? Hmmm, am I right?



3. On pages 67-8, I seem to be having a lot of trouble with a piece of wax: what's my problem? (No psychiatric diagnoses, please!)
4. On page 68, first paragraph , I seem to be having the same problems with other people as I had with that piece of wax: what is my problem with other people? Why don't I have the same problems with myself (page 69)?
5. Comment on anything else you find particularly interesting in this *Meditation*.

READ 📖 9.4 Sartre: excerpt from *Nausea*.


Assignment continued on next page...

READ Meditation VI; Synopsis.

We will not cover these in as much detail as *Meditations I* and *II*: much of *Meditation VI* is a summary of the earlier *Meditations*.

Pay particular attention to the nature of the mind and its relation to the body, expanded answers to *Meditation II: IPQs 2 & 4*. What are the two major kinds of substance that make up the world, and how are they related? Who am I really: not just my body?

The *Synopsis* is poor as a synopsis, but it has further interesting arguments.

READ  10.2 Oliver Sacks: "The Man who Fell out of Bed" and "The Disembodied Lady"

8. Wednesday, February 28

Return and comment on *Meditation I: IPQs*

Meditation II

DUE: *Meditation II: IPQs*

Meditation VI, Synopsis

 [Second Essay](#);  [Second Essay Hints](#)

Readings & Assignments: The Rest

8. Wednesday, February 28

Return and comment on *Meditation I: IPQs*

Meditation II


DUE: *Meditation II: IPQs*


Meditation VI, Synopsis

 [Second Essay](#);  [Second Essay Hints](#)


Assignment


DUE SESSION 10: *Second Essay Draft* (See  [Second Essay](#).)

READ:  **10.3** David Hume: excerpts from *Treatise of Human Nature*

 **10.4** Terence Penelhum: "Hume on Personal Identity"

 **10.5** Vladen Bakhnov: "Cheap Sale"

 **10.6** Jorge Luis Borges: "Funes, the Memorious," from *Ficciones*

 **10.7** Oliver Sacks: "The Possessed " from *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*

Oliver Sacks's *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* has some more interesting cases in "A Matter of Identity," "Yes, Father-Sister," "The Possessed," and "The Dog Beneath the Skin." Borges's "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," one of his best stories, is also of interest here.

DUE NEXT SESSION: Hume: Individual Prep Questions

In not more than about 100 words each, answer the following questions.

1. On pages 4 to 6, Hume cites factors of a small degree of change, a gradualness of change, and a continuation of serving a common end, as explanations of why we sometimes mistake diversity for identity. Using your own specific example, what is Hume's explanation of how these factors lead us into this mistake? (*Cf.* Penelhum, pp. 101-102)
2. On pages 1 to 2, Hume argues that, contrary to the claims of some philosophers (such as Descartes), we have no idea of the self as having both perfect identity and simplicity. Using your own specific example, explain Hume's reasons for this claim. (*Cf.* Penelhum, pp. 99-101)
3. Instead, Hume claims (page 2) that we are nothing but a bundle of perceptions and that the mind is a kind of theatre (but not really a theatre). Are these good metaphors for Hume's claim that we have no idea of the self as having both perfect identity and simplicity? (*Cf.* Penelhum, pp. 102-103)
4. On page 8, Hume says that "memory can be seen not so much to create personal identity as to discover it. Using your own specific example, explain what Hume means by this and why he believes it is true.
5. Comment on anything else you find particularly interesting in Hume's argument.

DUE SESSION 9: Group Presentations:

Turn in a list of topics ranked in your order of preference.

In order to apply what we have been doing in this course to some issues of continuing interest, we will have group presentations to the class on three of the topics listed below. This division of labour will make some of you experts who can then teach the rest of the class.

Each presentation will be marked as part of **Formal Co-op Work** (10% of your **Final Mark**) with each group member receiving the same mark pro-rated according to attendance at group sessions and preparation. By not putting his or her name on the short essay noted below, a Group may expel a group member who does not contribute. Each group will have about one and one-half hours to make its presentation and to discuss the issue with the class. A group need not present a unified front: members may wish to defend conflicting views. The audience should be attentive and helpful since the mark for the presentation depends in part on the quality of discussion and since the second *Final Essay* (in class) will be based on these topics.

Topics

Topic 5 must be done. There will also be presentations on either Topics 1 or 2 (but not both), and on either Topics 3 or 4 (but not both).

The topics should be approached **philosophically**. A lot of empirical research is not needed. Instead, you should present arguments about the **philosophical** issues raised by the topics.

1. Could a machine have a mind? If we could, should we build machines that have minds?

To answer the first question, you need to consider what kind of evidence would show that a machine has a mind.

2. Is a foetus a person What ceases to exist when a foetus is aborted?

Although the answer to this question obviously has great implications for the morality of abortion, this question does not ask whether it is morally justified to have an abortion, .

3. Could psychic phenomena occur? If they could, what would their occurrence show about the relationship between the mind and the material world?

To answer the first question, you need to consider what kind of evidence would show that they occur.

4. Is it possible for us to survive our deaths? Why is it desirable, if it is, to survive death?


To answer the first question, you need to consider what kind of evidence would show that such survival occurs. If such survival is possible, what is it that survives?

Assignment continued on next page...

5. What is it to be an individual? Why is it desirable, if it is, to be an individual? To answer the first question, you need to explain how we could tell that someone is an individual; for example, who amongst us are individuals? To answer the second question, you need to consider the implications of your answer to the first question for our current moral, social, political, and economic practices that we touched on in the course. Obviously, an exhaustive answer to this question is not possible within the confines of your presentation. Include issues of gender and personal identity as a significant part of your presentation on this issue. Is gender relevant to one's personal identity, e.g., as in statement 17 of the *Introductory Questions* where at least about 50% of you agreed that women and men think differently?
6. You might have good ideas for another topic relevant to issues we have dealt with in this course. I am open to suggestions, and to help you find good readings on the topic.

9. Wednesday, March 7


Meditation VI, Synopsis:  [9.5 *The Cartesian Doctrine: Meditation VI and Synopsis*](#)

Personal Identity:  [10.1 *Who Am I?*](#)


DUE: *Hume: Individual Prep Questions*


List of *Group Presentation* topics ranked in your order of preference.


Assignment

READ:  **11.2** Ludwig Wittgenstein, excerpts from *Philosophical Investigations* and from


Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus

 **11.3** Amélie Oksenberg Rorty: excerpts from *The Identities of Persons*

 **11.4** Thomas D. Davis: "Strange Behaviour"

DUE NEXT SESSION: Bring a draft of your  [Second Essay](#) to show to me and to work with in groups.

10. Wednesday, March 14

Personal Identity:  [10.1 *Who Am I?*](#)—Finish

Co-op work on *Second Essay*.

DUE: a draft of your *Second Essay*

 [Group Presentation](#): Assign topics and readings—attendance taken.

Assignment


WORK ON  [Group Presentation](#).

DUE NEXT SESSION: a **copy** of at least two pages of notes on your **Specific Readings**.

Group Presentation Handouts (and overheads) due one hour before your presentation session if you want me to photocopy and make overheads.

 **Second Essay** DUE session 12 for those making Group Presentations at session 13,
DUE session 13 for those making Group Presentations at session 12.


11. Wednesday, March 21

Post-modernism:  11.6 **End of the Modern Search for Knowledge and Reality?**
Work on *Group Presentations*: attendance taken.

Assignment

DUE NEXT SESSION: *First Group Presentation*

Handouts (and overheads) due one hour before your presentation session if you want me to photocopy and make overheads.

 **Second Essay** DUE next session for those making Group Presentations at session 13,
DUE session 13 for those making Group Presentations at session 12.

12. Wednesday, March 28

Work on *Group Presentation*: attendance taken.


First Group Presentation

Second Essay DUE for those making Group Presentations at session 13,

Assignment

DUE NEXT SESSION: *Second and Third Group Presentation*

Handouts (and overheads) due one hour before your presentation session if you want me to photocopy and make overheads.

 **Second Essay** DUE next session for those making Group Presentations at session 12.

13. Wednesday, April 4

Second Essay DUE for those making Group Presentations at session 12,

Second Group Presentation

Third Group Presentation: Individuality

Final Exam Period: *Third Essay (in class)*

Following the *Methods of Inquiry* steps, write an essay of no more than about 1000 words on a question about a topic **other than** the one about which **you** made your *Group Presentation*.

You may use any books and notes.

You may write a co-operative essay in groups of no more than three.

You may write in either the Abbotsford or Chilliwack *Final Exam* period.